



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

BIOSAFETY COP/MOP4 AGREES TO WORK TOWARDS A LEGALLY BINDING REGIME ON LIABILITY AND REDRESS

The fourth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP4) convened from 12-16 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany, and was dominated by discussions on liability and redress. While the meeting did not complete its mandate to adopt an international regime on liability and redress in the context of the Protocol, it achieved a political compromise that will pave the way towards adopting a legally binding regime, hailed by most participants as a major step forward. The compromise envisions a legally binding supplementary protocol focusing on an administrative approach, but including a provision on civil liability to be complemented by non-legally binding guidelines on civil liability. The meeting also established an *ad hoc* technical expert group on risk assessment and management (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/bs-copmop4/>).



President Wolfgang Koehler gaveling the meeting to a close

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CBD COP RESOURCE FOCUS

THE CORPORATE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES REVIEW

(WRI, Meridian Institute and World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2008) The Corporate Ecosystem Services Review consists of a methodology that helps managers develop strategies to manage business risks and opportunities arising from their company's dependence and impact on ecosystems (<http://www.wri.org/publication/corporate-ecosystem-services-review#>).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

WATER AND THE RURAL POOR

(FAO and IFAD, 2008) This publication, by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), addresses the linkage between water and rural poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. It seeks to help decision-makers make informed choices on where and how to invest, and emphasizes matching investments in infrastructure with interventions in institutions, knowledge and finance (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/i0132e/i0132e.pdf>).

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CBD COP RESOURCE FOCUS (*cont.*)

PLANT CONSERVATION REPORT (CBD Secretariat and Botanic Gardens Conservation International, 2008) The Plant Conservation Report outlines progress in implementing the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. It highlights the urgent challenges and some priorities for further implementation up to 2010, as well as providing a background and rationale for further global initiatives in plant conservation beyond 2010 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-09/information/cop-09-inf-25-en.pdf>).

THE VALUE OF NATURE: ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF PROTECTED AREAS

(CBD Secretariat, 2008) This brochure seeks to illustrate the ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits of protected areas, in order to generate a stronger call to action for policy-makers and other stakeholders (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-value-nature-en.pdf>).

CROP WILD RELATIVE GLOBAL PORTAL

(UNEP/GEF and Bioversity International) This portal provides access to information and data resources important for the conservation and utilization of crop wild relatives. It has been developed over the past four years in the framework of a UNEP/GEF project entitled “*In situ* conservation of crop wild relatives through enhanced information management and field application,” and executed by Bioversity International in collaboration with five partner countries (<http://cwr.int.grinfo.net/index.php?page=welcome>).

THE GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY ASTRAZENECA PARTNERSHIP FOR NATURAL PRODUCT DISCOVERY

(UNU-IAS, 2008) Authored by Sarah Laird, Catherine Monagle and Sam Johnston, this study presents an access and benefit-sharing case study, the Natural Product Discovery partnership between Griffith University in Australia and the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca (http://www.ias.unu.edu/sub_page.aspx?catID=7&ddlID=681).

FORESTS AND THE BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION

(Global Forest Coalition, 2008) This report includes the summary of 22 independent monitoring reports on the implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity of the CBD, in 22 different countries (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/external/cop-09/gfc-summary-en.pdf>).

PLANTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: WHICH FUTURE?

(Botanic Gardens Conservation International, 2008) Written by Belinda Hawkins, Suzanne Sharrock and Kay Havens, this report seeks to demonstrate the linkages between plant diversity and climate change and why it is crucially important to care for the world’s natural plant diversity (http://www.bgci.org/files/Worldwide/climate_change.pdf).

Editor’s note: MEA Bulletin invites articles from practitioners, MEAs and academics on issues that are of interest across the MEA community. Please contact the Editor, lynn@iisd.org, for further information.

