



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

ACCRA CLIMATE TALKS IMMINENT AS SOME SIDE EVENTS CANCELLED

The latest round of UN climate change negotiations are set to convene in Accra, Ghana, from 21-27 August 2008, and will include the third meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-Term Action (AWG-LCA) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the sixth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP). The AWG-LCA will include two workshops, one focused on sectoral approaches, the other on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. Under the AWG-KP, negotiators will try to reach agreements on the flexible mechanisms, land use, land-use change and forestry, greenhouse gases sectors and source categories, and possible approaches targeting sectoral emissions. Recently posted documents for the meeting include a technical paper on means to reach emission reduction targets and methodological issues (<http://unfccc.int/meetings/interessional/accra/items/4437.php>, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/tp/02.pdf>). On 8 August 2008, the UNFCCC Secretariat informed delegates that civil society side events planned for Accra had been cancelled, because the premises planned to accommodate non-governmental organizations (NGOs), side events, meeting rooms and facilities for media are no longer available at the Accra International Conference Center (AICC). However, exhibits will remain as originally planned (IISDRS sources).



L-R: AWG-KP Chair Harald Dovland, Norway, and AWG-LCA Chair Luiz Machado, Brazil

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GUEST ARTICLE

Bridging the Gap Between the Rio Conventions: The RNSCC Experience

By Theodore B. Mayaka, RNSCC Coordinator

Abstract

When promoting synergy between the Rio Conventions, an obvious approach is to focus on the ecological and political processes common to these agreements.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

HARMONIZED WORLD SOIL DATABASE

(FAO, July 2008) The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has developed this new database to improve knowledge of current and future land productivity, as well as the carbon storage and carbon sequestration potential, of the world's soils (<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/LUC/luc07/External-World-soil-database/HTML/index.html>).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Efforts have been made along these lines at both the global and national levels. These efforts are commendable and must be pursued, despite procedural constraints, including differing agendas that require painstaking processes to build consensus.

However, the drive for synergy is relatively overlooked at the field level, where its impact will ultimately face the most critical test: implementation. It is at this very level that, out of necessity, local communities are applying synergies through grassroots activities that combine holistic management, adaptation and innovation. Yet these local communities and their supporting environmental civil society organisations (CSOs) are stymied in their endeavour by several constraints, including physical isolation, lack of a proven track record, and difficulties in accessing information and funding sources.

These are the very reasons behind the creation, in January 2005, of the Regional Network for the Synergy between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification in West and

Central Africa (RNSCC). RNSCC is a network of 13 environmental NGOs from nine countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Ghana). The network is coordinated by the Centre for Environment and Development Studies in Cameroon, in collaboration with the Institute of Environmental Science, Leiden University, the Netherlands. Having two academic institutions as foster parents, RNSCC is a science-based network focused on learning with minimal involvement in lobbying.

RNSCC recognizes that the Rio Conventions have collectively generated a substantial amount of knowledge, which can be translated into grassroots projects that foster ecological, economic and social sustainability, and it seeks to act as a broker between the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions and the grassroots actors. RNSCC's ambitions also include providing the three Rio Secretariats with grassroots-level examples to inform their deliberations on sustainable resource use. With respect to its members, RNSCC is assigned a dual objective, namely facilitate information access and knowledge transfer and contribute to capacity building.

Among the activities that RNSCC promotes has been a project in Niger to transform the plant biomass of the invasive water hyacinth into compost used in vegetable production and reforestation. The project conserved the river's ecosystem while contributing to poverty alleviation and combating desertification. In another project, under the lead of traditional healers, local communities in Northern Benin undertook to establish and reforest botanical gardens with medicinal tree species that have become threatened. This example of *in-situ*, community-based conservation has also contributed to fight desertification and improve carbon sequestration. In only four years of existence, the achievements of RNSCC have been remarkable considering the difficulties with previous networking experiences on the continent.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle52.html>

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.

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

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In other UNFCCC news, the Executive Board of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) held its forty-first meeting in Bonn, Germany, from 30 July to 2 August 2008. The Board began consideration of a draft Validation and Verification Manual prepared by the Secretariat, and will continue discussions on this document at its next session. The Board also considered a number of specific draft methodologies, and discussed draft guidance on project boundaries for afforestation and reforestation project activities, and matters relating to the issuance of certified emission reductions (CERs). The Board discussed the CDM management plan and the increased income recently generated for work on the CDM (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/index.html>).

