



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF8 ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON FORESTS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, DEFERS FINANCING DECISION UNTIL UNFF9



L-R: Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF Secretariat, presented UNFF8 Chair Boen M. Purnama (Indonesia) with a plaque of appreciation

The eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF8) was held from 20 April-1 May 2009, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. Over 600 participants attended the two-week session, to address: forests in a changing environment, including forests and climate change, reversing the loss of forest cover and degradation, and forests and biodiversity conservation; and means of implementation for sustainable forest management (SFM). After an all-night session on the last day of the session, delegates adopted a resolution on forests in a changing environment, enhanced co-operation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, and regional and subregional inputs. Delegates did not agree on a decision on financing for SFM. The principle contention from the outset were the disparate views of developing countries and donor countries: the G-77/China favored the establishment of a global forest fund as soon as possible; and JUSCANZ and the EU preferred to establish a facilitative process to, *inter alia*, enable easier access to current funding and create enabling conditions for private sector and other investment. Delegates almost reached agreement on setting up a process to consider recommendations on the establishment of the fund, but attempts to find compromise text did not result in a reconciliation of the needs of both donor and recipient countries. The Forum decided to forward bracketed negotiating text to its next session (<http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff8>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Securing a Place for Agriculture at the International Climate Change Negotiations

By Gerald Nelson, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

Abstract

If fundamental climate change mitigation and adaptation goals are to be met, international climate negotiations must include agriculture. Agriculture and climate change are linked in three important ways:

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

CROP PROSPECTS AND FOOD SITUATION

(FAO, April 2009) The April 2009 issue of Crop Prospects and Food Situation, published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), reports that high food prices continue in developing countries even though there has been a sharp decline in international food prices. According to FAO, food emergencies or risk of food insecurity persist in 31 countries, despite the harvest results for 2008 cereal crops (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/ai481e/ai481e00.htm>).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

climate change will have large effects on agriculture; agriculture can help mitigate climate change; and poor farmers will need help adapting to climate change. In advance of the 15th session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009, IFPRI suggests several critical negotiating outcomes under these three points that will support climate change goals, while enhancing the well-being of people who manage and depend on agriculture, especially in the developing world.

Increase funding for research on the interactions between climate change and agriculture: Research should be funded that improves understanding and predictions of the interactions between climate change and agriculture. Climate change assessment tools are needed that are more geographically precise, more useful for agricultural policy and programme review and scenario assessment, more explicitly incorporate the biophysical constraints that affect agricultural productivity, and better integrate biophysical and socioeconomic scenarios.

Allow funding mechanisms that recognize the connection between pro-poor development policies for sustainable growth and sound climate change policies: A policy environment that enhances economic opportunities for smallholders will also be good for climate change adaptation. Such an environment would include more investment in agricultural research and extension, rural infrastructure, and access to markets for small farmers.

Provide funds for agricultural science and technology: It is urgent to pursue crop and livestock research, including biotechnology, to help overcome stresses related to climate change such as heat, drought, and new pathogens. Crops and livestock are needed that respond reasonably well in a range of production environments rather than extremely well in a narrow set of climate conditions. Research is also need-

ed on how dietary changes in food animals can reduce methane emissions.

Provide funds for infrastructure and institutional innovations: Improvements in water productivity are critical, and climate change, by making rainfall more variable and changing its spatial distribution, will exacerbate the need for better water harvesting, storage, and management. Equally important is supporting innovative institutional mechanisms that give agricultural water users incentives to conserve.

Provide funds for data collection on the local context of agriculture: Understanding agriculture-climate interactions well enough to support adaptation and mitigation activities based on land use requires major improvements in data collection and provision.

