



## RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

### ▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

#### CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE “TAKES NOTE” OF COPENHAGEN ACCORD



CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

L-R: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen; UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer; and UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary Richard Kinley, consulting during the closing COP plenary

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, took place from 7-19 December 2009. It included the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the fifth Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 5). At the close of the meeting, parties adopted a COP decision whereby the COP decides to “take note” of the “Copenhagen Accord,” which was developed through informal consultations during the high-level segment and was attached to the decision as an unofficial document. Parties also agreed to establish a procedure whereby countries supporting the Copenhagen Accord can accede to it.

*Continued on page 2*

### MEA Clusters In This Issue

- **Sustainable Development**  
DSD Prepares Briefs for Copenhagen Page 2
- **Forests, Deserts and Land**  
Forest Day 3 Convenes; ITTA, 2006 Ratified by 11 Countries; UNCCD Co-Sponsors Meeting on Drought Indices Pages 2-3
- **Water, Oceans and Wetlands**  
Ramsar Participates in Workshops Page 3
- **Biodiversity and Wildlife**  
CITES Publishes Provisional Assessment of Listing Proposals; UNFF and CBD Partner on Sustainable Forest Management Pages 4-5
- **Trade, Finance and Investment**  
CIF Invest in Energy Projects; Development Banks Support Environmental Governance and Management Page 5
- **Chemicals and Wastes**  
Stockholm Convenes Workshop Page 6
- **International Organizations**  
UNEP Convenes Environmental Justice Meetings; Second Committee Approves Draft Resolutions Page 6

### GUEST ARTICLE

#### Desertification from Space: The ESA DesertWatch Project

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#### Abstract

Desertification is defined as the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations, and occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one-third of the world’s land area, are

*Continued on page 4*

### RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

#### A CASE FOR CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

(UNEP, 2009) This United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) publication presents examples of cutting greenhouse gas emissions and promoting “green growth” at all levels. The publication draws on the experiences of nearly 200 participants of the Climate Neutral Network (CN Net), including countries, regions, cities, companies and organizations that are moving towards low-carbon economies and societies ([http://www.unep.org/pdf/CN-Net\\_case\\_studies.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/CN-Net_case_studies.pdf)).

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## ► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

*Continued from page 1*

COP 15 and COP/MOP 5 were held in conjunction with the 31st sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 31) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 31), the tenth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 10) and the eighth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC (AWG-LCA 8). The Copenhagen Conference marked the culmination of a two-year negotiating process to enhance international climate change cooperation under the Bali Roadmap, launched by COP 13 in December 2007. Close to 115 world leaders attended the joint COP and COP/MOP high-level segment from 16-18 December, among the largest such gatherings of world leaders outside of

UN Headquarters in New York, US. The Conference was subject to unprecedented public and media attention, and more than 40,000 people, representing governments, nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, faith-based, media organizations and other UN agencies applied for accreditation at the Conference.

Questions concerning transparency and process played out during the meeting, with differences emerging, *inter alia*, on whether work should be carried out in a smaller “friends of the chair” format as well as on a proposal by the Danish COP Presidency to table two texts reflecting the work done by the AWGs. Many parties rejected this idea, urging that only texts developed in the AWGs by parties should be used. During the closing COP plenary, which lasted nearly 13 hours, long and what many characterized as “acrimonious”

discussions ensued on the transparency of the process that had led to the conclusion of the Copenhagen Accord and on whether the COP should adopt it. Most negotiating groups supported its adoption as a COP decision in order to operationalize it as a step towards “a better” future agreement. Some developing countries, however, opposed the Accord reached during what they characterized as an “untransparent” and “undemocratic” negotiating process. During informal negotiations facilitated by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, parties agreed to adopt a COP decision whereby the COP decides to “take note” of the Copenhagen Accord, which was attached to the decision as an unofficial document. Parties also agreed to establish a procedure whereby countries supporting the Copenhagen Accord can accede to it (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop15/>).

## ► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### DSD PREPARES BRIEFS FOR COPENHAGEN

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), prepared a policy brief titled “Ocean Acidification: A Hidden Risk for Sustainable Development” and a technical note titled “A Global Green New Deal for Climate, Energy, and Development,” to inform participants at the UN Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. The brief on ocean acidification was prepared by the DSD with input from the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and members of UN-Oceans (<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/>

[res\\_pdfs/publications/sdt\\_cc/cop15\\_policy\\_brief\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/publications/sdt_cc/cop15_policy_brief_1.pdf)). The technical note on a global green new deal elaborates on the strategy first presented in the Department’s “World Economic and Social Survey 2009: Promoting Development, Saving the Planet.” Among its key messages are energy is the key to economic development and renewable energy is the key to a future without dangerous climate change, but renewable energy is too expensive today, and a “big push” in both public and private investment to scale up renewable energy will lead to rapid cost reduction, technology improvement, and learning by doing ([http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res\\_pdfs/publications/sdt\\_cc/cc\\_global\\_green\\_new\\_deal.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/publications/sdt_cc/cc_global_green_new_deal.pdf)).

In other DSD news, the second meeting of the Bureau of the 18th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 18) took place on 25 November 2009, in Antigua, Guatemala. Participants were briefed on the preparation process of the background reports, which they were told involved a special partnership with UNEP in terms of setting up joint drafting teams. These reports are expected to be available by mid-February 2010 and will be placed at the CSD website as advanced unedited copies as they become available. The Bureau was also updated on preparations for intersessional meetings and options for the organization of work for CSD 18 ([http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd\\_csd18\\_buremeet\\_2nd.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18_buremeet_2nd.shtml)).

## ► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND



Participants during the opening plenary of Forest Day 3

### FOREST DAY 3 CONVENES

The third Forest Day event convened in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 13 December 2009, taking place in parallel with the UN Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. Forest Day 3 was co-hosted by the Centre for International Forest Research (CIFOR), the Government of Denmark and the Collaborative Partner-

ship on Forests (CPF), a partnership of 14 forest-related international organizations. The 1600 registered Forest Day 3 participants heard keynote statements, discussed mitigation, adaptation and degradation in three subplenary sessions, and participated in eight learning events. The UN Forum on Forests, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the UN Food

and Agriculture Organization, and IUCN co-hosted a subplenary session on forest degradation, which explored, *inter alia*, the risks and benefits of different forest restoration objectives offered as incentives under the UNFCCC, and difficulties in measuring emissions from degradation. A summary statement from Forest Day 3 was developed based on participants’ responses to a series of questions posed to the subplenary sessions, and was presented to Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, during the closing plenary. The statement indicates that participants supported including “REDD+ (including conservation, sustainable forest management and stock enhancement)” in the climate change agreement (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop15/fd/>).

► **FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND**

**ITTA, 2006 RATIFIED BY 11 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain took part in a ceremony on 18 December at UN Headquarters in New York, US, to indicate their support for the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 (ITTA, 2006). The Agreement was adopted in 2006 to serve as a successor to the previous Agreement, ITTA, 1994, but has yet to enter into force pending ratification of the Agreement by a certain proportion of major exporting and importing countries. The Agreement aims to improve the management of forests in tropical countries



Photo courtesy of the UN Secretariat

by, *inter alia*, promoting tropical timber and timber product exports from sustainably managed sources (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33304&Cr=environment&Cr1=>).

