



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP CO-HOSTS B4E SUMMIT



Photo courtesy of B4E

The UN Business for the Environment Global Summit (B4E Summit) took place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 21-23 April 2010. The goal of the meeting was to consider the outcome of the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the UNFCCC and discuss the role of business in realizing a low carbon future. The Summit was co-hosted by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Global Compact, WWF, the Korean Ministry of Environment, the Korean Ministry of Knowledge Economy and the Presidential Committee on Green Growth, with over 20 businesses partnering to support the Summit. The meeting brought together 1,000 individuals from 35 countries, representing multinational corporations, governments, international agencies and NGOs, to discuss "Powering growth for the global green economy." During the meeting, working groups identified strategies to address barriers to a low carbon future. UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner reframed the financial crisis as an opportunity to transition away from "business as usual" and toward sustainable economic development (<http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/b4e/b4e4/>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Forests and Biodiversity for our Future

By Jan L. McAlpine and Ahmed Djoghlaif

Almost twenty years after the Rio Earth Summit, progress towards sustainable development as envisioned in Agenda 21 remains slow and elusive. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook demonstrates that the Johannesburg biodiversity target to significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010 has not been met.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

THE PROS AND CONS OF PROCUREMENT

(ITTO, April 2010) Written by Markku Simula and others, this volume of ITTO's technical series reviews developments and progress in timber-procurement policies as tools for promoting the sustainable management of tropical forests. It also includes recommendations for enhancing the positive impacts of timber procurement policies and mitigating their adverse effects on tropical timber producing countries (http://www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics_pdf_download/topics_id=2323&no=0).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Equally, the ambitions of poverty elimination and incorporation of the social benefits of natural resources into the world's way of operating have not yet been achieved. Recognizing the need to redouble efforts to implement the Rio commitments, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariats are launching a series of joint activities on forest biodiversity.

Forests are central to the implementation of the three Rio Conventions¹ and the UNFF, and provide a link between them. For example, three of the four UNFF Global Objectives on Forests are directly relevant to the implementation of the CBD programme of work on forest biodiversity, including the Global Objective to significantly increase the area of protected forests and other sustainably managed forests. Similarly, other provisions of the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests – while promoting effective implementation of sustainable forest management – contribute to addressing climate change and land degradation.

Most recently, in Copenhagen in December 2009, the world recognized that forests are central to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus) have resulted in a new level of awareness regarding the relationship between forests and climate change amongst decision makers at the highest level. The commitments of countries under the CBD and the UNFF already cover a wide range of necessary actions to implement REDD-plus ambitions at the national level, including: strengthening sustainable forest management, including building the required institutional capacity; conserving, sustainably managing and restoring forest ecosystems; and improving forest monitoring. The joint UNFF and CBD activities aim to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to address these issues in a holistic way, *inter alia* as a basis for successful REDD-plus ef-

forts. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, 18-29 October 2010, is expected to adopt a new Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020, with several forest-related targets that aim to further bolster linkages between the CBD, the other Rio Conventions, the Millennium Development Goals and the UNFF.

Key findings from the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 show that while deforestation has slowed somewhat in recent years as compared to the 1990s, it is still alarmingly high. Four million hectares (40,000 sq km) of highly diverse primary forests, an area the size of the Netherlands, are lost every year. Continued deforestation is resulting in shortages in water and food supply, including in highly vulnerable countries and regions. Perhaps the most dramatic example is Haiti, where forest cover has plunged to less than 4% over recent decades, with devastating consequences for agriculture, rural livelihoods and ecosystem resilience. The Haitian government has recognized that restoration of forests and other intact ecosystems must be at the core of long-term recovery efforts. Another example is the Mau forest complex in Kenya, where the government has started an ambitious process of conservation and forest landscape restoration, because deforestation is threatening water supply to twelve rivers essential to agriculture throughout Kenya and in neighbouring countries.

Developing countries are increasingly recognizing the important role of forests in sustainable development, including in contributing to poverty alleviation, conserving biological diversity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Unfortunately, the wider development community has yet to fully embrace the new paradigm of investing in intact and sustainably managed ecosystems as essential yet affordable "green infrastructure" for sustainable development. Developing countries and their regional organizations need the full support of donors and the development community to maintain, sustainably manage and restore diverse and resilient forests. It is important to provide such support to developing countries using a comprehensive and strategic approach. This is one significant area which the UNFF and CBD Secretariats intend to facilitate through their joint activi-

ties by bringing all relevant actors to the table. This includes the Ministries from governments representing the Rio Conventions and forest issues. Another example of a holistic approach to forest and biodiversity issues is a recent memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat of the CBD and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), signed in Tokyo on 2 March this year, which *inter alia*, foresees the development of a support programme for implementation of the CBD programme of work on forests in ITTO producer countries.

