



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

ACCRA CLIMATE TALKS REPORT PROGRESS

The latest official talks under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were held in Accra, Ghana, from 21-27 August 2008, with some progress reported. The talks included the third session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA3) and the first part of the sixth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC (AWG-KP6). The talks resulted in the adoption of conclusions on long-term cooperative action and on the 2009 work programme under the AWG-LCA. Parties also adopted conclusions on spillover effects, Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF), the flexible mechanisms, methodological issues, greenhouse gases, sectors and source categories, and means to reach emission reduction targets under the AWG-KP. Parties agreed to compile ideas and proposals on the elements contained in paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan for discussion in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008 (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ccwg2/>).



L-R: UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer; AWG-LCA Vice-Chair Michael Zammit Cutajar; AWG-LCA Chair Luiz Machado; and Halldor Thorgeirsson, UNFCCC Secretariat

MEA Clusters In This Issue

- **Climate and Atmosphere**
Africa Carbon Forum Convened; IPCC Elects Bureau; Ozone Secretariat Prepares for COP8 *Page 2-3*
- **Chemicals and Wastes**
Workshop on Stockholm Review Committee Convened; UNEP Releases Mercury OEWG Documents *Page 3-4*
- **Intergovernmental Organizations**
UNGA Considers Gender Equality; UNEP Co-Organizes Conference on Health and Environment *Page 4*
- **Sustainable Development**
DSD Engages in Water Week and Expo *Page 4*
- **Biodiversity and Wildlife**
Dugong and IOSEA Turtles Meetings Held; CBD Plans for International Year of Biodiversity; CITES COP15 Dates Set *Page 4-5*
- **Trade, Finance and Investment**
Aid Effectiveness Forum Concludes; GEF Meeting Discusses Access to Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency *Page 5-6*
- **Forests, Deserts and Land**
UNFF CLI Discusses Forest Financing; UNCCD's Gnacadjia Attends Expos *Page 6*
- **Water, Oceans and Wetlands**
Ramsar Sites Designated; UNEP/GPA Coordination Office Relocates *Page 7*

GUEST ARTICLE

GEO: An Experiment in Governance

By Michael Williams, External Relations Manager, Secretariat, Group on Earth Observations

Abstract

With the world becoming ever more interconnected and interdependent, governments are exploring new ways of collaborating with one another on common goals. One global issue that has recently gained traction is the need for better information about environmental change.

Continued on page 2

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT: ONE-PAGE CASE SUMMARIES (1995-2007)

(WTO, 2008) This publication offers summaries of panel and Appellate Body reports adopted by the WTO Dispute Settlement Body since 1995. Each summary provides core facts, substantive panel findings, and summaries of key findings on significant procedural matters, as well as Appellate Body reports, where applicable. Cases are indexed by article and by WTO agreement (http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/dispu_summary08_e.pdf).

Continued on page 3

The *MEA Bulletin* © is a publication of IISD <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was researched and written by Soledad Aguilar, Melanie Ashton, Alice Bisiaux, Reem Hajjar, Amber Moreen, Ph.D., Renata Rubian, Chris Spence, Elsa Tsioumani, and Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. The Digital Editor is Diego Noguera. The Editor is Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. <lynn@iisd.org>. The Deputy Director of IISD Reporting Services is Chris Spence and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The *MEA Bulletin* is published by IISD in cooperation with UNEP's Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DEL/C). Opinions expressed in *MEA Bulletin* are those of the authors and not the publishers. Excerpts from the *MEA Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on IISDRS publications, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11A, New York, NY 10022, USA.

GUEST ARTICLE (*cont.*)

Improved Earth observations are essential for tackling global warming, biodiversity loss, resource depletion and other barriers to sustainable development.

Fortunately, new technologies and increased investments in both satellite and *in-situ* monitoring systems are generating vast quantities of high-quality data and analyses about the Earth system. Joining these national assets together to form an interconnected “system of systems” would enable governments to pool their data and resources, coordinate investments and fill information gaps.

Recognizing this, governments and international organizations have joined forces to proactively build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems, or GEOSS. By making diverse monitoring instruments and analytical tools “interoperable,” GEOSS will give decision-makers greater access to cross-cutting environmental information and decision-support tools.

