



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

UNICPOLOS-7 ADDRESSES ECOSYSTEM APPROACHES AND OCEANS

The seventh meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (12-16 June 2006, UN Headquarters, New York) brought together over 400 representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. During the week-long conference, delegates convened in plenary sessions to: exchange views on areas of concern and actions needed; discuss cooperation and coordination on ocean issues; and identify issues that could benefit from attention in future work of the General Assembly. A discussion panel was held to consider ecosystem approaches and oceans. The outcome of the meeting includes a report containing elements agreed by consensus on ecosystem approaches and oceans, which will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its 61st session under the agenda item "Oceans and the law of the sea" (<http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/icp7/>).



UNICPOLOS-7 Co-Chairs Cristían Maquieira, Chile, and Lori Ridgeway, Canada, review draft text with Friends of the Co-Chairs group Chair Renée Sauv , Canada

In addition to coordinating the UNICPOLOS-7 meeting, the UN Division on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has released the advance and unedited draft report of the Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (22-26 May 2006, New York, NY) (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/reviewconf/reviewconferencedraftreport.pdf). The Division also released the Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/commission_documents.htm#Statements%20by%20the%20Chairman%20of%20the%20Commission).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

MEETING THE COMMITMENTS ON OCEANS, COASTS, AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES MADE AT THE 2002 WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

(Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, 2006) This report provides a synthesis of available information on progress and obstacles faced in the implementation of the WSSD/MDG and other related agreements' targets on oceans, coasts and SIDS (<http://www.globaloceans.org/globalconferences/2006/pdf/WSSDReport.pdf>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Options for harmonizing national reporting to biodiversity-related agreements

By Peter Herkenrath, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Abstract

Most multilateral environmental agreements require Parties to report at regular intervals on the measures they have taken to implement the agreement. National reporting serves a number of purposes: it demonstrates Parties' compliance with the agreement, allows for an overview of the status and effectiveness of implementation, supports the identification of priorities, enables decision-making, and facilitates the identification of interactions with other processes.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY IN DEEP WATERS AND HIGH SEAS

(UNEP/IUCN, 2006) This UNEP Regional Seas report reviews facts and options for the conservation and sustainable use of marine habitats and life forms in deep waters and the open ocean, with a special focus on areas beyond national jurisdiction (http://www.unep.org/pdf/IUCN_Report_16June06.pdf).

BASIC INFORMATION ON SECRETARIATS OF MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS: MISSION, STRUCTURE, FINANCING AND GOVERNANCE

(UN, 2006) This document is intended to provide "snap-shots" of information on the different MEA missions, structures, financing and governance. The document contains fact sheets prepared using information provided by individual MEA Secretariats in response to a series of questions posed by the Secretariat of the UN High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/60/summitfollowup/060612d.pdf>).

UN REFORM: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT PILLAR

(UNEP, 2006) This paper was prepared by the UN Environment Programme to contribute, with views, perspectives and proposals, to the work of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment and the UN General Assembly's informal consultations on environmental governance (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/60/summitfollowup/060504.pdf>).

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE ENVIRONMENT: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

(KOF and ETH, 2006) This research paper by Axel Dreher and Magdalena Ramada-Sarasola empirically analyzes whether and to what extent the presence of the IMF, World Bank, regional Multilateral Development Banks, WTO and Global Environmental Facility has an impact on environmental governance and outcomes (<http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=892566>).

► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

RAMSAR SCIENTIFIC PANEL MEETS, NEW WETLAND SITES ANNOUNCED AND REPORTS RELEASED

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands' Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) met from 30 May to 2 June 2006 in Switzerland to take stock of Parties' priority tasks for the 2006-2008 period and discuss a work programme for carrying out these tasks. The results of the meeting are being consolidated into a work plan for the Standing Committee's approval, and a report for the meeting will be released soon (http://ramsar.org/strp/key_strp_index.htm).