**UNCCD CO-SPONSORS MEETING ON DROUGHT INDICES**

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) co-sponsored an Inter-Regional Workshop on Indices and Early Warning Systems for Drought, which developed a “Lincoln Declaration on Drought Indices,” in which 54 experts from all regions agreed on the use of a universal meteorological drought index for more effective drought monitoring and climate risk management. The 8-11 December 2009 workshop convened at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, US, and agreed that the Standardized Pre-

cipitation Index (SPI) should be used to characterize meteorological droughts by all National Meteorological and Hydrological Services around the world. The SPI is an index based on the probability of precipitation for any time scale using the long-term precipitation record. The experts also decided to undertake a similar, comprehensive review of agricultural and hydrological droughts in order to develop common indices for better early warnings in the agricultural and water sectors. As a next step, the World Meteorological Organization, a workshop co-sponsor, will develop a user manual on SPI and will establish two working groups with the objective of recommending, by the end of 2010, indices for global use to cope with agricultural and hydrological droughts ([http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press\\_releases/pr\\_872\\_en.html](http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press_releases/pr_872_en.html)).

► **WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS**



Participants at the Changwon Declaration Network Meeting (photo courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

**RAMSAR PARTICIPATES IN WETLANDS WORKSHOPS**

The Ramsar Secretariat has posted a number of reports for recent workshops and committee meetings, including a report on the 17 November 2009 steering committee meeting of the Ramsar Regional Centre – East Asia. At this first meeting of the steering committee, participants reviewed progress, approved its programme of work, and hosted the “Changwon Declaration Network Meeting” with the Ministry of Environ-

ment, to review the dissemination and uptake of the Changwon Declaration that was adopted during Ramsar COP10 ([http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-26-45-84%5e24270\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-26-45-84%5e24270_4000_0__)).

Sixty-five experts from all seven Carpathian countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine), the Carpathian and Ramsar Convention Secretariats, and WWF’s Danube-Carpathian Programme attended a conference on

“Conservation of wetlands in the Carpathians,” from 16-19 November 2009, in Tatranská Štrba, Slovakia. This was the first major event organized in the framework of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, one of the 15 regional initiatives endorsed by the Ramsar Standing Committee as operating within the framework of the Ramsar Convention. The conference prepared the Initiative for its programme of work ahead of Ramsar COP11, which will be hosted in 2012 by Romania, one of the Carpathian countries ([http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-26-45-84^24274\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-26-45-84^24274_4000_0__)).

In addition, the fifth seminar of the Nordic-Baltic Wetland Initiative (NorBalWet) convened from 25-27 August 2009, in Turku, Finland, and brought together 30 Ramsar focal points to share practical experiences of wetland management, restoration and conservation, as well as to discuss progress since the previous meeting and plans for future work ([http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-26-45-84^24282\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/ramsar/display/main/main.jsp?zn=ramsar&cp=1-26-45-84^24282_4000_0__)).



During the Fifth NorBalWet Seminar field excursions were organised to possible Ramsar sites of Mietoistenlahti Bay (left and center) and Puurijärvi-Isosuo National Park (right) (images courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

**GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)**

extremely vulnerable to over-exploitation and inappropriate land use. Combating desertification is essential to ensuring the long-term productivity of inhabited drylands, but past efforts have too often failed, and around the world the problem of land degradation continues to worsen. Recognizing the need for an internationally coordinated approach, 193 governments have joined the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as of October 2009.

The desertification and land degradation risk in the north Mediterranean areas is receiving growing attention by the international community, as demonstrated by numerous national and European desertification projects carried out during the past few years. Many of them emphasized the exploitation of Earth Observation (EO) data. The DesertWatch project of the European Space Agency, which was recently successfully completed, sought to develop an integrated information system tailored to the specific user's needs, built on the technological transfer of the most significant results of related research projects.

The DesertWatch Information System (DW IS), which was developed in the course of the project, is a user-

friendly tool for monitoring desertification. Automated processing algorithms were included to enable non-specialized users to operate the system and produce the necessary information in all areas with comparable accuracy. The DW IS can monitor up to 11 desertification related parameters, ranging from simple geo-referenced indicators (e.g. urban sprawl, irrigated areas, forest fires, vegetation abundance and health, soil erosion, etc.), to complex models that can simulate future scenarios of desertification and risk maps. A comprehensive demonstration phase has been carried out for testing the processing chain results over vast areas of Italy, Turkey and Portugal using data covering the last 20 years.

