



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP GC25/GMEF TAKES DECISIONS ON MERCURY, IEG

Delegates to the 25th Session of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC25/GMEF), which met from 16-20 February 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya, adopted 17 decisions, including on: chemicals management including mercury; the world environment situation; international environmental governance; a significantly increased UNEP budget; and support to Africa in environmental management and protection, including on climate change.

In the decision taken on mercury, governments unanimously agreed to launch negotiations to elaborate a legally binding instrument on mercury, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, together with interim activities, to reduce risks to human health and the environment. An open-ended working group meeting will be convened in the second half of 2009, to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC). The INC will commence its work in 2010, with the goal of completing its work by GC27 in 2013. The decision also recognizes the mandate of the INC may be supplemented by further decisions of the GC.

On international environmental governance, delegates established a high-level group of developed and developing countries to identify options to improve the architecture of international environmental governance. In addition, ministers called on UNEP to convene a meeting to assess whether an “intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services” should be established (<http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/25unepgc/>).



L-R: Angela Cropper, UNEP Deputy Executive Director; and Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director

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GUEST ARTICLE

Climate Change and Migration: Reflections on Policy Needs

By Koko Warner, with Tamer Afifi, Olivia Dun and Marc Stal, UN University Section on Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability, and Adaptation

Overview

Environmental change, including climate change, presents a new situation for human mobility embedded in coupled social-ecological systems (Warner et al. 2008).

Continued on page 2

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

A GLOBAL GREEN NEW DEAL

(UNEP, January 2009) This report, authored by Edward Barbier, outlines a basic framework or blueprint for a Global Green New Deal (http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/docs/GGND_Final%20Report.pdf).

UNEP YEAR BOOK 2009

(UNEP, February 2009) This Year Book details progress on knowledge regarding global environmental change, environmental trends and issues on the horizon and points to the need for a low carbon economy (<http://www.unep.org/geo/yearbook/yb2009/>).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Climate change will visit urban and rural areas alike with increasingly frequent and violent hazard events. Flooding, intense storms or droughts, or more gradual but similarly intense changes in regional climates, place great stress on livelihood systems. Migration may be an adaptation mechanism for those with the resources to move early and far enough away from danger. Alternatively, in extreme cases and for those with fewer means to move, migration may be an expression of failed adaptation (IOM 2008, Renaud et al 2007, Afifi and Warner 2009, Gemenne and Dun 2008, Stojanov 2008).

While awareness of the complexity of the social challenges associated with global environmental change grows, so does the diversity and fragmentation of institutional arrangements to address them. Nonetheless, it is not clear whether the current governance systems suffice to address the many issues that environmentally-induced migration raises, or whether new governance modes are needed (Pierre and Peters 2005, Biermann 2007, Galaz et al. 2008).

It is therefore useful to discuss the implications of these global environmental and societal changes in the context of governance systems. Currently, many different international agreements, guiding principles, norms and institutions shape governance of

human mobility, but few have explicitly considered the interactions of ecosystems and human mobility (Brown 2008, Warner et al. 2008, Kolman-skogg 2008). In the current governance structure, country interests (especially that of industrialized countries) and the implicit system of reciprocity in international negotiations provides few incentives for active leadership in reshaping governance for human mobility and environmental change.

An opportunity and challenge for governance systems is to create policies and actions that flexibly address migration and environmental change, which in themselves are highly dynamic and nonlinear processes. This may mean a combination of approaches that have been shown effective in the past, including: improving education and training that facilitate access to alternative livelihoods in communities affected by environmental change; technical measures that complement better resource and land management; and enhancing access to other types of risk management tools such as risk sharing, risk transfer or insurance. Governance systems today have experience addressing these kinds of adaptation/development activities and can engage in such as “no regret” measures.

Some approaches that have not yet been widely explored are also a needed part of governance responses in the future (Warner and Laczko 2008b).