The Ramsar Secretariat reported Sudan's designation of the Sudd marshes as its second Wetland of International Importance, along with the Dinder National Park Ramsar site and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Sudd is one of the largest tropical wetlands in the world, located in Southern Sudan in the lower reaches of Bahr el Jebel, the name given to the White Nile as it flows northwards (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.sudan_sudd.htm).



Photo courtesy of Sudan's Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources.

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY PARTICIPATES IN GREEN WEEK PANEL, COP-8 REPORT RELEASED

CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlafl participated in a panel discussion on "The global partnership: fostering international governance to achieve the 2010 target" during the EU Green Week, organized from 30 May to 2 June 2006, in Brussels, Belgium, under the theme "Biodiversity is life!" Other panels were held on issues such as: the ecological footprint; the value of biodiversity; the impact of trade and what trade can do; agriculture and forests; the Natura 2000 network; access and benefit-sharing; and oceans and seas (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/home.html>; http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/day04/gw_daily_issue4.pdf). The CBD Secretariat has also posted the official report of the CBD COP-8 (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-08/official/cop-08-31-en.pdf>).

The Ramsar Secretariat also announced the availability of two reports. The first is a Liberian report on the impact of civil conflict on wetlands, which was produced in the framework of a Ramsar/ Swiss Grant for Africa initiative on post-conflict assessment of wetlands in selected West and Central African countries (http://www.ramsar.org/swiss/sga_liberia_postconflict_rpt.pdf). The Ramsar Secretariat collaborated in the drafting of the final report of the Lake Basin Management Initiative, which is also now available online. The Initiative was a collaborative project involving LakeNet, the Ramsar Convention, UNDP, UNEP, USAID, the World Bank, and the Shiga Prefectural Government. The report, entitled "Managing Lakes and their Basins for Sustainable Use: A Report for Lake Basin Managers and Stakeholders," synthesizes lessons learned on lake basin management from experiences around the world, with a focus on lakes in developing countries and on transboundary lakes (<http://www.ilec.or.jp/lbmi/LBMI%20Main%20Report.pdf>).

IMO DISCUSSES PANAMA CANAL EXPANSION

International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Efthimios Mitropoulos received a high-level delegation from the Republic of Panama on the occasion of its visit to London to present proposals on the future expansion of the Panama Canal. Panamanian First Vice President and Minister for Foreign Affairs Samuel Lewis Navarro and Deputy Administrator of the Panama Canal Authority Manuel Benítez addressed an *ad hoc* seminar on the occasion, stressing why it has become necessary to expand the Canal (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1320&doc_id=6430).

CMS SECRETARIAT MOVES TO NEW PREMISES, ANNOUNCES NEW INTERN SCHEME

The offices of UNEP/CMS Secretariat and those of the co-located Agreements on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) and the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (EUROBATS) moved on 16 June 2006 to occupy adjacent floors in a new building for UN agencies in Bonn, Germany. The building is located at Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10, 53113 Bonn, Germany. Email addresses and telephone numbers will remain unchanged. CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth noted that the move "will give a boost to internal communication." He also announced a new CMS Family Intern scheme, which started on 1 June 2006, for university students (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/June/nw140606_LE.htm).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

DEMAND-SIDE OPTIONS: POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR REDUCING IMPORTS OF ILLEGAL TIMBER AND TIMBER PRODUCTS TO CONSUMER COUNTRIES

(Chatham House, 2006) This report looks at the options available to governments of consumer countries to reduce their contribution to illegal logging. It considers EU member state procurement policies, border controls and licensing, legal mechanisms, working with industry on controlling supply chains, and using development assistance to improve governance in producer countries (http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/CH_Demand_side_options.doc).

EXCLUDING ILLEGAL TIMBER FROM EU MARKETS: OPTIONS FOR THE EU AND ITS MEMBER STATES

(Chatham House, 2006) This paper examines policies adopted by the EU and some of its member states in seeking to reduce their contribution to illegal logging (http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/RIIA_EU_control_of_imports.doc).