Monitoring desertification requires the evaluation of a complex set of indicators, related to climatic (e.g. rainfall, evapotranspiration, aridity indexes), biophysical (e.g. morphology, soil and vegetation properties), socio-economic (e.g. population density and age, employment) and management (e.g. policies, protected areas, master plans) factors. The DW IS uses primarily EO data, in combination with some ancillary data, into a seamless data processing facility.

The DesertWatch project follow-up is currently under development. It will

exploit the same paradigm as the original project, with three significant highlights: (i) enhanced data processing methodology aimed at improving classification accuracy; (ii) finer resolution, obtained by integrating additional high resolution data sources; and (iii) extension of the demonstration cases to areas outside the Mediterranean, such as Mozambique and Brazil.

For the full article and the authors' contact information, visit: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle83.html>

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*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](mailto:lynn@iisd.org), for further information.*

**► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE**

**CITES SECRETARIAT PUBLISHES PROVISIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LISTING PROPOSALS**

The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has published provisional assessments of the proposals to amend Appendices I and II of the Convention, to be considered at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held from 13-25 March 2010, in Doha, Qatar (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2009/E051.pdf>).

In related news, an advisory panel of independent experts convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has issued recommendations regarding six proposals on commercially exploited aquatic animals, relating to several shark and coral species and Atlantic bluefin tuna. The panel determined that sufficient evidence exists to warrant placing on CITES Appendix II Oceanic whitetip shark, Porbeagle, and Scalloped hammerhead shark. The proposed listing of "look-alike" shark spe-

cies to help enforcement for Scalloped hammerhead shark was found to be justified in the cases of Great hammerhead shark and Smooth hammerhead shark. The panel did not reach consensus regarding the proposed listing under CITES Appendix I of Atlantic bluefin tuna, however a majority of the panel agreed that the available evidence supports the proposal. There was consensus that the evidence available supports inclusion of Atlantic bluefin tuna on Appendix II. With regard to Spiny dogfish and all species of the coral family *Coralliidae*, the panel assessed that they did



An oceanic whitetip shark (photo courtesy of FAO/J. Quinn)



A Scalloped hammerhead shark (photo courtesy of FAO/J. Quinn)

not meet the CITES criteria required for listing on Appendix II (<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/38195/icode/>).

Finally, the Secretariat has presented the CITES Wiki Identification Manual, a collection of data sheets designed to help identify various species of fauna and flora with drawings (black and white), photographs, maps and concise descriptions. It is a useful tool for CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, Customs officials, and all others involved in implementing and enforcing CITES ([http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/wiki\\_id.shtml](http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/wiki_id.shtml)).

## ► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

### UNFF AND CBD PARTNER ON SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT, ABS DATABASE IMPROVED

The Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen joint actions to ensure that forests are sustainably managed. The MoU was signed during the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. It was developed based on a request that both secretariats received from their respective governing bodies (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2009/pr-2009-12-15-mou-en.pdf>).

On the occasion of the Copenhagen Conference, the CBD Secretariat has set up a webpage for posting relevant CBD documents and statements on

linkages between climate change and biodiversity ([www.cbd.int/climate/copenhagen/](http://www.cbd.int/climate/copenhagen/)).

In other CBD news, the database on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) measures has been further improved. In addition to information on national or regional ABS measures, the database now also includes a matrix providing references to relevant provisions dealing with key ABS elements, such as national focal points, competent national authorities, prior informed consent procedures, mutually agreed terms including benefit-sharing, and others. Governments and relevant organizations are invited to provide information regarding national or regional ABS measures not included in the database by 29 January 2010 (<http://www.cbd.int/abs/measures/>).

The CBD Secretariat is also requesting comments on the draft elements of a strategic plan of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, prepared based on submissions of parties, information from national reports and relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the parties to the Protocol. Comments are expected no later than 30 January 2010 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2009/ntf-2009-171-bs-en.pdf>).