Collaborating on GEOSS is attractive to both the scientific community and to governments, but what form should this collaboration take? The answer hit upon in 2005 was to rely on an extremely flexible form of governance embodied by the Group on Earth Observations, or GEO.

As suggested by the informal monitor “Group,” GEO has a limited legal identity based on a multilaterally

agreed 10-Year Implementation Plan. While GEO has established a small secretariat to facilitate collaboration, its financial and contractual commitments are managed through one of GEO’s Participating Organizations (the World Meteorological Organization). Contributions to the secretariat’s budget are strictly voluntary. The staff consists largely of experts seconded from governments and organizations for two or three years. Overhead is reduced by working in English only and limiting the amount of documentation for meetings.

GEO is an intergovernmental body, but its 75 members (consisting of national governments and the European Community) are joined by 51 participating organizations. Although the conclusion of the 10-Year Plan in 2015 does not constitute a sunset clause, it does make it easier to phase out the Group should governments decide that it has completed its mission.

Collaboration on networking the world’s Earth observation systems takes place through specific “Tasks.” Tasks are informal arrangements led and implemented by all governments and organizations willing to participate. Governments and organizations also “contribute” their national systems, instruments, services and tools – known as “components” – to GEOSS.

How widely applicable is the GEO model? For many issues, such a voluntary collaboration clearly would not work. In particular, organizations and

treaties that confront the problems of free riders and non-compliance may require binding commitments. In the area of sustainable development and environmental change, this is particularly true when it comes to protecting the global commons.

But many governments are clearly pleased to contribute their Earth observation resources to a common effort that supports the global public good. While potential competition over security issues or commerce cannot be completely ignored, the spirit of voluntary collaboration remains strong. Meanwhile, countries that do not join GEO can still reap many of the benefits, and their preference to free ride on GEOSS does not generate unacceptable costs or disincentives for GEO’s active members.

GEO, then, is a governance structure that is well suited to its time and purpose. It demonstrates that a light touch and minimal formality may be all that governments need to collaborate on certain ambitious endeavours. As the world community itself moves increasingly towards “interoperability,” it is a model well worth considering.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle53.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

AFRICA CARBON FORUM HELD

Shortly after the Accra meeting, another UNFCCC-related event, the Africa Carbon Forum, convened in Dakar, Senegal. The event, which took place from 3-5 September 2008, was organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat in collaboration with the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and various partner organizations, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), World Bank and African Development Bank. The aim of the Forum was to strengthen links between those developing Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects in Africa and the region’s investment community, and to facilitate knowledge sharing and transactions between CDM project sponsors and buyers. It also sought to provide opportunities for Designated National Authorities (DNAs) to exchange views

and share experiences on the CDM. The three-day event combined a carbon investment trade fair, a conference and policy forum for African DNAs and climate change officials, and targeted capacity building on the CDM (<http://www.iisd.ca/africa/acf/>).

In other news from the UNFCCC, the Secretariat has recently posted the provisional agenda for the next session of the AWG-LCA, which will take place alongside various other official UNFCCC meetings in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008. The Secretariat has set up a webpage with the provisional agendas and other information for the Poznan meetings (http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php).

IPCC CELEBRATES 20th ANNIVERSARY, ELECTS BUREAU

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) met for its 29th

session from 31 August to 4 September 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. The event marked the IPCC’s 20th anniversary, which was commemorated with a high-level event on 31 August attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other senior officials. During the session, participants re-elected Rajendra Pachauri as IPCC Chair, and also elected a new IPCC Bureau and Bureau of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. These elections raised some questions about the Rules of Procedure. In addition to the elections, participants continued discussions on the future of the IPCC, agreed to create a scholarship for young climate change scientists from developing countries with the funds of the Nobel Peace Prize, and asked the Bureau to consider a scoping meeting on disaster risk reduction (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc29/>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF ADAPTATION OPTIONS FOR CLIMATE-SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCES

(USEPA, 2008) This report is a contribution to the US Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) and was developed by the Global Change Research Program in the US Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Office of Research and Development. It seeks to provide the best-available science on management adaptations for ecosystems and resources (<http://www.climate-science.gov/Library/sap/sap4-4/final-report/>).

FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND TRADE – THE EUROPEAN UNION APPROACH

(European Forest Institute, September 2008) This policy brief introduces the Action Plan taken by the European Commission's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Group. The Action Plan focuses on EU trade policies by developing partnerships with producer countries, developing legislation to encourage importers to take responsibility for the provenance of the wood they buy, and promoting responsible purchasing by governments and timber importers in member States (http://www.efi.int/attachments/publications/efi_policy_brief_2_eng_net.pdf).

POLITICAL SCIENCE? STRENGTHENING SCIENCE-POLICY DIALOGUE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(ODI, August 2008) This report, authored by Nicola Jones, Harry Jones and Cora Walsh for the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), examines the science-policy interface in developing countries. It identifies a need to tackle systemic barriers to institutionalizing evidence-informed policy processes in the field of science, technology and innovation for development, and identifies ways in which to strengthen the quality of policy dialogues on science and technology (<http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/index.asp>).

CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES DOCUMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR COP8

The Ozone Secretariat has released numerous documents in advance of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention (COP8) and the 20th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (MOP20), which will convene 16-20 November 2008, in Doha, Qatar. The released documents include: financial reports and the past and future budgets of the Trust Fund for the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and of the Trust Fund for the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; the provisional agenda for MOP20 and COP8; the Report of the Implementation Committee under the Non-Compliance Procedure for the Montreal Protocol on the work of its 40th meeting; an Information Note for Participants; and a document containing proposals, proposed adjustments to the Montreal Protocol, draft decisions, and reports of the co-chairs of the contact groups on campaign production and essential uses, destruction and stocks of ozone depleting substances, and Replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementa-

tion of the Montreal Protocol. MOP20 and COP8 will consider, *inter alia*, the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Ozone Research managers of the parties to the Vienna Convention, the status of the trust funds and of ratification, replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, disposal of ozone-depleting substances and essential-use and critical-use exemptions (<http://ozone.unep.org/highlights.shtml>).

In other ozone news, the Summary of the Fifty-fifth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund has been released. The report details the US\$36 million the Executive Committee approved for 169 projects and activities, including the over US\$16 million to fund 101 countries' initial plans to accelerate the phase out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons. In addition, the report discusses the Executive Committee's consideration of implementing and bilateral agencies' progress reports, the status of implementation of delayed projects and prospects of developing countries' achieving compliance with the Protocol's next control measures, and the implementation of 2007 business plans (<http://www.multilateral-fund.org/show/page/documents.htm>).

CHEMICALS AND WASTES

WORKSHOP ON PARTICIPATION IN THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION REVIEW COMMITTEE CONVENES

The Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) Regional Workshop for Effective Participation in the Work of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) convened in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 20-22 August 2008. The primary objectives of the workshop were to demonstrate and trial the draft handbook prepared by the POPRC intersessional working group, which seeks to build the capacity of all stakeholders in understanding the Stockholm Convention process for assessing candidate POPs. Workshop participants included National Focal Points and key stakeholders from

GRULAC and experts from Sweden and Mexico who prepared the handbook. The Fourth Meeting of the POPRC will convene in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13-17 October 2008 (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/Meetings/WorkshopforEffectiveParticipationinthePOPRC/tabid/406/mctl/ViewDetails/EventModID/1007/EventID/30/xmid/1400/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

UNEP CHEMICALS RELEASES MERCURY OEWG MEETING DOCUMENTS

UNEP Chemicals has released meeting documents for the Second Meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Mercury, scheduled to convene in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6-10 October 2008. Documents include: the annotated provisional agenda; a report on financial considerations and possible funding modalities for a legally binding instrument or voluntary arrangement on mercury; a report presenting the costs and benefits for each of the strategic objectives; and a report on progress in strengthening the Global Mercury Partnership (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/MERCURY/OEWG2/Documents.htm>).