JUSTICE IN THE FOREST: RURAL LIVELIHOODS AND FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT

(CIFOR, 2006) Based on exploratory studies from six different countries (Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, Honduras, Indonesia, and Nicaragua), this report explores the types of relevant issues that arise in different contexts related to how forest law enforcement affects rural livelihoods (http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/Books/BColchester0601.pdf).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

ITTC-40 ALLOCATES FUNDS, ADDRESSES TIMBER PROCUREMENT POLICIES

The 40th session of the International Tropical Timber Council has allocated several million dollars to new projects and considered procurement policies in consumer countries. At the session, which took place in Mérida, Mexico, from 29 May to 2 June 2006, the Council allocated a total of US\$3.9 million to a number of new projects, including initiatives on shoot-borers in timber plantations, management of mangrove and flood forests, and funding for an African regional parliamentary conference on the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems. ITTO's Annual Market Discussion was convened during the session and addressed tropical timber procurement policies in consumer countries. Rupert Oliver, a UK-based tropical timber trade analyst, reported that Europe's public procurement policies are moving towards requiring evidence of legality and sustainability. A number of side-events were also convened on challenges facing community forestry enterprises. The Council is the governing body of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and meets regularly to discuss issues aimed at promoting sustainable tropical forest management and



Panelists present findings from the ITTO Status of Tropical Forest Management report. Photo courtesy ITTO.

the trade of sustainably produced tropical timber (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageld=213>).

UNCCD SECRETARIAT MOVES TO NEW PREMISES, PROMOTES WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has moved to new office space, along with several other UN organizations located in Bonn, Germany. The UNCCD move was anticipated in Decision 29 at COP-7 and was expected to be completed on 23 June 2006. Email and phone contact information will remain the same, while the new UNCCD address will be: Hermann-Ehlers Str. 10, 53113 Bonn Germany (<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cop7/pdf/16add1eng.pdf>).

The UNCCD Secretariat has also taken part in a number of activities to mark World Day to Combat Desertification (17 June) as well as World Environment Day (5 June), which focused on desertification with the theme "Don't Desert Drylands." Executive Secretary Diallo attended the major event in Algiers, Algeria, on 5 June. On 10 June, he participated in a panel discussion entitled "Desertification - What's it got to do with us?" held at the premises of Deutsche Welle Radio, followed by a family event on the theme of deserts and desertification. On 16 June, he was in Kirundo, Kirundo province, Burundi, along with the Vice President of Burundi for an event marking both days. The Secretariat released a June 2006 edition of its newsletter, "Down to Earth," to mark the dates, with updates on recent meetings and activities (http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/june17/2006/docs/Down_to_Earth-2006UN-eng.pdf; IISD Sources).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

SAICM OPENS QUICKSTART PROGRAMME TRUST FUND AND ANNOUNCES CONSIDERATION FROM OTHER IGOs

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Secretariat has opened applications for funding from the Trust Fund for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Proposals may be presented by SAICM participating governments that have given appropriate formal recognition to SAICM. The first round of applications will close on 18 August 2006 and the second one will follow six months later (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsptf.htm>).

At the opening of the "Thematic Workshop on Governance, Civil Society, Participation and Strengthening Partnerships for Chemicals and Waste Management and SAICM Implementation" (19-21 June 2006, Geneva, Switzerland), the SAICM Secretariat introduced participants to a set of principles and guidance articles on SAICM implementation post-ICCM (International Conference

on Chemicals Management). Organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in collaboration with the Swiss Government, the Basel Convention Secretariat, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the workshop focused its attention on three themes: developing an effective governance framework for chemical management and SAICM implementation; roles of industry and public interest and labour organizations in national chemicals management and SAICM implementation; and designing and implementing effective chemical management partnership projects through collaboration of government, industry, and public interest and labour organizations (<http://www.unitar.org/cwg/tw/tw10.html>; <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/>).