For example, migration and environment policies are currently rising separately on global agendas, but little has been done to link the two policy domains, either at the global, regional or national level. Adaptation and resilience are often discussed in terms of impacts on sectors, while what may be needed in the future is an understanding of adaptation and resilience that is much wider and holistic in scope (Pelling and High 2005, Few 2003, Paavola and Adjer 2006). Policy dialogue, especially at the national level, is needed to understand how climate change impacts affect livelihood potential.

A mix of approaches and actions is needed to confront human mobility coupled with global environmental change. Progress in the following five areas will help shape a new governance mode for the nuanced forms of human mobility and environmental change (Renaud et al. 2007): scientific basis, multi-level awareness and adaptation, improving legal frameworks, adequate humanitarian response, and strengthening institutions and policies.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle64.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.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

CO-CHAIRS REPORT ON STALLED UNGA IEG CONSULTATIONS

The Co-Chairs of the informal consultations of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on the institutional framework for the UN's environment work, Peter Maurer (Switzerland) and Claude Heller (Mexico), reported on 10 February 2009, at UN Headquarters in New York, US, that they had “found themselves in a situation, in which the attempt to move to a decision increased the difficulties in finding consensus.” They reported that discussions on international environmental governance (IEG) were at the point



L-R: Co-Chairs Claude Heller (Mexico) and Peter Maurer (Switzerland)

that opposing viewpoints on key issues meant that any “consensual document would likely fail to add value to existing decisions” or could fall behind decisions taken by UN Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Governing Council, and that the chance of reaching a substantive decision during the 63rd session of the UNGA is very small. On the debate regarding whether broad transformation of the system is needed, the Co-Chairs reiterate their support for “ambitious incrementalism.” Other unresolved issues noted by the Co-Chairs include financing, sustainable development, UNEP’s mandate, the role of the Environment Management Group (EMG), the need for coordination between or autonomy of multilateral environmental agreements, and capacity building (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/PDFs/IEGdraftresolution100209.pdf>, <http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/PDFs/ReportIEG100209.pdf>).

EMG HOLDS TECHNICAL MEETING

A technical meeting of the UN EMG convened immediately prior to UNEP GC25/GMEF, during which participants discussed possible support to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and recommendations on the modalities for a UN system-wide contribution to 2010 biodiversity targets. Participants identified the need for a joint process on inclusion of environmental and social safeguards for projects. In addition, a progress report on cooperation towards a climate neutral UN and sustainable procurement in the UN was provided. The recommendations from the meeting will be submitted by the Chair of the EMG and Executive Director of UNEP to Heads of agencies for their consideration (<http://www.unemg.org/MeetingsDocuments/EMGEvents/2009/tabid/711/Default.aspx>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

FROM CONFLICT TO PEACEBUILDING - THE ROLE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

(UNEP, 2009) This report highlights that: without a focus on the environment and natural resources, intrastate conflicts are likely to escalate; post-conflict and peacebuilding plans and activities need to account for linkages with the environment and natural resources; and natural resources can contribute to peace. The report emphasizes that: compared to non-resource related conflicts, conflicts linked to natural resources are twice as likely to relapse within the first five years; over 40% of intrastate conflicts are linked to natural resource issues; and climate change could generate new conflicts, as a consequence of water and food shortages (http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/pcdmb_policy_01.pdf).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

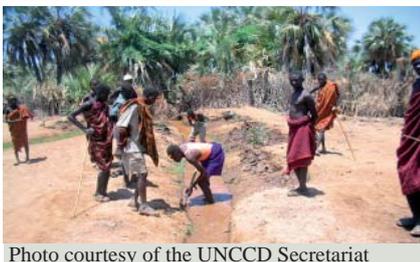


Photo courtesy of the UNCCD Secretariat

UNCCD SELECTS THEME FOR WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat has announced that the theme for World Day to Combat Desertification in 2009, which is celebrated annually on 17 June, will be "Conserving land and water = Securing our common future." The Secretariat has requested those who will be organizing events on this occasion to submit information about the activity, to be posted on the UNCCD website (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/june17/2009/menu.php>).