The International Year of Biodiversity Implementation Plan is now available in all 6 UN languages (<http://www.cbd.int/2010/prints/>). Finally, the November 2009 issue of the CBD Monthly Bulletin of Activities is available (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/mba/2009/mba-2009-11-en.pdf>).

## ► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT



Image courtesy of Climate Investment Funds

### CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS INVEST IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

Countries governing the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) have endorsed a total of US\$800 million from the CIF Clean Technology Fund (CTF) for Viet Nam, the Philippines and Thailand, to invest in a range of innovative climate activities. These include catalyzing private sector investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy through local banks, transmission system upgrades to reduce losses and support renewable energy development, and significant urban transport improvements (<http://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/node/520>).

The CIF have also launched a new program, Scaling up Renewable Energy in Low Income Countries (SREP), with a total of US\$260.7 million. The Clean Technology Fund (CTF) also approved financing of US\$750 million on 2 December 2009, to accelerate global deployment of Concentrated Solar Power (CSP). It will do so by investing in the CSP programs of five countries: Alge-

ria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22417280~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

In related news, members of non-profit civil society organizations, networks or small, local communities involved in issues of climate change have been invited to vote for candidates to civil society observer seats on two sub-committees of the CIF's Strategic Climate Fund (SCF): the Forest Investment Program (FIP) and the Scaling up Renewable Energy Program in Low Income Countries (SREP) ([www.resolv.org/cif/registration](http://www.resolv.org/cif/registration)). Nominations are also being accepted for private sector observers (<http://www.wbcasd.org/templates/TemplateWBCSD5/layout.asp?type=p&MenuId=MTY0MA&doOpen=1&ClickMenu=LeftMenu>).

### DEVELOPMENT BANKS SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The World Bank approved, on 8 December 2009, a US\$50 million loan to

support environmentally sustainable growth and strengthen the Peruvian Government's institutional capacity in key sectors such as mining, fishing and urban transportation (<http://go.worldbank.org/HD0QXKE5X0>). The World Bank also approved a US\$9 million GEF grant to fund conservation activities in the Isimangaliso Wetland Park and Surrounding Regional Project in South Africa. The project will restore key ecological processes while contributing to local economic development and improved livelihoods (<http://go.worldbank.org/VOE6FQU1T0>). South Africa will also benefit from a EUR 40 million loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy projects across South Africa, and a one million dollar funding package from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to ensure that the World Cup has a long-term sustainable impact on the country and the region ([http://www.gefweb.org/interior\\_right.aspx?id=27728](http://www.gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=27728)).

In related news, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a US\$102 million loan in partial financing for two wind power projects in Mexico, which will help establish a critical mass of renewable energy in the country and contribute to the country's aspirational goal of reducing emissions by 50% of their 2000 levels by 2050. It has also approved a US\$25 million loan to support the production of sugar-cane-based ethanol in Piura, Peru ([http://www.iadb.org/news/detail.cfm?language=English&id=6118&wt.mc\\_id=6118&ealertFrq=HA](http://www.iadb.org/news/detail.cfm?language=English&id=6118&wt.mc_id=6118&ealertFrq=HA); [http://www.iadb.org/news/detail.cfm?language=English&id=6101&wt.mc\\_id=6101&ealertFrq=HA](http://www.iadb.org/news/detail.cfm?language=English&id=6101&wt.mc_id=6101&ealertFrq=HA)).

## ► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

### STOCKHOLM CONVENTION CONVENES PCBs AND POPs WASTE WORKSHOP

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat, together with the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) in Bratislava, Slovakia, convened a regional training workshop on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) wastes for the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region from 1-4 December 2009, in Bratislava. As part of the training, participants visited two POPs wastes and PCBs sites: a small decontamination facility where ca-

pacitors and transformers are drained and the oils and capacitors decontaminated; and a hazardous waste incineration plant. Participants also discussed the opportunities for raising funds for projects on the environmentally sound management of PCBs and POPs wastes, and agreed on the need to convince industry to contribute financially to the projects. Recommendations from the workshop included the need for increased collaboration and information exchange between countries in the region (IISDRS Sources).