Fund cost-effective mitigation in agriculture and research on promising technologies and management systems: Agriculture has huge potential to cost-effectively mitigate greenhouse gases (GHGs) through changes in agricultural technologies and management practices. Changing crop mixes to include more plants that are perennial or have deep root systems, as well as shifting land use to pasture and agroforestry, increases the amount of carbon stored in the soil. Cultivation systems that leave residues and reduce tillage, especially deep tillage, encourage the buildup of soil carbon. Changes in crop genetics and the management of irrigation, fertilizer use, and soils can reduce both nitrous oxide and methane emissions.

Fund low-cost systems for monitoring agricultural mitigation: Promising technologies exist for reducing the costs of tracking the performance of agricultural mitigation programmes.

Allow innovative payment mechanisms and support for novel institutions for agricultural mitigation: Agricultural production differs qualitatively from other sources of GHGs because the sources are individually small, geographically dispersed, and

often served by inadequate physical and institutional infrastructure. Beyond the traditional schemes developed under the Kyoto Protocol, the negotiating outcome should allow and encourage cost-effective payment mechanisms that take advantage of these differences, exploiting activities beyond project-specific funding.

Allow funding mechanisms that recognize and support synergies between adaptation and mitigation: Many changes to agricultural management systems that increase their resilience to climate change also increase carbon sequestration. For example, conservation tillage improves soil water retention in the face of drought while also sequestering carbon below ground, and small-scale irrigation facilities both conserve water and increase crop productivity and soil carbon.

Based on the brief available at: http://www.ifpri.org/2020/focus/focus16/Focus16_01.pdf



Image courtesy of IFPRI

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle69.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.

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD CALLS FOR COMMENTS ON DRAFT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR FUNDING CSOs

In accordance with decision 3/COP.8 and the relevant recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UN-

CCD) Secretariat has developed "Draft Eligibility Criteria for funding the participation of Civil Society Organizations in UNCCD processes and events," for consideration by the ninth Conference of the Parties (COP9). The Secretariat is now encouraging all accredited civil

society organizations (CSOs) to the UNCCD COP to submit the completed questionnaire on "Enhancing the participation of CSOs in UNCCD processes and events," to the Secretariat by 31 May 2009 (<http://www.unccd.int/ngo/menu.php#participation>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

FOOD AID INFORMATION SYSTEM

(WFP, April 2009) The World Food Programme (WFP), with the support of the European Commission and the Government of Canada, has launched a database on Food Aid Information System (FAIS), which contains data on food aid flows and was developed to strengthen the coordinated international response to food aid shortages (<http://www.wfp.org/faiss/>).

GLOBAL FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

(IMF, April 2009) This report highlights policies that may mitigate systemic risks that led to the financial crisis, thereby contributing to financial stability and sustained economic growth. In the current crisis, the report traces the sources and channels of financial distress and provides policy advice on mitigating its effects on economic activity (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/2009/01/index.htm>).

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD17 BEGINS NEGOTIATIONS ON POLICY OPTIONS RELATED TO THEMATIC CLUSTER

The 17th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD17), which is taking place from 4-15 May 2009, at UN Headquarters in New York, US, is focusing on the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. In addition to negotiating policy options related to the thematic cluster of issues, CSD17 delegates will participate in several additional discussions, many of which CSD17 Chair Gerda Verburg (the Netherlands) described in an information note to participants. The note highlights that: on 12 May, there will be a dialogue of ministers with major groups and the UN system on implementing sustainable development in the morning, and

a dialogue of ministers with the policy research community and the UN system in the afternoon; on 13 May, the High-level Segment will begin, during which Ministerial Roundtables will focus on responding to the food crisis through sustainable development, realizing a sustainable green revolution in Africa, and integrated management of land and water resources for sustainable agriculture and rural development; and on 13 and 14 May, Heads of UN agencies, chairs of Executive Boards/Governing Councils of UN agencies, and ministers will conduct closed, informal discussions. The results from the Ministerial Roundtables will be collated in a Ministerial Vision Statement (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/csd-17/INFORMATION_NOTE_FROM_CHAIRPERSON.pdf; <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd17/>).