In other UNCCD news, the Secretariat has submitted to the fifth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA5) a proposal stressing the need to include in the UNFCCC negotiation agenda practical approaches, such as biochar-related (charcoal) mitigation, focusing on increased land productivity. The

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD17 IPM CONVENING

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD17) is convening from 23-27 February 2009, in New York, US, at UN Headquarters. Delegates are exchanging views on the CSD17 thematic cluster of issues, which are agriculture, Africa, desertification, drought, rural development and land. During her opening statement, Gerda Verburg, CSD17 Chair and Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands, suggested that CSD17 develop



CSD17 Chair
Gerda Verburg (the Netherlands)

a voluntary set of criteria for the sustainable production of biofuels. Delegates have also highlighted linkages between the thematic cluster and food security, climate change, and the financial crisis. On

the final day, a Chair's draft will be distributed, for delegates' use as they prepare to return to New York for the May 2009 CSD17 session (<http://www.iisd.ca/csd/ipm17/>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

RAMSAR ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA RECEIVE SWISS FUNDING

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced that the Government of Switzerland has agreed to provide financial resources for some of the Convention's activities in Africa for another year through the Swiss Grant for Africa. This year, the CHF 162,800 grant will allow

the Secretariat to support six projects in the continent with an activity in almost all of the six sub-regions. The projects will be carried out in countries and/or sub-regions that will illustrate the level of implementation or non-implementation of the Convention in relation to the national reports submitted for the 10th Conference of the Parties (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm).

submission notes that actions related to sustainable land management influence directly, through the soil component, the increased capture and sequestration of carbon and other greenhouse gases that mitigate global climate change. It emphasizes that the recognition of soil carbon as a greenhouse gas abatement technology can be optimally achieved with the utilization of biochar, including through inclusion of biochar in the Clean Development Mechanism, along with afforestation and reforestation that are already included (http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/AWGLCA5/UNCCD_2nd_submission_land_soils_and_UNFCCC_process_05Feb.pdf).

Finally, UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja and Mark Winslow, Dryland Science for Development Consortium, participated in a conference that gathered US scientists working on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) issues in Washington DC, US, on 26 February 2008. The meeting was co-organized by the UNCCD and Colorado State University, and assessed DLDD activities in the US and strategies for improved national-level assessment, monitoring and mitigation, and sought to develop a strategy for enhanced US contributions to the UNCCD process (IISD RS sources; http://newsinfo.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=news_item_display&news_item_id=340570513).

UNFF TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS ON FOREST FINANCE

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) will hold an informal consultation to further the work of the Open-ended *Ad Hoc* Expert Group to Develop Proposals for the Development of a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework. The consultation will be held from 12-13 March 2009, at the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy, prior to FAO's 19th meeting of the Committee on Forestry (COFO). The Expert Group had originally met in 2008 to discuss proposals on financing sustainable forest management, a principal agenda item for the UNFF's eighth session, which will convene from 20 April-1 May 2009, in New York, US (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/consultations-SFMfinance.html>).

In other UNFF news, the Secretariat has posted additional documents in preparation for UNFF8. These include discussion papers submitted by the Major Groups, and advance unedited reports on: achieving the four Global Objectives on Forests and the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests; forests and climate change; forest degradation and desertification; forests and biodiversity; and recommendations for forests in a changing environment (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

KYOTO PROTOCOL'S JOINT MECHANISM ACCREDITED FIRST THIRD PARTY VERIFIER

The Kyoto Protocol's joint implementation (JI) mechanism has accredited its first third party verifier, TÜV SÜD Industrie Service GmbH, whose job is to determine the acceptability of emission reduction projects and verify emission reductions achieved (http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/20091902_pr_jisc_milestone.pdf). In related news, the Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee held its 14th meeting from 17-18 February 2009, in Bonn, Germany. Matters addressed included: membership issues; election of the Chair (Derrick Odeson) and Vice-Chair (Vlad Trusca); the outcome of the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; the work plan; accreditation of independent entities; the management plan and resources for JI; and means to provide guidance to project entities and project developers regarding determinators (http://ji.unfccc.int/Sup_Committee/Meetings/014/Reports/Report.pdf).