Participants during the workshop (Photo courtesy of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat)

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

BASEL CONVENTION INVITES INTEREST IN COMPUTING EQUIPMENT WORKING GROUP

The Basel Convention has prepared a summary of requests directed at parties and other stakeholders, as contained in the decisions of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ba-

sel Convention, which met from 23-27 June 2008, in Bali, Indonesia. Among other invitations, the Secretariat of the Basel Convention has invited parties and other stakeholders, including manufacturers, recyclers, refurbishers, academia, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, to express interest in

participating in the working group on the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment. Interested individuals should contact Claudia Fenero (claudia.fenero@unep.ch) by 30 September 2008 (<http://www.basel.int/convention/rfc/rfcCOP9.doc>).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNGA CONSIDERS GENDER EQUALITY

UN member States considered System-wide Coherence in informal consultations at UN Headquarters on 8 September 2008. The consultations focused on the institutional dimensions of gender architecture reform at the UN, contained in the report of the Co-Chairs on System-wide Coherence and the Secretary-General's Options Paper on Gender Equality, with the goal of developing a General Assembly Framework Resolution on the five elements of System-wide Coherence (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/resolutions/swc030908.pdf>; <http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/eupdate/4413>).

UNEP CO-ORGANIZES CONFERENCE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT IN AFRICA, LAUNCHES PLAN TO PROTECT BEES AND BIRDS

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) organized the First Inter-

ministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Africa, from 26-29 August 2008, in Libreville, Gabon. At the conference, which sought to catalyze the reduction of environmental threats to health, health and environment experts and ministers from across Africa considered: policy actions to address current environmental risks to human health; climate change; new and emerging environmental threats to human health; tools and approaches for policy making in environmental management and public health; policy frameworks for addressing health and environmental impacts; health impact assessment; economic and development dimensions of environmental risk factors to human health; and international legislative and regulatory frameworks. The meeting closed with the adoption of the Libreville Declaration which, *inter alia*, calls on WHO and UNEP to establish a network for addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases (<http://www.iisd.ca/africa/hae/hae1/>; <http://www.unep.org/health-env/default.asp>).

In a bid to protect pollinators, which play a key role in crop production and biodiversity, UNEP has launched a five-year programme to disperse best management practices worldwide. Partially funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the US\$27 million project, "Conservation & Management of Pollinators for Sustainable Agriculture through an Ecosystem Approach," aims to develop local and national capacities to protect these species (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=543&ArticleID=5893&l=en>).



Ministers and Heads of Delegation in a group photo after the official opening of the ministerial segment

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DSD ENGAGES IN WATER WEEK AND EXPO

The UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), which serves as the Secretariat for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), has recently engaged in two water-related fora. The Water, Natural Resources and Small Island Development States (SIDS) Branch of DSD undertook, in 35 countries covering different regions, a country-level survey to follow-up the implementation of the CSD13 decisions on water and sanitation. The preliminary results were discussed in a Meeting

of Experts on 19 August 2008, and in a public seminar on 20 August 2008, during World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden (<http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>). In addition, the Division has helped staff the UN Water Pavilion at the Water Expo in Zaragoza, Spain, and has organized exhibits, panels, symposia and presentations for the event, which runs from 14 June-14 September 2008 (<http://www.zaragoza2008.com/>).



Logo courtesy of Expo Zaragoza 2008

The Policy Integration and Analysis Branch of DSD launched a new website dedicated to the Marrakech Process, which is contributing to the elaboration of a ten-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production, as called for by the Johannesburg Plan of Action. This website will serve as a portal for national governments, development agencies, and civil society to relevant sustainable consumption and production topics, developments and programmes of work (<http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES ANNOUNCES COP15 DATES, FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR TIMBER SPECIES PROJECTS

As announced by the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), its 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties will

be held from 16-28 January 2010, in Doha, Qatar (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2008/E056.pdf>).

The CITES Secretariat also announced that the European Commission has provided US\$120,000 to support the work of the parties on the implementation of the Action plan for *Cedrela odorata*,

Dalbergia retusa, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*. In order to share the available funding, the Secretariat invited parties to submit project proposals in line with the activities to be undertaken under the Action plan, by 10 November 2008 (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2008/E055.pdf>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

DUGONG AND IOSEA TURTLES MEETINGS HELD IN BALI

The meeting of Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the conservation and management of Dugongs and the fifth meeting of Signatory States to the MoU on Indian Ocean – South East Asian Marine Turtles (IOSEA), which are both agreements under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), convened from 19-23 August 2008, in Bali, Indonesia. During the Dugong meeting, participants summarized the conservation challenges and priorities in their countries, and agreed terms of reference for project funding. They welcomed new signatures by Comoros, Kenya and the Philippines, as well as the offer from Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi to provide full funding for the operations of the MoU, including the establishment of a secretariat to service the Dugong agreement (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/09_Sep/nw_010908_Dugong_Bali.htm).