A view of the dais during the CSD17 opening ceremony

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GEF-STAP ADDRESSES GEF'S ROLE IN REDD

The Global Environment Facility's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (GEF-STAP) met to review GEF implementation science and the emerging strategies for the fifth GEF Replenishment (GEF-5). The meeting, held in Rome, Italy, from 28-30 April 2009, addressed GEF-5 draft strategies and the role of the GEF within sustainable forest management, land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF), and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing

countries (REDD) issues, including the potential for actions towards ecosystem restoration and recarbonization using an ecosystems approach. Other topics addressed included oceans and overfishing, biofuels and biodiversity, improved chemicals management and new and cross-cutting focal area objectives for consideration in GEF-5 and beyond. The meeting also provided an opportunity for GEF Agencies to provide expert advice to the Panel within a set of priorities relevant to the development of GEF-5 strategies (<http://stapgef.unep.org/activities/stapmeetings/April2009>).

In other GEF-related news, the GEF is organizing a photographic contest, with photos invited in the following categories: people and environment; wildlife; and climate change. The deadline for submissions is 1 June 2009 (http://www.gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=24708).

ADB ISSUES REPORT ON COSTS OF CLIMATE INACTION, HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING IN BALI

A new report was released on the occasion of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) 42nd Annual Meeting, held from 2-5 May 2009, in Bali, Indonesia, highlighting the soaring costs that Southeast Asia will face if climate change action delayed. The report, titled "The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review," notes that business as usual could cause, in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, combined damages equivalent to more than 6% of those countries' gross domestic products per year by the end of this century, dwarfing the costs of the current financial crisis (<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Economics-Climate-Change-SEA>).



Delegates during the GEF-STAP meeting

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

WORKSHOP ON INCREASING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE CONVENES

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Technical Workshop on Increasing Economic Resilience to Climate Change and Reducing Reliance on Vulnerable Economic Sectors through Economic Diversification took place from 28-30 April 2009, in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop was convened under the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP). The event was organized in response to a request by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to the UNFCCC Secretariat to hold such a technical workshop, before the 30th session of SBSTA, with a view to promoting understanding and the development and dissemination of measures, methodologies and tools for increasing economic resilience, including the understanding of social aspects. Key messages from the workshop included: the importance of fostering enabling environments; the need for knowledge and information sharing; the significance of social and cultural aspects; and the need to integrate climate change into planning across all sectors and levels (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/wnwpc/>).

In other news, the UNFCCC Secretariat has released the provisional agenda for the following upcoming sessions of the climate change talks, which will take place in Bonn, Germany: 30th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 30), 1-10 June 2009; 30th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 30), 1-10 June 2009; eighth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 8), 1-12 June 2009; and sixth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 6), 1-12 June 2009 (http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/sb30/application/pdf/090422_prov_agenda_sb30.pdf).

The UNFCCC Secretariat has received a number of submissions from parties, dating from 7 April, on negotiating text for consideration at AWG-LCA 6. Eleven submissions (FCCC/SBI/2009/MISC.4) from parties have also been posted concerning views on the areas of focus set out in section IV of the terms of reference for the review and assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 1(c) and 5, of the Convention (development and transfer of technologies), contained in the annex to document FCCC/SBI/2008/L.28, as agreed at the 29th session of the SBI

(<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/sbi/eng/misc04.pdf>).

The UNFCCC Secretariat has released the report of the individual review of the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory submissions of a number of countries submitted in 2007 and 2008 including Denmark (FCCC/ARR/2008/DNK), Japan (FCCC/AAR/2008/JPN), Spain (FCCC/ARR/2008/ESP), Poland (FCCC/ARR/2008/POL), the European Community (EC) (FCCC/ARR/2008/EC), and Switzerland (FCCC/ARR/2008/CHE) (http://unfccc.int/national_reports/annex_i_ghg_inventories/national_inventories_submissions/items/4771.php). The report on the 15th meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) (FCCC/SBI/2009/6), which convened in Cotonou, Benin, from 3-5 March 2009, has also been posted (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/sbi/eng/06.pdf>).