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES OEWG28 REPORT

The Ozone Secretariat has released an advance copy of the Report of the 28th Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG28) of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances



that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which convened from 7-11 July 2008, in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as the Report of the Co-Chairs of the contact group on replenishment. The latter called for a study of the effect of inflation on activities and a risk analysis of future hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) growth, and considered destruction and HCFC production reduction (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/28oewg/OEWG-28-5E.pdf; http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/28oewg/Report_of_the_CoChairs_Contact_Group_on_Replenishment_28OEWG.pdf).

The Secretariat also recently released information regarding Ozone Day, which will be observed 16 September 2008 under the theme "Montreal Protocol – Global partnerships for global benefits," and the Report of the Seventh Meeting of the Ozone Research Managers. The latter includes the Ozone Research Managers recommendations, including regarding the need for better data upon which to analyze the relationships between climate change and ozone depletion and the need for capacity development to support data gathering in developing countries (http://ozone.unep.org/Events/ozone_day_2008/index.shtml; http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/research-mgrs/7orm/index.shtml).

In other ozone news, the Multilateral Fund Secretariat has released the report of the 55th Meeting of the Executive Committee. The report details, among other matters, the status of contributions, the status of ongoing projects and programmes funded by the Multilateral Fund, updates from implementing and bilateral agencies, and consideration of requests for funding for hydrochlorofluorocarbon phase-out management plans (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/files/55/5553.pdf>). In addition, the proceedings of the 6 July 2008 Consultative Meeting on Essential Use Nominations for Chlorofluorocarbons for metered-dose inhalers Manufacturing in Article 5 Countries Beyond 2009 have been released. The meeting, which was held in Bangkok, Thailand, sought to help developing countries understand the inputs and procedures needed for essential use nominations, as well as to clarify the roles of the affected public and private institutions (http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/information/mmc/lib_detail.asp?r=5110).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

GLOBAL TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT 2008

(UNEP, July 2008) In this report, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) shows a surge in renewable energy investments in 2007 to US\$148.8 billion, an increase of 60% compared with investments in 2006. The analysis suggests that the increased investments were driven by oil prices and concerns about both climate change and energy security, and were dominated by investments in renewable energy capacity. The report also highlights the increasing proportion of investment in alternative energy in China, the US, India and Brazil (<http://sefi.unep.org/english/globaltrends1.html>).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN EVALUATION OF WORLD BANK GROUP SUPPORT

(World Bank, July 2008) This internal World Bank report evaluates the effectiveness of World Bank Group support to the environment from 1990 to 2007, and recommends that the Bank ensure that environmental issues enter fully into discussions of its strategic directions and in regional and country assistance programmes. Among its findings, the report highlights insufficient attention to longer-term sustainable development, and the need for more adequate systems to monitor environmental outcomes and to assess impacts across the World Bank Group (<http://go.worldbank.org/00BMAYWC60>).

CLIMATE RESILIENT CITIES

(World Bank, UN/ISDR, GFDRR, August 2008) The World Bank, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) prepared this resource, which provides cities and their governments with guidelines to reduce their vulnerability to climate change and strengthen disaster risk management. It encourages cities to develop strategies for adaptation to climate change and plans to mitigate the consequences of future natural disasters, as well as ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (www.worldbank.org/eap/climatecities).

CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

IPCC ISSUES DOCUMENTS AHEAD OF 29th SESSION

The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a number of documents in advance of its upcoming 29th Session. In early August, the Secretariat posted online its programme for the opening ceremony and celebration of the IPCC's 20th anniversary, which is being marked in Geneva, Switzerland, on 31 August 2008. The Secretariat has also

recently published the provisional annotated agenda for the 29th session, the final draft report of the 28th session, and documents on programme and budget issues, procedural matters and future activities. The 29th session is taking place from 31 August-4 September 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland (<http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session29.htm>, <http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session29/doc1-add1.pdf>).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DSD POSTS GUIDELINES FOR MAJOR GROUP PARTICIPATION IN CSD17

The UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), which serves as the Secretariat for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), has posted guidelines for major group participation in CSD17, which will convene from 4-15 May 2009, in New York, US, and the preparatory Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, scheduled from 23-27 February 2009. Among the upcoming deadlines are 19 September 2008 for major groups' inputs to the Secretary-Generals reports, and 1 November 2008 for



Cover of Issue 5 of Innovation Brief

submission of the "Major Groups' Priorities for Action" papers (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd17/mg/guidelines2009e.htm>). The DSD has also released Issue 5 of *Innovation Brief*, which examines

public procurement as a tool for promoting more sustainable consumption and production patterns (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/innovation-briefs/no5.pdf>).

TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

DEVELOPMENT BANKS FINANCE MINING REMEDIATION, CBOs AND POLLINATOR CONSERVATION

The World Bank approved, on 31 July 2008, a US\$30 million, 30-year loan to support an environmental programme designed to assist the Government of Argentina in meeting its legal obligations to remediate closed uranium mines and milling facilities in a permanent manner, consistent with internationally accepted standards for the safe disposal and handling of hazardous materials. The "Mining Environmental Restoration Program" will finance investments to remediate a closed uranium processing site and will provide technical assistance for the planning and engineering design of up to seven additional sites (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21859310~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

A project supported by the Asian Development Bank, through a US\$2 million grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, will help establish at least five environmental community-based organizations in the Onon River basin in Mongolia. The project will enable local people to act as stewards of the natural resources in their communities, while also supporting

environmental conservation planning and management in the Onon River watershed through strategy development and investments in technical research (<http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2008/12554-mongolian-poverties-reductions/>).

In other news, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has approved a US\$7.8 million grant to protect bees, bats and birds that are essential to the world's crop production. The project, "Conservation and Management of Pollinators for Sustainable Agriculture through an Ecosystem Approach," will be implemented by the UN Environment Programme, and seeks to promote food security through the protection of key pollinator species. The project will be coordinated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and executed through partnerships with the Governments of Brazil, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan and South Africa, in collaboration with stakeholders from different environment and agricultural communities. Along with providing an essential service to human populations, pollinators also play a key role in maintaining other ecosystem services including ensuring biodiversity and helping nature to adjust to external threats such as climate change (<http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=22248>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

PROGRESS ON DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION

(UNICEF and WHO, July 2008)
 This UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and UN World Health Organization (WHO) report finds that, despite recent progress, more than 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation, while nearly 1.2 billion people defecate without sanitary facilities, posing a major health threat to their communities. The report indicates that, at present, 87% of the world’s population can access improved water sources, with the figure expected to rise to 90% by 2015. The report also states that rural dwellers without access to improved water sources outnumber their urban counterparts by four to one (http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp_report_7_10_lores.pdf).

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT



Srgjan Kerim, President of the UN General Assembly (Photo courtesy of the UN)

MONTERREY CONSENSUS REVIEW DRAFT OUTCOME DOCUMENT RELEASED

The President of the UN General Assembly issued a draft outcome document for the Monterrey Consensus Review Conference, which will convene in Doha, Qatar, from 29 November-2 December 2008. The draft outcome document is based on input received during the first semester of 2008 from

countries, businesses, NGOs and civil society on the thematic areas of the Monterrey Consensus, as presented during several informal review sessions. It reaffirms the goals and commitments of the Monterrey Consensus and includes a section on “New Challenges and Emerging Issues,” which includes recognition of “increased costs from damage to the Earth’s environment and climate change” as key challenges the world faces today, and reaffirms the need for concerted global action to address these “while consistently furthering economic and human development for all.” In particular, the draft document recognizes that responses to the climate change problem have “major development implications.” Informal consultations and drafting sessions on the outcome document will be held during the second semester of 2008, leading to the Doha Review Conference in November (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/ffdfinal280708.pdf>).

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNGA CONSIDERS REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE DRAFT, INFORMED OF SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE WORK

A revised version of the draft resolution on strengthening the environmental activities in the UN system was put forward on 23 July 2008. Among other changes, the new draft: focuses on collaboration, rather than hierarchical relationships, between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN General Assembly (UNGA); proposes an “overview” rather than a “strategy” with regard to research activities; highlights UNEP’s presence in the regions rather



Co-Chair Claude Heller (Mexico) presented the environmental governance draft resolution

than on a need for resources; drops the proposal that the Global Environment Fund (GEF) be the financial mechanism for all global MEAs; includes new references to requests for additional resources, as well as to the need to more efficiently use existing resources; and asks for integration of the Environmental Management Group in the Chief Executives Board (CEB). Further consultations on the matter are expected in early September (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/environmental-gov/TalkingPointsEIG.pdf>; <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/environmental-gov/resolution230708.pdf>).

In other news, UN member States received a letter from the Deputy Secretary-General on the issue of the institutional dimension of system-wide coherence and UN work on gender equality and women’s empowerment and the report of the Co-Chairs on the consultations

on system-wide coherence. The report of the Co-Chairs emphasizes the urgency of the need for more coherence, the shared nature of the vision for a coherent UN, and the progress of the “Delivering as One” approach in the pilot countries. The report also commends the work of the CEB towards harmonizing UN system business practices and calls for: political impetus on “Delivering as One;” empowerment of country-level agency representatives; funding predictability; and improved UN and Bretton Woods Institutions collaboration. On gender equality and the empowerment of women, the report and the Deputy Secretary-General’s letter are optimistic about making a “conceptual breakthrough” on the institutional architecture of the UN system (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/swcReportoftheCochairs230708.pdf>; <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/usgswc280708.pdf>).