The SAICM Secretariat has released its second Newsletter. The publication reviews the outcomes of the ICCM (4-6 February 2006, Dubai, UAE) and updates the reader

on recent work of the SAICM Secretariat (http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/SAICM_newsletter_june06.pdf).

Since the ICCM, SAICM has reported receiving consideration by the following governing bodies of intergovernmental organizations: Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Decision SS.IX/1, (English, French, Spanish), 9 February 2006; Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Decision on SAICM, 27 April 2006; and World Health Assembly (for the World Health Organisation -WHO), Decision WHA59.15 (English, French, Spanish), 27 May 2006 (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/consideration.htm>).



Dais at Thematic Workshop: Klaus Töpfer, Marcel Boisard (UNITAR), Achim Halpaap (UNITAR), Brijoy Chatterjee (OPCW) and Peter Mueller (BAFU - Swiss Government)

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

In recent years, however, there has been a growing recognition that the reporting burden has increased, creating a number of challenges to be addressed.

One solution offered is to harmonize reporting requirements among agreements, although an examination of harmonization among several biodiversity-related agreements has revealed several obstacles. The reporting cycles differ between conventions. Some conventions require specific information in a specific format that is incompatible with other conventions' requirements. At the national level, the involvement of different ministries can make harmonization efforts difficult.

A modular approach to managing the information required by reporting offers a useful way forward. National agencies responsible for, for example, agriculture, forestry and water, would produce information modules to be made available and periodically updated in a database of some kind. Focal points could then draw on this information when they prepare national reports. This approach could be supported by regional cooperation, facilitated by intergovernmental bodies. At the global level, the conventions could develop joint report questions on issues of common interest.

Other issues also need to be addressed to help reporting achieve its purposes. Increasingly, governing bodies of conventions call for better information to assess the outcome of implementation activities. To measure progress, for example towards the 2010 biodiversity target, information from the national level on the status and trends of biodiversity is urgently needed. So far, however, national reporting has focused on activities Parties have undertaken to fulfill their obligations under agreements.

On-line reporting by Parties, which allows for continuous updating, offers another way forward. It enables users to view and query national reports, and it allows Parties and conventions to easily generate up-to-date reports.

At the national level, future reporting would benefit from a number of elements. Firstly, the information that is needed for national implementation of agreements needs to be identified. Secondly, it should be determined how this information can best be managed, for example through a national biodiversity database, and the thematic information modules required for reporting need to be identified. Thirdly, institutional arrangements need to be made, including liaison between the information managers and the convention focal points.

Harmonizing biodiversity information management and national reporting requires additional efforts in the short-term. In the long-term, however, it is expected to lead to substantial benefits from avoiding duplication of efforts and providing synergies.

Read the Full Article at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle8.htm>

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 Research Editor, lynn@iisd.org, for further information and article guidelines.

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GEF COUNCIL APPOINTS NEW CEO, TRUST FUND MAKES PROGRESS ON REPLENISHMENT

Monique Barbut (France), Director of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, was confirmed as the new Global Environment Facility (GEF) CEO during the 6-9 June 2006 GEF Council meeting in Washington, DC. The Council meeting also adopted decisions on the GEF's budget and portfolio, the Special Climate Change Fund and the organization of the Third GEF Assembly, and encouraged developments in the design of a private sector strategy. Regarding the implementation of the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF), the Council requested the GEF Secretariat to strengthen its outreach and communications with the conventions to enhance the understanding of the RAF, report to the Council issues and challenges raised at sub-regional consultations, and continue to monitor the implementation of the RAF and to report any relevant developments to the Council, among other actions. Regarding the relationship between the GEF and MEAs, the Council approved the Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). It also agreed to discuss collaboration with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) at the Council meeting in December 2006 (http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C28/gef_c28.html; http://gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C28/documents/C.28_CRP4DraftJointSummary.pdf).