► **BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE**

CBD COP9 FOCUSES ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING, BIOFUELS, PROTECTED AREAS

Immediately following COP/MOP 4, the ninth Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the CBD opened on 19 May 2008, and will continue until 30 May. COP9 delegates are addressing a wide range of substantive, strategic, procedural and financial issues, and are primarily focused on: agricultural biodiversity, including biofuels; biodiversity and climate change, including a proposed call for a moratorium on ocean fertilization; protected areas; forest biodiversity; and access and benefit-sharing, including a decision on the process to finalize negotiations on an international regime by 2010. Concerns



German Chancellor Angela Merkel addresses the High-Level Segment

related to the lack of new and additional financial resources have also been high-

lighted in relation to most agenda items (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cop9/>).

► **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

CSD16 COMPLETES REVIEW OF AGRICULTURE, DESERTIFICATION, AFRICA

Delegates to the 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD16), which convened at UN headquarters in New York, US, from 5-16 May 2008, reviewed the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Throughout CSD16, participants highlighted the connections be-



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed CSD16 delegates at the opening of the High-level Segment

tween the session’s thematic agenda and both the current food crisis and climate change, and highlighted the drivers of food prices, including land degradation, high

energy costs, climate change, poor harvests, speculation in agricultural commodities, inequitable terms of trade, decline of investments in agricultural and rural development, and increased production of biofuels from food crops. A Chair’s Summary outlines the issues discussed. Delegates will take up these issues at the May 2009 meeting of CSD17, during which policy recommendations will be negotiated (<http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd16/>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

HIGH FOOD PRICES: THE WHAT, WHO, AND HOW OF PROPOSED POLICY ACTIONS

(IFPRI, 2008) This paper, authored by Joachim von Braun et al. for the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), offers an action plan to combat the global food price crisis. It calls for an “emergency package” to stem the tide of the humanitarian crisis and a “resilience package” to strengthen the capacity of poor people and developing countries to meet their own needs, and outlines who should do what, and how (<http://www.ifpri.org/PUBS/ib/foodprices.asp>).

TROPICAL FOREST UPDATE

(ITTO, May 2008) This issue of the newsletter from the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) has articles on promoting sustainable forest and protected area management in Africa, improving forest governance in the Republic of Congo, certification in Papua New Guinea, and expanding timber species utilization in Guyana (http://www.itto.or.jp/live/Live_Server/4021/tfu.18.1.e.pdf).

SAVING WATER: FROM FIELD TO FORK – CURBING LOSSES IN THE FOOD CHAIN

(Stockholm International Water Institute, May 2008) This report stresses the link between food production and water use, and indicates that the magnitude of current food losses presents challenges and opportunities. It outlines a number of steps to reduce by half, by 2025, the amount of food that is wasted after it is grown, such as supporting farmers with improved harvesting and water storage facilities, benchmarking standards for businesses to minimize waste in processing and transport, and educating consumers on the impacts of over-eating and food waste on water resources (http://www.siwi.org/documents/Resources/Policy_Briefs/Paper_13_Field_to_Fork.pdf).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

POPS CLEARING HOUSE MECHANISM AND NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) launched a clearing house mechanism for exchange of information on POPs, including sound measures and valuable experiences in implementing the Convention, on 19 May 2008. The clearing house is intended to help countries and other stakeholders take informed decisions about how to reduce or eliminate the release of POPs into the environment. The clearing house contains information on the 12 POPs covered by the Convention and includes a section dedicated to DDT and alternatives to its use in controlling malaria and other disease vectors (<http://chm.pops.int/Home/PressRelease19May/tabid/295/language/en-US/Default.aspx>). Also in May, a new



website was launched (<http://chm.pops.int/Default.aspx>).

ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTION SECRETARIATS HOLD JOINT RETREAT

The first joint retreat of the Secretariats of the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions convened from 6-7 May 2008, at Glion sur Montreux, Switzerland. The retreat considered issues including: optimizing roles and contributions of staff; enhancing synergies between technical and support functions; and enhancing cooperation between the two conventions in facilitating assistance to parties for convention implementation. At the close of the retreat, Don Cooper, Executive Secretary of the Stockholm Convention and co-Executive Secretary of the Rotterdam Convention, elaborated the plan for a joint services unit of the two conventions, which will house administration, information technology, conference services and resource mobilization functions (<http://chm.pops.int/>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF ANNOUNCES EXPERT MEETING ON FINANCE

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) announced that an *ad hoc* expert group (AHEG) meeting on financing will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 3-7 November 2008. The AHEG is tasked with developing proposals for the development of a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework for all types of forests, with a view to adopting it at the eighth session of the Forum. The mechanism/portfolio approach/financing framework aims to mobilize significantly increased, new and additional resources to support the implementation of sustainable forest management and the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, and the achievement of the global objectives on forests (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-SFMfinance.html>).