Finally, the UNFCCC Secretariat has received updates to Action Pledges under the NWP from: Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA) (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/application/pdf/update_april_09.pdf); the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/fao_pledge_7.pdf); the Institute of Development Studies (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/ids_update_apr09.pdf); Practical Action (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/progress_report_april_09.pdf); SysTem for Analysis, Research and Training (START) (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/start-nwp-booklet_2007_final.pdf); the World Health Organization (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/who_action_pledge_28oct08.pdf); and the World Meteorological Organization (http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/application/pdf/wmo_update_april_09.pdf).

IPCC DISCUSSES FIFTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

The 30th session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was held from 21-23 April 2009, in Antalya, Turkey, with approximately 320 participants in attendance. During the meeting, the Panel focused mainly on the scoping process for the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), with a view to providing guidance to the climate change experts who will define the outline of the Assessment during the AR5 scoping meeting to be held in Venice, Italy,



Rajendra Pachauri, IPCC Chair, welcomes delegates to the Thirtieth Session of the IPCC

from 13-17 July 2009. For this purpose, the Panel adopted a number of proposals on the near-term future of the IPCC and the scoping of the AR5. The Panel also decided to proceed with the preparation of a Special Report on managing the risks of extreme events and disasters, and agreed to hold a number of expert meetings on topics such as human settlements, and the detection and attribution of anthropogenic climate change. Other issues included the revised rules of procedure for the election of the IPCC Bureau and the Task Force Bureau, work on new scenarios and the IPCC Peace Prize Scholarship Fund. Most of the meeting outcomes will serve as guidance for the AR5 scoping meeting, while others will be taken up at the next session of the IPCC, to be held from 26-28 October 2009, in Bali, Indonesia (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc30/>).

MONTREAL PROTOCOL TRUST FUND FINANCIAL REPORT RELEASED AND AMENDMENT PROPOSED

The Ozone Secretariat has released the indicative financial report on the Trust Fund for the Montreal Protocol pursuant to decision XX/20 of the 20th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol. The report outlines the expenditures as compared to the approved budget of the Trust Fund for the Montreal Protocol and the status of contributions as at 31 March 2009 (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/29oewg/OEWG-29-INF-1E.pdf).

In other Montreal Protocol news, a joint proposal has been submitted by the Federated States of Micronesia and Mauritius to amend the Montreal Protocol. The amendment proposes to regulate and phase-down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) with a high global warming potential and to promote the destruction of banks of ozone-depleting substances. According to the submission, these proposals will strengthen the Montreal Protocol to provide fast-action climate change mitigation several times greater than the emission reductions sought during the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/29oewg/OEWG-29-8E.pdf).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

UNDOALOS RELEASES DOCUMENTS

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) has released a document on the format and annotated provisional agenda for the tenth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP) (A/AC.259/L.10). The agenda was developed by the co-chairs, Paul Badji (Senegal) and Don MacKay (New Zealand), on the basis of consultations with delegations and input from an informal preparatory meeting held at UN Headquarters in New York, US, on 25 March 2009. The areas of concentration for the discussion panel on the topic "Implementation of the outcomes of the Consultative Process, including a review of its achievements and shortcomings in its first nine meetings," are presented in an annex and are intended to identify important issues that the discussion panel may wish to consider (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/AC.259/L.10>).

UNDOALOS has also released the annual report of the UN Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/64/66), which provides background information on the topic of focus of the tenth meeting of the ICP. The report contains information on the establishment of the ICP and an overview of its functioning, including summaries of the outcomes of its meetings and how those outcomes have generally been incorporated in the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and what subsequent major actions have been taken. It also summarizes the views that have been expressed on the achievements and shortcomings of the Consultative Process at its meetings and in the contributions to the report (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm#a/64/66).