Meanwhile, reports indicate that donors at a GEF Trust Fund meeting on the Fourth Re-

plenishment on 5 June made significant advances towards guaranteeing pledges for the fourth replenishment at levels around 10% below current GEF funding (IISD Sources; http://gefweb.org/Replenishment/Reple_Documents/reple_documents.html).

WORLD BANK APPROVES COSTA RICA ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROJECT AND AVIAN FLU FACILITY

The World Bank approved on 8 June a loan and grant to the Government of Costa Rica to implement an environmental management project (IBRD loan: US\$ 30 million; GEF grant: US\$ 10 million). The project's components include new sustainable financing mechanisms for the payment of environmental services through a water tariff, a conservation trust fund, carbon sequestration, and voluntary markets for biodiversity conservation. It also supports national forestry finance through institutional strengthening and payments to participating land users (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20952750~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

The European Commission and the World Bank have set up an Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) Facility, which will provide grants for countries to reduce the social and economic impact of avian influenza and to minimize the possibility of a human flu pandemic in developing countries. The European Commission will contribute €46 million to the facility (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20949458~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ACHIM STEINER ASSUMES DUTIES AS UNEP HEAD



Achim Steiner

Achim Steiner assumed his duties as the fifth Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) on 15 June 2006. His recent statements have focused on the link between the environment and market

forces. In an interview with the Financial Times (12 June 2006), Steiner called for a "new era" in which environmental concerns are integrated fully into economic market regulations, by altering market incentive structures. On his first day as UNEP head, he called attention to the deterioration, poor management and overexploitation of ecosystem services, and reiterated the need to focus on how markets, economic incentives and international treaties should work in a way which is "pro-environment, pro-poor and thus pro-sustainable development" (<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/8c8b2ad6-fa2e-11da-b7ff-0000779e2340.html>, <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=480&ArticleID=5294&I=en>).

UNEP-DEC LAUNCHES MANUAL ON MEA COMPLIANCE, ORGANIZES MEETINGS ON MEA KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND HARMONIZED REPORTING

UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC) launched its "Manual on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements," which offers stakeholders a reference tool and guide for the effective implementation of MEAs. The Manual was launched in Geneva on the occasion of festivities to commemorate World Environment Day 2006 in early June. At the launch, UNEP-DEC Director Bakary Kante underlined the fact that the Manual will facilitate the use and application of the "Guidelines on



Bakary Kante launching UNEP-DEC Manual on MEA Compliance

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▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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erning Council of UNEP), by providing specific examples of best practices on how governments, NGOs, the private sector, and other institutions have used various approaches to ensure effective implementation of, compliance with and enforcement of MEAs. Fully searchable on-line and CD-ROM versions will be added in the near future to expand the Manual's practical use and value (http://www.unep.org/dec/MEA_Manual.html).

UNEP-DEC organized three meetings during which representatives from the Secretariats of several biodiversity-related MEAs, UNEP, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and non-governmental organizations discussed knowledge management and harmonized national reporting. The meetings took place in Cambridge, UK, from 13-16 June 2006, and were convened by UNEP-DEC, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Participants discussed the participating MEAs' existing information management practices, technological capacities and national reporting requirements and developed proposals for several projects to improve the interoperability of MEA information datasets, increase Secretariats' and parties' capacities, and harmonize national reporting. The UNEP-funded projects will seek to improve access and search capacities related to the participating MEAs' focal points, articles and decisions, and strategic plans, and to work towards harmonized national reporting among MEAs (<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/briefing8.html>).