UNCCD CONVENES HIGH LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE, GM CO-COMMISSIONS REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN VIET NAM

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) convened a High Level Policy Dialogue to discuss “Coping with Today’s Global Challenges in the Context of the UNCCD Strategy” on 27 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. The Dialogue was intended to facilitate a targeted exchange from a number of stakeholders on the ten-year strategic plan and to foster awareness of, and

buy-in among, relevant policy and decision makers. It was funded by the Government of Germany and was attended by 123 people, including ambassadors, ministers, country representatives, intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Dialogue consisted of three segments, which addressed policy development, mobilizing for a forward-looking strategy, and Parties’ views on responses to emerging challenges (<http://www.unccd.int/meetings/global/hldp/menu.php>; <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/hldp/>).



Luc Gnacadja,
UNCCD
Executive
Secretary

The Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have released a report they commissioned on “Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change and Land Degradation through IFAD’s Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) for Viet Nam.” The report stems from efforts to help Viet Nam adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, in part by mainstreaming adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change into IFAD’s COSOP. The report identifies the impact of climate change and land degradation on local communities and the national economy, along with ways and means to address the problem ([http://news.global-mechanism.org/u/nrd.php?p=\\$uid\\$_\\$l1d\\$_96424_151_83](http://news.global-mechanism.org/u/nrd.php?p=uid_$l1d$_96424_151_83)).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

BONN CLIMATE TALKS TO FOCUS ON POST-2012 ISSUES

The next round of talks under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol are scheduled to start on 2 June 2008, with a strong focus expected on post-2012 issues. The 28th sessions of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) are taking place from 4-13 June in Bonn, Germany. In addition, the second session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWGLCA2), and the second part of the fifth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG5) will convene from 2-12 June.

Recently, the UNFCCC Secretariat has released a number of documents in preparation for these meetings, including a "Scenario Note" by the AWGLCA Chair, setting out the context for this meeting. This document notes that, following a first session in Bangkok, Thailand, in April 2008, that focused on organizational issues, the AWGLCA will now need to "make the transition to undertaking more focused work, leading to negotiations on the elements of the Bali Action Plan." In this context, AWGLCA2 will include a workshop on advancing adaptation through finance and technology, investment and financial flows to address climate change, and scaling up the development and transfer of technology to developing countries (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/awglca2/eng/07.pdf>).

Delegates in Bonn will also be informed by a new document from the Secretariat about ongoing work that relates to the Bali Action Plan. The Action Plan was negotiated in December 2007,

and sets out steps for reaching an agreement on a post-2012 framework by December 2009 (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/awglca2/eng/inf01.pdf>).

In addition, the Secretariat has issued an "Overview Schedule" of the Bonn meetings to assist delegates in understanding this complex series of events. The Secretariat has also released numerous other documents and background papers relating to individual agenda items (http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/sb28/application/pdf/sb28_overview_schedule.pdf, <http://unfccc.int/meetings/sb28/items/4328.php>).

OZONE SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR OEWG; OZONE RESEARCH MANAGERS MEETING HELD

The Ozone Secretariat has released the annotated provisional agenda for the 28th Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG28), which will take place from 7-11 July 2008, in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as the May 2008 Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) Progress Report and the text of proposed adjustments to the Protocol. The proposed adjustments, submitted by Micronesia and Mauritius, call for adjustments that would not only stem ozone loss, but would achieve near-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, these island States propose adjustments that would call for funding and incentives to destroy banks of ozone-depleting substances (ODS), which are largely contained in foams and air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment. Issues arising from the TEAP Progress Report, including TEAP recommendations on critical-use and essential-use exemptions, are slated to be discussed at OEWG28, as is the replenishment of the Multilateral