In preparation for the seventh session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP7), scheduled to take place from 29 March-8 April 2009, in Bonn, Germany, the UNFCCC Secretariat has released the provisional agenda and annotations for the meeting (FCCC/KP/AWG/2009/1) (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/>

[awg7/eng/01.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awg7/eng/01.pdf)). The Secretariat has also released the scenario note on the session prepared by the AWG Chair. The note, which complements the information contained in the provisional agenda and annotations, aims to share the Chair's views with parties and help them prepare for the session (FCCC/KP/AWG/2009/2) (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awg7/eng/02.pdf>).

IPCC RELEASES DOCUMENTS

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Secretariat has released the provisional agenda programme and budget and matters relating to the UNFCCC ahead of the 30th plenary session, which will take place in Antalya, Turkey, from 21-23 April 2009 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>).

The IPCC Secretariat has also announced that it is organizing a scoping meeting for its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) from 13-17 July 2009, in Venice, Italy. The scoping meeting will result in a scoping paper describing the objectives and an annotated outline of AR5 and its Working Group contributions, as well as the process and timeline for its preparation, within the overall timeframe decided by the Panel. The draft scoping paper will be circulated for comments to organizations and will then be submitted for consideration and approval to the sessions of the three IPCC Working Groups and the 31st Session of the IPCC, scheduled to be held in November 2009 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>).



Participants at the Workshop on Preparation of Ozone Regulations (photo courtesy of UNEP DTIE)

MEETINGS CONSIDER MONTREAL PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION

On 4-5 February 2009, representatives of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol met with officials in Myanmar to discuss implementation of the Montreal Protocol and ratification of key amendments to the Protocol. A workshop on policy and regulations related to the Montreal Protocol also took place (<http://www.unepie.org/ozonaction/information/gallery/Myanmar/album/index.html>; http://www.unepie.org/ozonaction/archive_features.htm).

In other ozone news, consultations on a policy and enforcement strategy for the phase-out of ozone depleting substances in India were held from 12-13 February 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand (<http://www.unepie.org/ozonaction/events/index.htm>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



L-R: Worku Damena Yifru, CBD Secretariat; Co-Chair René Lefeber (the Netherlands); Co-Chair Jimena Nieto (Colombia); and Manoela de Miranda, CBD Secretariat

MEETING ON LIABILITY AND REDRESS UNDER THE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL CONVENING

The First Meeting of the Friends of the Co-Chairs on Liability and Redress under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is being held from 23-27 February 2009, in Mexico City, Mexico. Par-

ticipants at the meeting are continuing their negotiation of international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms, on the basis of the outcomes of the deliberations of the Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress and the decisions of the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/bs-gflr/>).

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has launched an online discussion forum on Article 10(c), guided by the framing question: How can parties to the Convention ensure that obligations arising from Article 10(c), to protect and encourage the customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements, are further advanced and

implemented as a priority? The forum is being held from 11 February to 11 March 2009 (<http://www.cbd.int/tk/forum/>).

In other CBD-related news, an expert workshop on the development of the City Biodiversity Index was held from 10-12 February 2009, in Singapore. The workshop aimed at developing a City Biodiversity Index to: assist national governments and local authorities in benchmarking biodiversity conservation efforts in the urban context; help evaluate progress in reducing the rate of biodiversity loss in urban ecosystems; help measure the ecological footprint of cities; and serve as material on the development of guidelines for the preparation of a cities and biodiversity plan of action for the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EWDCBI-01>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES COP 15 POSTPONED

The Government of Qatar has informed the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that it is no longer able to host the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in January 2010. The Secretariat is in discussions with the Government of Qatar to find new dates for the meeting (http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sundry/2009/cop15_postponed.shtml).