To this end, the Secretariats of the CBD and the UNFF have already hosted the first-ever joint capacity-building workshop in September 2009 in Singapore, with support from the German government, the National Parks Board of Singapore, and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity. As a unique element amongst present capacity-building efforts, the workshop brought together CBD, UNFF and UNFCCC experts from the ASEAN countries, as well as China, India, and Papua New Guinea. Expertise was also provided by 7 of the 14 members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a global forum of international organizations to support the implementation of sustainable forest management. Contributing CPF members included the UN-REDD Programme organizations (UNEP, UNDP and FAO), IUCN, IUFRO, CIFOR and ITTO, in addition to the CBD and UNFF Secretariats. The evaluation by workshop participants showed that this holistic and coordinated approach has resulted in new understanding of feasible solutions and synergies at both the national and regional levels. At a practical level, colleagues from differing Ministries have discovered more of a common interest than they anticipated. This provides a new possibility for discussions about national and international forest policy and implementation, and could improve policy complementarity in the different international regimes in which these countries participate.

The CBD and UNFF Secretariats are planning to extend this type of capacity-building to other UN regions, alongside with other joint activities at global level, including the development of a joint publication in 2011 on the value of forest biodiversity for livelihoods and human well-being.

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¹ The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Joint CBD and UNFF activities throughout the International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and the International Year of Forests (2011) and beyond will include a series of regional and sub-regional capacity-building workshops on forest biodiversity in the context of climate change, supported and followed up at the national and regional level and expertise of members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). The increased attention towards forests and biodiversity due to these two International Years gives us a rare opportunity to strengthen implementation of the Rio commitments of 1992 at the national level, by supporting national governments and regional organizations. A joint ceremony for the closing of the International Year of Biodiversity in Kanazawa, Ishikawa

Prefecture, Japan, on 18-19 December 2010, will provide a seamless transition to the International Year of Forests.

Scheduled to achieve results in time for the celebrations of the Rio+20 anniversary in 2012, these activities will rest on a platform of high political awareness and public interest. The basis for this cooperation is the decision of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, and the eighth session of the UNFF, which resulted in a memorandum of understanding signed between the two Secretariats in December 2009. To coordinate joint activities, the recruitment of a joint staff member of the two Secretariats, based at the UNFF Secretariat in New York City, is being suggested, pending necessary financial support.

Forest biodiversity will remain high on the agenda throughout 2011 and 2012 and beyond, and we look forward to working with the international community, in particular with the other two Rio Conventions, to ensure that our constituencies are fully empowered to deliver the promise of Rio. The world's forests are a good place to start.

Jan L. McAlpine is Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat, and Ahmed Djoghlaif is Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Editor's note: MEA Bulletin invites articles from practitioners, MEAs and academics on issues that are of interest across the MEA community. Please contact the Editor, lynn@iisd.org, for further information.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**UNEP ANNOUNCES CHAMPIONS OF THE EARTH**

UNEP announced the UN's highest awards for environmental leadership, the 2010 Champions of the Earth, on 22 April 2010. Winners included: President Bharrat Jagdeo, Guyana, for his work in forestry and ecosystem infrastructure; President Mohamed Nasheed, the Maldives, for his international climate change campaigning; Prince Mostapha Zaher, Director General of the National Environmental Protection Agency, Afghanistan, for his sustainability advocacy; Taro Takahashi, Japan, for his pioneering research into how oceans cycle carbon; Zhou Xun, China, for her work on green life-styles; and Vinod Khosla,



L-R: Zhou Xun, Chinese Actor and Environment Advocate, received the Inspiration and Action Award from Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP (photo courtesy of UNEP)

US, for his work as a green energy entrepreneur and co-founder of Sun Microsystems ([http://www.unep.org/Docu-](http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=620&ArticleID=6536&l=en)

[ments.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=620&ArticleID=6538&l=en&t=1ong](http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=620&ArticleID=6538&l=en&t=1ong)).