Fund (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/28oewg/OEWG-28-1-Add1E.pdf; http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/28oewg/OEWG-28-3-Add1E.pdf; http://ozone.unep.org/Assessment_Panels/TEAP/Reports/TEAP_Reports/Teap_progress_report_May2008.pdf). The TEAP Report also contains progress reports from the Technical Options Committees, which convened to prepare their reports in advance of the OEWG. The Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee met in Tel Aviv, Israel, from 21-25 April 2008, and the Medical Technical Options Committee met from 1-4 April 2008, in Tokushima, Japan (http://www.environment.gov.il/bin/en.jsp?enPage=e_BlankPage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=Object&enDispWho=News^14077&enZone=e_news; http://ozone.unep.org/Events/Indicative_List_TEAP_TOCs_Meetings.shtml).

In other ozone news, the seventh Meeting of the Ozone Research Managers of the Vienna Convention was held 18-21 May 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. Participants considered interactions between climate change and ozone depletion, monitoring, research needs, data archiving and capacity building (<http://www.wmo.ch/pages/prog/arep/gaw/ozone/7thORM.html>).

In implementation news, China has phased out the use of methyl bromide in grain fumigation (http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/12/content_8149842.htm), and the Philippines is in the process of using funding from the Multilateral Fund to fund car and refrigerator repair shops, with the aim of increasing their capability to recycle ODS (<http://www.gmanews.tv/story/96829/20-refrigerator-car-aircon-shops-in-Benguet-to-get-funding-to-recycle-CFC>).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP FI AFRICAN TASK FORCE CONSIDERS SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

The UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) African Task Force (ATF) convened a high-level group of experts in Lagos, Nigeria, from 21-22 May 2008, to discuss "Sustainable Finance: Opportunities and Challenges." Participants explored the nexus between finance, capital markets and the sustainability agenda and considered topics including climate change and carbon finance in Africa, microfinance, and environmental and social credit risk management (<http://www.unepfi.org/events/2008/lagos/index.html>).

IEG CONSULTATIONS CONTINUE

On 13 May 2008, informal consultations on international environmental governance (IEG), organized by Costa Rica, convened in New York, US, on the sidelines of the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Participants heard a presentation of a draft resolution prepared by the Co-Chairs, which draws upon the Options Paper presented in June 2007. The



L-R: IEG Co-chairs Claude Heller and Peter Maurer

draft has "ambitious incrementalism" as an important guiding principle, and includes proposals structured around seven building blocks, on the improvements of the existing IEG and fundamental transformations in the future. Discussion focused on, among other issues, sustained financing and whether incremental changes to the existing IEG architecture were adequate to address emerging needs and objectives. Participants were informed that a follow-up meeting would be hosted by Italy later in 2008 (http://www.unep.org/roa/Amcen/Amcen_Events/12th_Session_AMCEN/docs/reference/MinisterialDialoguePaper-InternationalEnvironmentalGovernance.pdf).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

CONSULTATIONS ON UN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE CONSIDERS GENDER

The UN General Assembly consultations on System-wide Coherence, which convened on 16 May 2008, in New York, US, considered the gender dimension of system-wide coherence. Deliberations focused on the establishment of a new UN gender entity and the creation of an Under-Secretary-General post on gender and women's rights, with some countries supporting the creation of a new body, and others favoring further discussion. Participants identified the need to address accountability, resources and resource predictability, and Co-Chair Paul Kavanagh (Ireland) invited the Secretary-General to provide a non-paper analyzing which gaps affect the UN system's delivery on coherence. Delegations were informed that a debate to address the gender issue on a more programmatic level is scheduled for the beginning of June 2008, as is an information session to learn more about the undertakings within the Chief Executive Board (<http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/eupdate/4132>;

<http://www.centerforunreform.org/node/339>;