In other CITES news, a workshop on wildlife e-trade and cyber-crime is being organized by the CITES Secretariat and Environment Canada, from 24-26 February 2009, in Vancouver, Canada. The workshop is addressing the way in which wildlife and wildlife products are advertised via the Internet, as well as

wildlife-related cyber-crimes that take place via email and the use of specialized "chat rooms" where collectors may arrange sales of protected species (http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press_release.shtml; <http://www.cites.org/common/docs/misc/E-Internet%20trade.pdf>).

CMS-RELATED SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW STEERING GROUP MEETS

A meeting of the Slender-billed Curlew Steering Group was held on 10 February 2009, in Bonn, Germany, in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding on the species developed under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The purpose of the meeting was to plan further action on finding and preserving the Slender-billed Curlew, an endangered

species protected under both the CMS and African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, and for which no confirmed records have been reported in nearly a decade. Discussions focused on reaching agreement on the Slender-billed Curlew Working Group's work plan until 2012 (http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2009/slender_billed_curlew_meeting_bonn_10feb2009.htm).



Participants during the meeting (photo courtesy of Florian Keil (UNEP/AEWA))

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

WORLD BANK APPROVES ENVIRONMENTAL LOAN, SEEKS FEEDBACK ON STRATEGY

The World Bank approved a US\$330 million loan to Peru, on 17 February 2009, to strengthen the new Ministry of the Environment and improve environmental management in key sectors of the Peruvian economy, including mining, urban transport, fisheries and biodiversity conservation. The new Ministry of Environment commenced operations in December 2007, in light of the ratification of the Free Trade Agreement between Peru and the US, which creates benchmarks for environmental regulations in Peru. The World Bank's programmatic loan is the first in a series of three that will fund institutional reforms and policies in five key areas: improved environmental management, including supporting the strengthening of the Ministry of the Environment; fuel and transport sector reform to improve air quality; biodiversity conservation; sustainable environmental management in the mining sector and sustainable development of the fisheries sector. The US\$330 million loan includes a LIBOR rate plus a 0.75 percent fixed margin to

be repaid in 21.5 years and a grace period of 13.5 years (<http://go.worldbank.org/SR5VZXU0V0>).

In other Bank news, the World Bank's South Asia region is in the process of seeking feedback on the document "Towards a Climate Change Strategy for South Asia," which will articulate the guiding principles for the Bank's climate-related work in the region. A consultation process will be held from 1 February-31 March 2009 (<http://go.worldbank.org/DEOKW48F50>).

In related news, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) Board of Directors is currently reviewing an update to its Energy Policy, a document that guides the Bank's operations in the energy sector. The draft policy has been finalized incorporating views received from both internal and external stakeholders and will align ADB's energy operations to meet energy security needs, facilitate a transition to a low-carbon economy, and achieve the Bank's vision of a region free of poverty. ADB expects the Board of Directors to adopt the updated energy policy in March 2009 (<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Energy-Policy/W-Paper-Energy-Policy.pdf>).

GEF FOCAL POINTS PARTICIPATE IN SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP

The Sub-Regional Workshop for Global Environment Facility (GEF) Focal Points for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) took place from 11-13 February 2009, in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The meeting gathered 24 GEF Focal Point participants from 16 countries, together with representatives of the GEF. Issues addressed during the meeting included the GEF5 replenishment, technology transfer, and follow-up and evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). An update on funding under the resource allocation framework (RAF), the status of the Adaptation Fund and co-financing strategies were also addressed, as well as several case-studies from the region addressing national communications and specific projects. Tools and resources available to support focal points, including tools to monitor and track portfolios, also were presented (http://www.gefcountrysupport.org/report_detail.cfm?projectId=138).



Image courtesy of GEF

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **Regional Training Workshop on PCBs and POPs Wastes:** 2-5 March 2009. Lima, Peru. <http://chm.pops.int/LinkClick.aspx?link=494&tabid=276&language=en-US>
- **13th Session of the International Maritime Organization's Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases:** 2-6 March 2009. London, UK. http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D24150/1.pdf
- **28th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries:** 2-6 March 2009. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/about/cofi/meetings>
- **19th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO):** 16-20 March 2009. Rome, Italy. <http://www.iisd.ca/fao/cof19/>