UNEP-ETB INITIATIVE ADDRESSES TRADE AND BIODIVERSITY

Under the auspices of the UNEP initiative on "Integrated Assessment of Trade-Related Policies and Biological Diversity in the Agricultural Sector," UNEP's Economics and Trade Branch (ETB) is in the process of identifying six African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, which will receive support to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of trade liberalization in the agricultural sector. The first phase of the initiative, which was launched in mid-2005, focused on the development of a Reference Manual on Trade and Biodiversity jointly with UNEP-WCMC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat. From 30-31 May 2006, UNEP-ETB convened a Workshop for ACP Countries and an International Steering Committee Meeting in Geneva to discuss the first draft of the Reference Manual and the initiatives' next steps with a group of experts from governments, non-governmental and international organizations. ACP countries, including Cuba, Jamaica, Fiji, East Timor, Mauritius, Madagascar, Uganda and Papua New Guinea, attended the meeting to learn more about the initiative and discuss their potential participation. This initiative is timely for ACP countries, most of which are actively involved in trade negotiations at multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels and are currently preparing strategies to respond to further liberalization processes in the agricultural sector. This project also responds to a key challenge identified by UNEP and the CBD Secretariat in undertaking assessments of trade-related policies in the agricultural sector: namely, analyzing the opportunities and challenges agricultural liberalization poses

for biodiversity conservation. Assessing the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable trade and discussing potential environmental safeguards will be crucial to securing the future development potential of ACP countries. The UNEP initiative seeks to build institutional and governmental capacities to assess the opportunities and impacts of trade liberalization in the agricultural sector with a special focus on biodiversity, increase understanding of factors that lead to a loss in biodiversity, and enhance civil society engagement in policy-making processes (<http://www.unep.ch/etb/areas/biodivAgriSector.php>).

UNGA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTATIONS FOCUS ON INSTITUTIONS, POLICY AND INTEGRATION

The most recent session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) consultations on international environmental governance opened on 13 June 2006 at UN headquarters in New York. Participants exchanged views on: enhancing institutional coordination; improving policy advice and guidance; and stepping up integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity-building.

The EU reiterated its proposal to transform UNEP into a UN specialized agency (UN Environment Organization or UNEO), which would exercise cross-cutting functions for MEAs such as information exchange and centralization, regional and global coordination of activities, and streamlining of the international agenda of MEA meetings. The US expressed doubts as to the need to transform UNEP into UNEO. The group of developing countries (G-77/China) prioritized the consideration of environmental matters within the context of the other two pillars (economic and social) of sustainable development, called for more effective assistance to developing countries, and cautioned against the total or immediate restructuring of UN activities or architecture. Switzerland supported UNEP's role in facilitating the adoption of administrative structures and work programmes for all MEAs, and for MEAs to report to the General Assembly through UNEP. New Zealand prioritized clarifying the environment-related mandates of different UN bodies and programmes, and respecting the autonomy of MEAs.

UNGA consultations on environmental governance will resume on 20 June to consider compliance with MEAs, and scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation. On 27 June, a summary of the 13 and 20 June consultations will be presented together with the results of a study on global environmental governance (<http://www.g77.org/Speeches/061306.htm>, IISDRS sources).



Participants at the Knowledge Management for Biodiversity Related Conventions Meeting, 14-15 June 2006, Cambridge, UK; front row (L-R): Liu Yuan (CITES), Michael Williams (UNEP), Peter Herkenrath (UNEP-WCMC), Olivier de Munck (CBD), Marcos Silva (CITES), Bert Lenten (CMS/AEWA), Gerardo Fragoso (UNEP-WCMC); back row (L-R): Lynn Wagner (IISDRS), Jerry Velasquez (UNEP-DEC), Magnus Grylle (FAO), Jerry Harrison (UNEP-WCMC), Nick Davidson (Ramsar), and Doug Hykle (CMS/IOSEA Marine Turtles)

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC SECRETARIAT CELEBRATES CDM MILESTONE, POSTS ANNUAL STATUS REPORTS

The UNFCCC Secretariat has announced that greenhouse gas emissions cuts resulting from the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) have reached one billion tonnes. The CDM is designed to allow industrialized nations to gain credits for investing in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries. Richard Kinley, Officer-in-Charge of the Secretariat, announced on 9 June that "It is now evident that the Kyoto Protocol is making a significant contribution towards sustainable development in developing countries." Over 800 projects are currently

being processed, with 210 already registered. However, some concerns have been expressed about more equitable geographic distribution, with African nations under-represented in the CDM (http://unfccc.int/files/press/newsroom/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/20060608_cdm_1_billion_tonnes-english.pdf).