ECOSOC DISCUSSES GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has convened a special session on the global food crisis. The event, which was originally scheduled for one day, 20 May 2008, extended to 22 May 2008. It convened at UN headquarters in New York, US. The session heard video-recorded messages from Bingu wa Mutharika, President of Malawi, and Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister, as well as a keynote address by Joachim von Braun, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute. ECOSOC President Léo Mérorès emphasized that "agriculture has to be put back in the center of the development agenda." UN General Assembly President Srgjan Kerim also drew attention to the role that high oil prices have played in rising food prices, and emphasized that "a sustainable solution to the crisis must therefore be

linked to oil price stability and our efforts to tackle climate change." A Presidential Statement (E/2008/66) was issued at the end of the meeting (<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/GlobalFoodCrisis/index.shtml>;

DELIVERING AS ONE STOCKTAKING SUMMARY MADE PUBLIC

The UN Development Group has released *Delivering as One 2007 Stocktaking Summary*, which compiles the assessments provided by UN Country Teams, national governments and UN agencies on progress, emerging issues and lessons learned in the eight pilot countries - Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam. According to the summary report, the key lessons learned include the importance of: government leadership and involvement; greater Resident Coordinator accountability; support from headquarter level; resource mobilization; and sharing of country experiences (<http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=568>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

RAMSAR RELEASES DOCUMENTS, ATTENDS CSD16, NEW SITE DESIGNATED

The Ramsar Secretariat has released the report of the preparatory meeting of Oceania parties to the Ramsar Convention, which took place in Samoa on 10-11 April 2008. The meeting culminated in a draft statement to be presented to the 37th Ramsar Standing Committee meeting, which will convene in Gland, Switzerland, from 2-6 June 2008 (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_reg_oceania_2008_report.pdf). The Secretariat has also released the agenda documentation for this upcoming meeting (http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key_sc37_agenda_papers.htm). Ramsar Secretary General, Anada Tiéga, attended the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which took place in New York, US, from 5-16 May 2008. Tiéga was

one of the panelists in the thematic discussion about drought, and his presentation focused on "Wetland management as a significant land use issue" (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_csd16.htm). He also delivered a message on the International Day of Biological Diversity, which was celebrated on 22 May 2008. He noted that food security is a key part of the requirements for human health, and is also a vital component of the theme of Ramsar COP10- "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People," which will take place from 28 October to 4 November 2008, in Changwon, Republic of Korea (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm).

In other Ramsar news, the Secretariat has announced that Mexico has designated its 79th site, *Humedales La Libertad* (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_mexico_libertad.htm).

UNDOALOS RELEASES DOCUMENTS; ANNOUNCES ACCESSIONS

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) has released a number of documents: the advance and unedited Joint Statement of the Co-Chairpersons of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas

of national jurisdiction, which held its second meeting in New York, US, from 28 April - 2 May 2008 (<http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/joint%20statement%20advanced.pdf>); the Statement by the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress achieved at its 21st session (Document CLCS/58) (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/commission_documents.htm#CLCS/58); the document containing the latest version of the rules of procedure of the Commission (Document CLCS/40/Rev.1) (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=CLCS/40/Rev.1>); and the provisional agenda of the 18th meeting of the States parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which will be held in New York, US, from 13-20 June 2008 (Document SPLOS/L.54) (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/eighteenthmeetingstatesparties.htm).

In addition, UNDOALOS has announced that Cape Verde has ratified, and Hungary has acceded to, the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_agreements.htm).



Anada Tiéga addresses CSD16

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GEF CONVENES CLIMATE CHANGE WORKSHOP, SUBREGIONAL MEETING

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Evaluation Office organized an international workshop on Evaluating Climate Change and Development, on 10-13 May 2008, in Alexandria, Egypt. Participants shared experiences in evaluating projects and programmes aimed at the nexus between climate change and development. Participants discussed the need to apply best practices in evaluating mitigation, and to develop them into frameworks and guidelines. They also highlighted the value of exchanging experiences on adaptation and vulnerability best practices and frameworks, and identified the need for establishing a global network of evaluators, practitioners and researchers working on climate change and sustainable development (<http://www.esdevaluation.org/>).