Finally, UNDOALOS has released the report of the eighth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement), which took place in New York, US, from 16-19 March 2009 (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/fishstocksmeetings/icsp8report.pdf).

WORLD'S LARGEST RAMSAR SITE DESIGNATED, TRAINING SEMINAR CONVENED

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced that the paperwork has been completed for the rainforest wetland called "Ngiri-Tumba-Maindombe," which was designated by the Democratic Republic of Congo, effective 24 July 2008, and becomes the world's largest Wetland of International Importance (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.drcongo_largest.htm).

In other Ramsar news, the Secretariat has organized, jointly with the UN



Ngiri-Tumba-Maindombe wetland (photos courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)



Environment Programme, the Franco-Phone Institute for Energy and the Environment, and the African Institute for Environmental Law, the first training seminar in environmental law exclusively for magistrates of Francophone Africa, from 27-30 April 2009, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The training seminar sought to provide participants with legal means to protect the environment and knowledge in environmental law, to allow them to assist their nations to better comply with their obligations for multilateral environmental agreements to which they are parties. The seminar brought together 35 magistrates practicing in various tribunals and courts of appeal in West and Central African countries (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.cotedivoire_law2009.htm).

UNEP/GPA LAUNCHES GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

On 6 May 2009, on the sidelines of CSD17, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Coordination Office for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), in conjunction with the Governments of the US and the Netherlands, launched a new Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM). At the launch, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, which will provide the Secretariat for the GPNM, described the proposed web-based platform, which is designed to provide information, tools and training opportunities from all GEF nutrients-related projects, as well as those from other partners. The platform will also bring together reports and overviews on nutrients from around the world, enabling the GPNM to produce nutrient source-impact guidelines that integrate policy messages and available management tools (IISDRS Sources).

► INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP HOSTS BUSINESS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUMMIT

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), in cooperation with UN Global Compact, hosted the Business for the Environment (B4E) summit, which took place from 22-23 April 2009, in Paris, France. Over 400 delegates attended the meeting and underscored that agreement on a new climate regime is crucial, with recovery from the current economic turmoil requiring investments in clean technologies and sustainable infrastructure systems. The major outcome from the B4E summit was a manifesto that emphasized the

need for increased transparency and a new risk paradigm that takes into account extra-financial issues in the realms of environment and governance (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=579&ArticleID=6138&l=en>).

UN LAUNCHES "SEAL THE DEAL!" CAMPAIGN

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched a worldwide climate change campaign under the slogan "Seal the Deal!" The campaign seeks to galvanize political will and public support towards signing a new UN agree-



Photo courtesy of UNEP

ment on climate change at the UNFCCC conference scheduled to take place this December in Copenhagen,

Denmark. At the launch event, Ban called for the EU's continued support on that matter, and José Manuel Barroso, European Commission President, indicated that sealing the deal was the EU's priority (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=579&ArticleID=6143&l=en>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE CONCLUDES

The 24th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 20-24 April 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland. The AC heard reports from intersessional working groups and issued recommendations on issues including: sharks and stingrays; non-detriment findings (NDFs); sea cucumber fisheries; the review of significant trade (RST); and periodic review of the appendices (<http://www.iisd.ca/cites/ac24/>). The working group reports of the AC meeting have been posted to the CITES website at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/24/wg/index.shtml>.

In other CITES-related news, a new version of the *Introduction to CITES for Customs* on CD-Rom has been launched, including new materials and taking account of decisions and resolutions adopted at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. Copies of the CD-Rom are provided by the Secretariat on request (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2009/E018.pdf>).