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD SELECTS CONSORTIUM FOR 2009 CST SESSION

The Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has selected the “Drylands Science for Development” consortium as its partner to jointly organize a scientific conference for the CST’s ninth session in 2009. Consortium members include the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA),

the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and the UN University/International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH). CST9 will convene in conjunction with the ninth Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, in late 2009, and will consider the priority theme “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water man-

agement.” In other UNCCD news, the Secretariat has begun posting documents for the 3-14 November 2008 meetings of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and special session of the CST, which will take place in Istanbul, Turkey (<http://www.unccd.int/>).



► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF REQUESTS INFORMATION ON NLBI IMPLEMENTATION

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat has put out a call for information from countries on progress made on national implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI) and the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests. This information will be used in the preparation of the UN Secretary-General's report on the subject, in advance of the eighth session of the UNFF in April

2009 (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/nlbi-call.html>).

ITTO PROVIDES REDD INITIATIVES OVERVIEW

The latest issue of Tropical Timber Market Report, a publication of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), provides an overview of carbon markets and reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) initiatives. In addition to highlighting climate-related forest experiences in several

ITTO producer and consumer countries, this issue discusses the potential contribution of the carbon market to offsetting carbon emissions and how forest-related activities could potentially be included in a post-2012 climate regime. It also draws attention to potential risk management techniques that could be used by participating entities in forest carbon trading that would allow for widely accessible, equitable and efficient forest carbon markets (http://www.itto.or.jp/live/Live_Server/4215/mis200800716.pdf).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS



Banner courtesy of Ramsar

RAMSAR COP10 DRAFT RESOLUTIONS POSTED, WORLD WETLANDS DAY PLANNED

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced that the 31 draft resolutions approved by the Standing Committee for consideration and possible adoption at the tenth Conference of the Parties (Changwon, Republic of Korea, 28 October-4 November 2008) are now available (http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_docs_index_e.htm#dr). In addition, the Secretariat has reported that the Government of Argentina has designated its 17th site, the Humedal Laguna Melincué, a Multiple Use Reserve in the Santa Fe province (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_argentina_melincue.htm). The Secretariat is also planning activities for World Wetlands Day 2009, which will be held around the slogan "Upstream – Downstream" on 2 February 2009, and will focus on river basins and their management. The Day will aim at raising awareness of all stakeholders regarding their river basins (http://www.ramsar.org/wwd/9/wwd2009_intro.htm).

IMO GUIDANCE REQUESTED FOR SALVAGE PLANS, SPECIAL AREAS DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS TAKE EFFECT

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been requested by the Government of the Philippines to provide guidance on assessing the technical aspects of the salvage proposals being considered in the case of the Princess of the Stars. The ferry was carrying 861 passengers and crew, as well as various hazardous materials, including ten metric tonnes of endosulfan, a toxic pesticide, when it went aground and sank on 21 June 2008

in the Philippines. Almost all on board lost their lives. The IMO consulted salvage experts and consolidated technical information that was shared with the Government and the UN Country Team. Based on the technical information provided by IMO, the Philippines requested IMO to mobilize a salvage expert to provide further guidance (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9908).

The IMO has also announced that Special Areas, in which the discharge of wastes from ships is prohibited as an additional protection from pollution from shipping under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), entered into force on 1 August 2008 in the "Gulfs area" and off southern South Africa. The former was established as a Special Area in 1973, but the discharge requirements could not take effect until States in the area had ratified MARPOL and provided adequate reception facilities. Following a ten-year regional project on the implementation of MARPOL, this requirement has now been completed. The Southern South African waters Special Area was adopted in 2006, and a resolution was adopted in 2007 by the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee, establishing 1 August 2008 as the date on which the discharge requirements take effect (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9919).

DOALOS RELEASES REPORTS, ORGANIZES TRAINING COURSE

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has released a number of documents: the advance and unedited report of the Secretary-General on Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migra-

tory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/documents/fisheries_advance_unedited.pdf); the advance and unedited report of the ninth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea containing the elements agreed by consensus relating to maritime security and safety, the topic of focus of the meeting, and additional issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/documents/icp9_advance_unedited.pdf); the documents of the eighteenth meeting of States parties to the UNCLOS (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/eighteenth-meetingstatesparties.htm#Decisions); and the 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 contains a summary of key issues, ideas and proposals raised during the meeting under the various agenda items and some concluding remarks based on our assessment of the discussions (<http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm#A/63/79>).