The fifth meeting of the IOSEA Signatory States discussed the proposed Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles, and agreed that an IOSEA List of Sites should be developed to give recognition to a limited number of sites of critical ecological importance to marine turtles. An inter-sessional working group will be established to finalize the selection criteria, to enable signatories



Philippine Ambassador signing the Dugong Agreement in the presence of CMS Executive Secretary and CMS Senior Advisor

to nominate sites to an initial list to be agreed at the next meeting of the Signatory States. The meeting also agreed on the general terms of a letter to be directed to countries that have yet to contribute voluntary funding for the MoU's operations. Two workshops were incorporated into the meeting's programme: one on coastal development issues; and the other on fisheries-turtles interactions and mitigation options (http://www.ioseaturtles.org/feature_detail.php?id=263).

Finally, as announced by the CMS Secretariat, Gabon's accession to the CMS Gorilla Agreement will take effect on 1 November 2008, making it the sixth range State to join the Agreement (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/09_Sep/gabon_joins_gorilla.htm).

ACCORD CMS GORILLA



CMS GORILLA AGREEMENT
Logo courtesy of CMS

CBD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY



Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary

On 4 September 2008, Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), met with Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at the organization's headquarters in Paris, France. They discussed possible future collaboration within the context of the International Year of Biodiversity in



Koïchiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General

2010, including launching the Year at UNESCO headquarters and creating an exhibition on biodiversity. They agreed that the CBD and UNESCO would move forward with the drafting of a new memorandum of understanding (MoU), to update the MoU signed in 1998 and to be signed on the occasion of the next meeting of the CBD Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS), to be hosted by UNESCO in spring 2009 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2008/unesco-flash-108-2008-en.pdf>).

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to be celebrated on 11 September 2008, the CBD Secretariat has posted a CD containing related outreach material (<http://www.cbd.int/biosafety/anniversary/>).



Image courtesy of CBD

Finally, the CBD Secretariat has called for parties' nominations for the *ad hoc* technical expert group (AHTEG) on biodiversity and climate change, by 15 September 2008 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-091-cc-en.pdf>); for the group of legal and technical experts on concepts, terms, working definitions and sectoral approaches in the context of the international ABS regime, by 30 September 2008 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-104-abs-en.pdf>); and for the open-ended online forum on specific aspects of risk assessment through the Biosafety Clearing-House and the AHTEG on risk assessment and risk management, by 10 October 2008 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-110-bs-en.pdf>).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

AID EFFECTIVENESS FORUM CONCLUDES IN ACCRA

The Third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, was held in Accra, Ghana, from 2-4 September 2008. The Forum concluded with the adoption of the "Accra Action Agenda to Improve the Efficiency of Development Business," which was based on consultations and discussions among developing countries, OECD donors, and civil society organizations. The Declaration follows the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,



Participants during the Third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Photo courtesy of the Government of Ghana)

signed in 2005, and seeks to enhance aid predictability by: providing three to five year forward information on planned aid to developing countries; promoting the use of country systems within aid programmes; reducing conditionality;

and relaxing requirements related to the procurement of goods and services from donors within aid projects (<http://www.accrahlf.net/>).