CBD SECRETARIAT WELCOMES SYRACUSE CHARTER ON BIODIVERSITY

On the occasion of the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting Opening Working Session on Biodiversity, held on 23 April 2009, in Syracuse, Italy, Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), stressed that the Syracuse Charter on Biodiversity provides an outline for the way ahead in addressing unprecedented biodiversity challenges. He underscored the interlinkages between climate change, biodiversity, forests and

sustainable development, and drew attention to the upcoming International Year of Biodiversity 2010 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/speech/2009/sp-2009-04-23-g8-en.pdf>).

In a communiqué issued by the CBD Secretariat following the conclusion of the G8 Environment Ministers meeting, Djoghla notes the Charter marks a new era in the environmental dialogue of the G8 and their partners, adding that their commitment to work together for the completion of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing by 2010 and finalize a post-2010 biodiversity strategy should be applauded (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2009/pr-2009-04-23-g8-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/g8/g8-2009-04-23-chair-summary-en.pdf>).

In related news, the Global Environment Facility has recently approved Phase III of a medium-sized project to fund the preparation of the fourth national report. This phase can support a total of 40 countries, with up to US\$20,000 for each country (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2009/ntf-2009-043-nr4-en.pdf>).

The CBD Secretariat has posted the electronic versions of the promotional material related to this year's celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity under the theme "Invasive Alien Species," to be celebrated on 22 May 2009, at: <http://www.cbd.int/idb/2009/>.

CMS HOLDS WORKSHOP ON THE SAKER FALCON

A workshop convened from 5-7 April 2009, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), to discuss the principles of sustainable use and management of the Saker Falcon, as

well as its population status, threats and conservation measures through captive breeding, artificial nests, reintroduction and satellite tracking. Participants agreed that conservation activities should be implemented under the umbrella of the existing CMS agreement on birds of prey (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2009/04_apr_09/nw_300409_saker_falcon.htm).

BIODIVERSITY SECRETARIATS AND UNEP-WCMC CONTRIBUTE TO WORKSHOP ON HARMONIZATION OF REPORTING

Held from 15-17 April 2009, in Hanoi, Viet Nam, a workshop on harmonization of reporting to biodiversity-related conventions gathered representatives of seven Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and Australia. Its goal was to provide a venue to develop a framework to harmonize national reporting to the CBD, CITES, CMS, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the World Heritage Convention. A strong focus was put on building the capacity of ASEAN countries to improve and streamline national reporting as an output of implementation of global conventions. The workshop was led by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, in partnership with the Vietnam Environment Administration and with the support of the UN Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and the biodiversity-related convention secretariats (http://www.aseanbiodiversity.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=322:asean-member-states-to-streamline-reporting-to-global-environmental-agreements&catid=65:ac-news&Itemid=92).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION COP4 CONSIDERS NEW CHEMICALS

The fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is convening in Geneva, Switzerland, from 4-8 May 2009. Over 800 delegates including ministers and officials from 150 governments are attending the meeting, and for the first time parties are considering adding new chemicals to the Conven-

tion. Nine new chemicals are proposed for listing: commercial pentabromodiphenyl ether (c-pentaBDE), chlordecone, hexabromobiphenyl (HBB), lindane, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), alpha hexachlorocyclohexane (alphaHCH), beta hexachlorocyclohexane (betaHCH), pentachlorobenzene (PeCB) and commercial octabromodiphenyl ether (c-octaBDE). As of Tuesday afternoon, delegates had asked the Secretariat to draft decisions on listing all chemicals with the exception of PFOS,

c-octaBDE and c-pentaBDE. These chemicals were referred to a contact group for further discussion. Also on Tuesday, delegates agreed to forward the recommendation of the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group on Cooperation among the Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions to the high-level segment for adoption (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/Pressrelease/COP4Geneva4May2009/tabid/509/language/en-US/Default.aspx>; <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pops/cop3/>).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **Second International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2):** 11-15 May 2009. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/iccm2/>
- **40th Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee:** 11-15 May 2009. Gland, Switzerland. <http://www.ramsar.org/meetings.htm>