The GEF also convened a sub-regional workshop for national focal points from Asian countries on 15-18 May 2008 in Manila, Philippines. Twenty-seven participants representing 16 countries in Asia attended the workshop, along with several observers and members of the GEF-NGO Network. During the event, GEF Focal Points discussed and reviewed policies and procedures and shared experiences and lessons learned from developing and implementing GEF projects. The issues addressed included: the GEF Focal Area Strategies, the revised project cycle, and the Resource Allocation Framework. Presentations also were made on the Adaptation Fund and the Coral Triangle Initiative (http://www.gefcountrysupport.org/report_detail.cfm?projectId=218).

IDB APPROVES LOAN FOR URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME IN BRAZIL

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a loan of US\$56.7 million for an urban environmental programme in Brazil. The programme

will help mitigate the impact of hazardous settlement along riverbanks and promote citizen participation in sustainable development of Goiânia, a city located in west-central Brazil. The programme will involve rehabilitation and installation of drainage systems, land-use planning and environmental protection along riverbanks (<http://www.iadb.org/news/articledetail.cfm?artid=4598&language=En>).

ADB POLLUTION REDUCTION PROJECT IN CHINA IMPROVES AIR QUALITY

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has reported positive results from a 1999 project it helped fund. The US\$183 million project, US\$102 million of which was an ADB loan, sought to improve the environment in three cities in China's leading coal-producing province of Shanxi. The Shanxi Environment Improvement Project helped develop production plants and networks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by capturing methane gas and turning the gas into a power source for residents and businesses, as well as to reduce coal use and bring down energy costs. The project reduced coal use by nearly 800,000 tons annually (<http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2008/12438-chinese-environmental-projects/default.asp>).

FFD PROCESS REVIEWS INTERNATIONAL TRADE AS AN ENGINE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The review session on Chapter III of the Monterrey Consensus, which considered "International trade as an engine for development," convened on 19-20 May 2008, at UN headquarters in New York, US. Delegates considered submissions by the EU, the Rio Group, the US, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which focused on the role of international trade liberalization in promoting development. During the meeting, participants heard

panel presentations and participated in interactive debates that addressed the challenges currently confronted by the Doha Development Round negotiations, and the need to advance further in the Doha development mandate and Aid for Trade initiatives (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/doha/chapter3/index.htm>).

WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT CONTINUES DEBATING ITS DOHA MANDATE

The WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session (CTESS) met informally on 5-6 May 2008, to consider a paper by Norway (JOB (08)/33) on the relationship between existing WTO rules and specific trade obligations (STOs) set out in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (article 31(i) of the Doha Declaration). Norway's proposal recognizes that: WTO rules would apply to a potential conflict with trade obligations emanating from MEAs; MEAs and the WTO Agreement are instruments of international law of equal standing; and all obligations under international law should be implemented harmoniously and in good faith. The African Group also presented an informal 'room document' (now JOB 08/38) that, *inter alia*, suggests experience-sharing among members and establishing specific and permanent technical assistance to developing countries to strengthen the implementation of trade and environment regimes in a harmonious manner. The meeting also continued consideration of a Brazilian proposal on modalities for negotiations on the liberalization of environmental goods (article 31(iii) of the Doha Declaration), which suggests engaging in a 'request and offer' process, rather than agreeing on a single list of environmental goods. Discussions will continue on these two topics, which some highlight as closely linked to parallel negotiations on modalities within agriculture and non-agricultural market access (IISD sources; <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-21/story4.htm>).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- Francis Gurry (Australia) has been nominated by the Coordination Committee to be the next Director General of the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**. The successor of current Director General Kamil Idris (Sudan) will be appointed by the WIPO General Assembly at its next meeting, which is scheduled to take place on 22-30 September 2008 (http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/articles/2008/article_0025.html)

Photo: Francis Gurry (photo courtesy of WIPO)



► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- 37TH MEETING OF THE RAMSAR STANDING COMMITTEE:** 2-6 June 2008, Gland, Switzerland. http://www.ramsar.org/sc/36/key_sc36_doc01_e.htm
- IMO'S SUB-COMMITTEE ON FLAG STATE IMPLEMENTATION:** 2-6 June 2008, London, UK. http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D20807/1.pdf
- 28TH SESSIONS OF THE UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODIES:** 2-13 June 2008, Bonn, Germany. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/sb28/>