In other World Bank news, global consultations for the development of a "Strategic Framework on Development and Climate Change for the World Bank Group" will continue receiving comments online until 15 September 2008. A final document will be submitted to the Development Committee during the IMF/World Bank Group Annual Meeting in October 2008 (<http://go.worldbank.org/PGEFG0GKW0>).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GEF MEETING DISCUSSES ACCESS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY; PROJECTS APPROVED FOR FISCAL REFORM, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND LAND DEGRADATION REVERSAL

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat met with Ministers from West African Countries on 25-26 August 2008, in Cotonou, Benin, to develop a regional programme for climate change and biodiversity that provides a more efficient use of resources from the GEF's Resource Allocation Framework. The proposed programme places a particular emphasis on improving access to energy under the climate change focal area. In her presentation to the meeting, GEF CEO Monique Barbut explained that priority projects will address: energy access for disadvantaged people and rural dwellers; development of mini-hydroelectric dams; development of micro-enterprises to provide

energy services; promotion of new and renewable energies; better use of biomass and solar power; and encouraging suitable and appropriate biofuels. Subject to confirmation by countries in the region, GEF funds in the range of US\$30-35 million would be earmarked under the proposed energy programme for West Africa, with expected co-financing in the range of US\$80-100 million (http://gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=22480).

In other GEF news, the GEF approved a project to assist Kyrgyzstan in initiating a process of environmental fiscal reform. The project, to be executed by the UN Development Programme, will support fiscal instruments for collecting, managing and allocating revenues from fines deriving from environmental degradation (http://gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=22386).

The World Bank approved an environmental management project on 4 September 2008, with an International Development Association (IDA) credit

of US\$15 million, to fund the expansion of municipal solid waste composting in up to 17 Ugandan towns and expansion of tree planting on denuded national forest lands. It will also support the National Environment Management Authority and assist in promulgation of important environmental laws and regulations related to the petroleum and gas sector in Uganda.

The Asian Development Bank and GEF have partnered to finance a land degradation and rural poverty eradication project in China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, with a US\$100 million loan, and a US\$4.55 million grant, respectively. The project will support sustainable livelihood programmes with the aim of reversing unsustainable land uses and boosting the incomes of over 46,000 rural households in the western regions of China, a region with some of the worst land degradation problems in the world (<http://www.adb.org/projects/project.asp?id=38660>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF CLI DISCUSSES FOREST FINANCING

A Country-Led Initiative (CLI) in support of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) is meeting from 8-12 September 2008, in Paramaribo, Suriname, to identify opportunities to significantly enhance financing for sustainable forest management. Delegates are expected to address experiences with mobilizing forest funding and generating revenues, identify existing and emerging public and private financing sources, and examine the relationship between forest financing and forest-related governance and enabling environments for investment. The event's output will feed into the deliberations of the UNFF *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Finance, which will meet from 10-14 November 2008, in Vienna, Austria, and the eighth session of the UNFF, which will convene in April 2009 (<http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/sdfms/>). A preparatory meeting for delegates to the CLI was held on 28 August 2008, at UN Headquarters in New York, US, where delegates were briefed by Suriname Ambassador Henry MacDonald on the CLI agenda (<http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/sdfms/>).

UNCCD's GNACADJA SPEAKS AT EXPOS; GM REGIONAL ADVISOR FOR SOUTH AMERICA HOSTED BY ECLAC

The Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Luc Gnacadja, has recent-

ly attended two Expos. On 27 August 2008, at Spain's Expo Zaragoza, which is organized under the theme "Water and Sustainable Development," Gnacadja participated in an event co-organized with the UN office to support the International Decade for Action "Water for Life," held at the UN Pavilion of the Expo, on the occasion of the day on "Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought." Gnacadja stressed the importance of sustainable and appropriate water resource management to reduce the impacts of desertification and recurrent droughts in the drylands.

At the 4-6 September 2008 Expo Forestal in Guadalajara, Mexico, which focused on Desertification and Climate Change and was organized by the Mexican National Forest Commission, Gnacadja presented the Convention's new ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention, and stressed that desertifi-

cation is a global challenge that requires global solutions (IISDRS sources).

In other UNCCD news, the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) announced, on 3 September 2008, that its Regional Advisor for South America is now hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/news/joint-gm-eclac-activities-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>). The GM participated in the July 2008 meeting of the Drynet network of civil society organizations, which was held in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting assessed Drynet's progress in strengthening national networks and mainstreaming UNCCD issues into development planning. Participants also participated in capacity building sessions (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/news/gm-joins-drynet-partners-in-south-africa-to-review-progress>). On 27 July 2008, the GM and the Minister of Natural Resources of Rwanda signed a cooperation agreement to provide technical and financial support to the Ministry of Natural Resources, for activities including the organization of stakeholder consultations and validation meetings at local and national levels, and the completion of Rwanda's National Action Programme (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/news/republic-of-rwanda-and-the-gm-sign-cooperation-agreement>).