In related news, UNEP in partnership with the non-profit institute AccountAbility, has released the 2010 Climate Competitiveness Index. The study represents the most comprehensive study to date of national progress in the creation of green jobs and economic growth through low carbon products and services, and shows that in spite of uncertainty surrounding international climate negotiations, countries have forged ahead with low carbon growth strategies in the first quarter of 2010 (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=620&ArticleID=6536&l=en>).

CHEMICALS AND WASTES**STOCKHOLM SECRETARIAT INVITES CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEN MAGAZINE, COMMENTS ON PROPOSED CHEMICALS**

The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention is inviting PCB Elimination Network (PEN) member contributions to the PEN Magazine. The aim of the magazine is to provide information and to exchange knowledge and expertise on issues related to the environmentally sound management of PCB oils and contaminated equipment. The theme of the first issue is "Inventories of PCBs – the place to start." Submissions should be made to the Secretariat by 31 May 2010 (<http://chm.pops.int/Programmes/PCBs/PCBsEliminationNetworkPEN/PEN-magazine/tabid/738/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

The Secretariat is also requesting comments on the draft risk profile on

hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD) currently being considered by the Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee (POPRC) (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/hrPOPRCMeetings/POPRC5/POPRC5Followupcommunications/HBCDInvitationforcommentsondraftRP/tabid/742/language/en-US/Default.aspx>). Comments are also requested on the draft risk management evaluation on endosulfan. Stakeholders are invited to submit additional information on the adverse human health effects of the chemical (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/hrPOPRCMeetings/POPRC5/POPRC5Followupcommunications/EndosulfanInvitationCommentsondraftRMEadd/tabid/743/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

Submissions are also requested on the draft guidance on alternatives to

perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) and its derivatives (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/POPsReviewCommittee/hrPOPRCMeetings/POPRC5/POPRC5Followupcommunications/PFOSalternativesguidanceInvitationforcommentsondraftRP/tabid/741/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

SAICM LAUNCHES INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) has launched the SAICM Information Clearinghouse. The Information Clearinghouse is intended to provide advice to countries on implementation of SAICM through request referrals for information and expertise in support of specific national actions, in accordance with Paragraph 28 of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy (<http://www.saicm.org/ich/>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC PREPARES FOR JUNE MEETING

The UNFCCC Secretariat has released documentation in the run up to the 32nd sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA), which will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 31 May-11 June 2010. Under SBSTA, a synthesis report on efforts undertaken to monitor and evaluate the implementation of adaptation projects, policies and programmes, the costs and effectiveness of completed projects, policies and programmes, and views on lessons learned, has been published (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/sbsta/eng/05.pdf>).

The UNFCCC has also published submissions from Australia, Indonesia, Norway and the EU on views related to carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) in geological formations as a possible mitigation technology (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/sbsta/eng/misc02.pdf>).

Under the SBI, submissions from parties on the draft terms of reference for the review of the Adaptation Fund have been released. The document includes sections on objective and scope of the review, methodology, and outcome and follow up (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/sbi/eng/07.pdf>).

Submissions on views and recommendations on the possible terms of reference for the review of the Adaptation Fund, received from Spain, on behalf of the EU, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan, have also been published (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/sbi/eng/misc02.pdf>).

In other news, the UNFCCC has released the conclusions adopted at the ninth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 9) and the 11th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 11), which took place from 9-11 April 2010, in Bonn, Germany (http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/kp/application/pdf/kp_conclusions_.pdf; http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/application/pdf/lca_conclusions_.pdf).

The creation of the Copenhagen Sustainable Meetings Protocol (CSMP) by a coalition of seven organizations has also been announced. The CSMP was inspired by the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 15), which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009,



COP15 Event Sustainability Report (image courtesy of the Copenhagen Sustainable Meetings Coalition)

and aims to increase the sustainability of future COPs and other large international meetings. The CSMP offers a flexible, umbrella framework that can be used to organize large, complex meetings in a more sustainable way. It is designed to be used in combination with the “COP15 Event Sustainability Report” (<http://www.e-pages.dk/visit-denmark/469/>).

IPCC PUBLISHES INFORMATION LEAFLETS

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has published a series of leaflets providing information on its ongoing work. The leaflets provide details on the goals, outline and timetable of the reports that are currently being prepared under the auspices of the Panel, namely: the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5); the special report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation; and the special report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation. A fourth leaflet provides information on the work of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>).