In other news from the UNFCCC, annual status reports of greenhouse gas inventories from more than 30 countries, including the US and members of the EU, have been posted on the Secretariat's website (http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/3594).



Photo courtesy UNFCCC

[php?such=j&last_days=60&dat_no=j#beg](http://www.unfccc.int/files/press/newsroom/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/20060608_cdm_1_billion_tonnes-english.pdf)).

IPCC RELEASES DRAFT REPORT OF 25TH SESSION

The IPCC Secretariat has released the draft report of the IPCC's 25th session that was held in Mauritius from 26-28 April 2006. The deadline for comments is 31 July 2006 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/p-25drfrprt.pdf>). The Secretariat also recently published an information note designed to clarify the process leading up to the release in 2007 of the IPCC's 4th Assessment Report, noting recent erroneous media reports about the process (<http://www.ipcc.ch/press/pr02052006.htm>).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- The GEF Council elected Monique Barbut, Director of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, to succeed Leonard Good as the **GEF's Chief Executive Officer and Chairman** (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20953243~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

- In late May 2006, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced four additional **candidates for the vacant post of Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC**: Sálvano J. Briceño (Venezuela), the director of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat; Luis Gylvan Meira (Brazil), professor at the University of Sao Paulo's Institute for Advanced Studies; Richard James Kinley (Canada), Officer-in-Charge of the UNFCCC; and Leela Krishnamurthy Ponappa (India), Ambassador of India to the Netherlands. John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) and Luis Gomez Echeverri (Colombia) – two of the five candidates shortlisted for the post in March 2006 – have recently withdrawn their candidacies (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sg2112.doc.htm>).

- Frances Seymour has been appointed the next **Director General of the Center for International Forestry Research**. Ms Seymour is currently Director of the Institutions and Governance Program of the World Resources Institute. She will replace David Kaimowitz who will soon step down after five years as Director General (http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/_ref/polex/english/2006/2006_06_09.htm).



Monique Barbut

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **THIRD MEETING OF THE BIGLEAF MAHOGANY WORKING GROUP:** 29 June - 1 July 2006. Lima, Peru. <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>
- **TWENTY-FIFTH OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL:** 3-6 July 2006. Montreal, Canada. <http://hq.unep.org/ozone/Events/meetings2006and2007.asp>
- **16TH MEETING OF THE CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE:** 3-8 July 2006. Lima, Peru. <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/meetings/PC16.shtml>
- **22ND MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE:** 7-13 July 2006. Lima, Peru. <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/meetings/AC22.shtml>
- **ECOSOC 2006 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION:** 3-28 July 2006. New York, NY, US. The High-level segment will convene from 3-5 July 2006 and consider the theme, "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development." The dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions will convene on 6 July and take up the theme, "The regional dimension of creating an environment conducive to generating full and productive employment, and its impact on sustainable development." The coordination segment will convene from 6-10 July and consider "Sustained economic growth for social development, including the eradication of poverty and hunger." The operational activities segment will convene from 11-13 July; the humanitarian affairs segment will convene from 14-19 July; the general segment will convene from 19-27 July; and the conclusion of the Council's work will be conducted on 27 and 28 July. <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/>
- **49TH MEETING OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL FUND'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** 10-14 July 2006. Montreal, Quebec. <http://www.multilateralfund.org/news/1149285657644.htm>