Luc Gnacadja at Expo Zaragoza (Photo courtesy of UNCCD)

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

NEW RAMSAR SITES DESIGNATED

The Ramsar Secretariat has reported that the Government of Colombia has designated its fifth Wetland of International Importance, a high Andean site called Complejo de Humedales Laguna del Otún. Support for this site designation



Complejo de Humedales Laguna del Otún (Photo courtesy of Ramsar)

was provided by WWF International's Freshwater Programme, as a contribution to the Ramsar Regional Initiative on High Andean Wetlands (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_colombia_otun.htm). In addition, the Governments of Austria and Germany have registered the Austrian-Bavarian Wildalm as a Transboundary Ramsar Site, which comprises the existing Ramsar sites 'Bayerische Wildalm and Wildalmfilz' and 'Bayerische Wildalm.' (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_trs_wildalm.htm). In related news, the Secretariat has informed that the Government of Kenya has added two of its five Ramsar sites to the Montreux Record, the register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. The sites are Lake Baringo and Lake Naivasha (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm).

IMO EFFORTS LEAD TO MoU FOR WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES

The 13th General Assembly of Ministers of the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), which took place in Dakar, Senegal, on 30 July 2008, concluded with the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a Sub-regional Coastguard Network for the West and Central African sub-region, aimed at improving maritime safety, security and environmental protection. The MoU follows a feasibility study undertaken by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the IMO/MOWCA forum on the establishment of an integrated coast guard function network for West and Central African Countries, held in Dakar in October 2006. The MoU provides an institutional framework for, *inter alia*: addressing illegal fishing, oil theft, damage to gas pipelines and maritime accident response in the sub-region; and guidelines for enforcement of international conventions, regulations and codes - principally those of IMO and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9939).

UNDOALOS RELEASES REPORTS

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) has released the 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 Conserva-

tion and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (A/63/128) (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm#A/63/128); as well as the advance and unedited Addendum to the Report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/63/63). The Addendum provides an updated overview of developments relating to the implementation of UNCLOS and the work of the UN, its specialized agencies and other institutions in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea since the preparation of the report in March 2008. It is also addressed to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Secretary-General under article 319 for the information of States parties on issues of a general nature, relevant to States parties that have arisen with respect to the Convention" (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/documents/oceans_los_advance_unedited.pdf).

UNEP/GPA COORDINATION OFFICE RELOCATES TO NAIROBI

During the month of August, the UN Environment Programme/Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (UNEP/GPA) Coordination Office relocated from The Hague, the Netherlands, to Nairobi, Kenya. The move is aimed at consolidating and strengthening UNEP's marine and coastal programme overall, and will finalize the creation of the new Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Branch (IISDRS sources).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- Walter Lusigi, the **Global Environment Facility's (GEF) senior environment specialist**, recently retired. Lusigi was the focal point for Land Degradation activities at the GEF for over ten years. He contributed to the development of four GEF operational programmes on Arid Lands, Integrated Natural Resources Management, Agricultural Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Management (<http://www.gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=22058>).
- Mounkaila Goumandakoye was confirmed in August 2008 for the position of **Director of the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Regional Office for Africa (ROA)**. His previous experience has included positions with the UN Development Programme and as a member of Niger's delegation to the negotiating process for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (IISDRS Sources).



Mounkaila Goumandakoye

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **WORKSHOP ON FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE REGION:** 10-12 September 2008. Brno, Czech Republic. <http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/annexvfundraiser/menu.php>
- **FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS:** 15-19 September 2008. Antananarivo, Madagascar. <http://www.iisd.ca/cms/aewa-mop4/>
- **SIXTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON CHEMICAL SAFETY:** 15-19 September 2008. Dakar, Senegal. <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/ifcs6/>
- **GEF SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE PACIFIC SIDS:** 18-19 September 2008. Auckland, New Zealand. <http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=21630>