In addition, DOALOS, in cooperation with the UNEP Shelf Programme/GRID-Arendal, and with the support of Namibia, Norway and other institutions, is organizing an advanced training course on the preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. The course is intended for participants nominated by Governments of West African States and is scheduled to take place in Windhoek, Namibia, from 15-26 September 2008 (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/application_form76westafrica2008.pdf).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION RELEASES COP4 DOCUMENTS

The Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention has released documents in preparation for the Fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4), which will convene from 27-31 October 2008, in Rome, Italy. The documents include the financial report and staffing situation and the Programme of work and budget for the biennium 2009–2010 (<http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=b&id=138&sid=27&tid=41>).



Logo courtesy of the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION POSTS PROGRESS REPORT ON REPORTING AND PROPOSAL FOR LISTING NEW CHEMICAL

The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention has released a progress report on national reporting, as required by Article 15 of the Convention. The document indicates that, at the time of preparing the progress report, national reports had been submitted from 43 Parties, 39 of which had been submitted through official channels. In light of the low rate of submission, the Secretariat has sent reminders to parties, inviting them to submit their first national report. A completed version of the progress report on national reporting will be made available by 30 Septem-

ber 2008 (<http://chm.pops.int/Portals/0/Repository/COP-General/UNEP-POPS-COP-ART15-PROGRPT-08.English.pdf>).

In other Stockholm Convention news, Norway submitted, on 19 June 2008, a proposal for listing hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD) in Annex A of the Stockholm Convention. This proposal will be considered by the fourth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee (PO-PRC4) in October 2008 (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/Chemicalsunderreview/NewProposals/tabid/245/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).



Logo courtesy of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD CALLS FOR INFORMATION ON BIOFUELS, ANNOUNCES THEME FOR 2009 INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in accordance with decision IX/2 of the ninth Conference of the Parties, has recently invited parties and other governments, indigenous and local communities, and relevant stakeholders and organizations to submit information on experiences on the development and application of tools relevant to the sustainable production and use of biofuels, as well as relevant information from research on, and monitoring of, their positive and negative impacts on biodiversity and related socioeconomic aspects, no later than 31 March 2009 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-100-biofuel-en.pdf>).

In other CBD news, the Secretariat has announced that the theme of the 2009 International Biodiversity Day will be: "Biodiversity and Invasive Alien Species" (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-087-ibd-en.pdf>).

On the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, celebrated on 9 August 2008, CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghla

stressed that "indigenous peoples have a special relationship with nature in general and biodiversity in particular, which makes them crucial partners of the Convention on Biological Diversity." He particularly highlighted the contribution of indigenous women, who are the key to the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge through indigenous languages (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/speech/2008/sp-2008-08-08-indigenous-en.pdf>).

CMS SIGNS MOU WITH WESTERN HEMISPHERE MIGRATORY SPECIES INITIATIVE

On 22 July 2008, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), in order to identify and strengthen conservation of those sites of international importance of relevance to both partners, in particular with regard to capacity building. Areas of cooperation include exchange of information, sharing of reports and databases, joint project development, and mobilization of human and financial resources. The MOU was signed during the Third Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference, held in Asuncion, Paraguay, from 22-25 July 2008. The objectives of the event included

establishing a permanent forum for the conservation of migratory wildlife and conducting thematic sessions of interest to the region (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/08_Aug/WHMSI_results_0408.pdf).

CITES STANDING COMMITTEE CONCLUDES

The 57th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (14-18 July 2008, Geneva, Switzerland) adopted recommendations on, *inter alia*: development of indicators; costed programme of work for 2009-2011; review of the status of the elephant, trade in its specimens and the impact of the legal trade; and designation of China as an ivory trading partner. Intersessional working groups were established to carry out work on, *inter alia*: CITES and livelihoods; introduction from the sea; the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme; decision-making mechanism for authorizing ivory trade; intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale; review of the scientific committees; trade in crocodilian specimens; and purpose codes on CITES permits and certificates (<http://www.iisd.ca/cites/sc57/>).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **22nd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF:** 11 August-12 September 2008, New York, US. http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/clcs_home.htm
- **ACCRA CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS:** 21-27 August 2008, Accra, Ghana. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ccwg2/>
- **FIRST INTER-MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT:** 26-29 August 2008, Libreville, Gabon. <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/hae/hae1/>
- **IPCC 29:** 1-4 September 2008, Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>
- **INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON FINANCING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT:** 8-12 September 2008, Paramaribo, Suriname. <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/sdfms/>