In other Stockholm Convention news, the Secretariat is seeking infor-

mation on new POPs including data on: brominated diphenyl ethers found in articles; perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride (PFOSF); and other chemicals listed in Annexes A or B of the Convention at the Fourth Conference of the Parties in May 2009. Information is sought, *inter alia*, on the types and quantities of articles containing substances, as well as the cost effectiveness of management options for these articles (<http://chm.pops.int/Programmes/NewPOPs/NewPOPsinformationrequestdecisionSC419/tabid/666/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

## ► INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### UNEP CONVENES MEETINGS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, LAUNCHES CLIMATE CENTRE

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has convened the first meeting to review and develop draft guidelines for the development of national legislation for damage caused by activities dangerous to the environment. Participants at the meeting, which took place from 9-11 November 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya, made progress on the draft guidelines and agreed suggested actions for consideration by the Governing Council, including to request the Executive Director to assist countries, upon their request, with the development or amendment of national legislation, policies and strategies on liability, response action and compensation for damage caused by activities dangerous to the environment (<http://www.unep.org/DEC/PDF/events/FINALREPORTLIABILITYMEETING261109.pdf>).

UNEP also convened the second meeting to review and further develop the draft guidelines for the development of national legislation on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. The meeting, which took place from 12-13 November 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya, made progress on the draft guidelines and agreed suggested actions for consideration by the Governing Council, including deciding to adopt the guidelines and requesting the Executive Director to provide assistance to countries in developing national legislation (<http://www.unep.org/DEC/PDF/events/FINALREPORTACCESSMEETING.pdf>).

In other UNEP news, the agency has announced a joint initiative with the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) to create the Bonn Center for Local Climate Action and Reporting – carbonn. According to UNEP, car-

bonn will seek to facilitate the access of local governments to climate benchmarking instruments. carbonn will assist local governments to report and compare their commitments, policies, programmes and performance in greenhouse gas emission reductions. It will also play a role in developing standards and providing guidance on local emissions accounting and reporting (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=606&ArticleID=6422&l=en&t=long>).

### SECOND COMMITTEE APPROVES DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

The Second Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has recently approved draft resolutions on sustainable development, including on climate change, harmony with Mother Earth, Mauritius Strategy, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), agricultural commodities, and implementation of Agenda 21.

On climate change, the resolution calls on developed countries to take enhanced commitments under the Kyoto Protocol in subsequent commitment periods, including through new, additional and predictable financial resources, capacity-building and access to and transfer of technology.

On harmony with Mother Earth, relevant organizations of the United Nations system and international, regional and subregional organizations are invited to transmit to the Secretary-General their views on the scope and content of a possible declaration of ethical principles and values for living in harmony with Mother Earth.

On the Mauritius Strategy, the high-level review of the strategy would be structured around an opening plenary meeting, followed by two multi-stakeholder roundtable sessions, an interactive dialogue on cross-regional perspec-

tives and a closing plenary meeting, with the preparatory committee meeting for the high-level review to be convened during the 18th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

On the ISDR, the international community is called upon to increase efforts to fully implement the commitments of the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework for Action and call upon the UN system to support in a timely, sustained manner efforts led by disaster-stricken countries for disaster risk reduction in post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes.

On commodities, the need for more efforts to address commodity price volatility was underscored, and a call made for a coherent international policy action to address excessive price volatility and mitigate its negative impact on commodity-dependent developing countries by facilitating value addition.

On Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the resolution calls for convening a United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in 2012. It indicates the event should be focused on a “green economy” in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development, and should result in a focused political document. The Preparatory Committee should meet for three days after the conclusion of the 18th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2010, two days after the CSD’s Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting in February 2011, and the three days immediately preceding the Conference in Brazil in 2012 (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/gaef3273.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/ga/second/64/proposalstatus.shtml>).