Leaflet on IPCC Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN) (image courtesy of the IPCC Secretariat)

OZONE MULTILATERAL FUND AGREES ON HCFC FUNDING GUIDELINES, SOUTH ASIAN ILLEGAL TRADE MEETING CONVENES

The 60th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund to the Montreal Protocol convened from 12-16 April 2010, in Montreal, Canada. The Committee agreed on hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) project guidelines that set out the eligibil-

ity and criteria for funding to enable countries to comply with the Montreal Protocol’s HCFC phase-out timetable. Specifically, the guidelines set out the principles to be used in regard to the level of funding, and how countries can establish their starting point for aggregate HCFC reductions. Under the guidelines, manufacturing capacity in developing countries will be eligible for funding to convert to non-HCFC technology provided that it was installed before 21 September 2007. Guidelines were also agreed to address the phase-out of HCFC consumption in the refrigeration servicing sector of low-volume-consuming countries to enable them to meet compliance targets. The guidelines also consider funding for the introduction of low global warming potential alternatives to HCFCs (<http://www.multilateral-fund.org/news/1271429352850.htm>).

In other Ozone news, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Government of India convened the Border Dialogue on Monitoring and Controlling Trade in Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) meeting from 8-9 April 2010, in Chalsa, India. The meeting included a one-day regional dialogue with representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. This was followed by a one-day capacity building training for customs and enforcement officers to enhance their knowledge and skills in identifying and handling ODS. Representatives from the World Customs Organization’s Regional Intelligence Office for Asia and the Pacific and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime also participated in the workshop (http://www.unep.fr/ozon-action/information/mmcfiles/6340-e-chalsa_PR2010.pdf).

In related news, OzonAction honored three journalists for their reporting on ozone and climate change issues on Earth Day, 22 April. The competition encouraged journalists from developing countries to submit recently published articles that represent the best reporting on interlinkages between ozone and climate change issues. Winners included journalists from Oman, Panama and India (http://www.unep.fr/ozon-action/information/mmcfiles/6347-e-journalists_honored_by_unep.pdf).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD FORMS PARTNERSHIP WITH WORLD FUTURE COUNCIL

The CBD Secretariat and the World Future Council have established a partnership for 2010 as a contribution to the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity. The World Future Council has selected biodiversity as the topic for this year's Future Policy Award, which celebrates policies with particularly positive effects on the rights of future generations. The CBD Secretariat will host the award ceremony on 26 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, as part of the official programme of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2010/pr-2010-04-22-wfc-en.pdf>).

In other CBD-related news, the Secretariat has published the ninth volume of the "REDD-plus & Biodiversity e-Newsletter." Aiming to inform CBD national focal points and partners about biodiversity aspects related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest

carbon stocks (REDD+), this volume highlights a new collaboration between the CBD and the International Tropical Timber Organization, and several projects and publications related to REDD+. The e-Newsletter also includes a call for abstracts for the International Conference on Biodiversity Conservation in Transboundary Tropical Forests, to be held in Quito, Ecuador, from 21-24 July 2010 (<http://www.cbd.int/forest/newsletters/redd-newsletter-vol-9.pdf>).

Finally, Angola recently acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, bringing the number of parties to 158 (<https://www.cbd.int/biosafety/signing-list.shtml>).

CMS PUBLISHES COP 9 PROCEEDINGS

The Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) has published the proceedings of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the Convention, in English, French and Spanish. A copy will be sent to all national focal points, scientific councilors, CMS partners and COP 9 participants. Further copies can

be requested from the CMS Secretariat, at: secretariat@cms.int (<http://www.cms.int/index.html>).

UNGA TO HOLD HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON BIODIVERSITY

To mark the International Year of Biodiversity, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) decided on 15 April 2010 to hold a high-level event on biodiversity, on 22 September 2010, the eve of the opening of the general debate of its 65th session. The high-level event will provide an occasion for world leaders to provide political impetus and support for a sustained global response to the world's biodiversity challenges, and the need to address each of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). During the high-level event, roundtable discussions will discuss post-2010 biodiversity targets, the links between climate change and biodiversity, and the importance of biodiversity to poverty alleviation and development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2010/pr-2010-04-16-unga-en.pdf>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD AND UNDP DISCUSS COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and representatives of the Drylands Development Center of the UN Development Programme (UNDP-DDC) met on 15 April 2010, where they agreed on a two-year collaborative approach to support the Convention's stakeholders to align their national action plans with the UNCCD 10-year strategy adopted in 2008. This collaboration will support mainstreaming the action plans into rel-



Representatives of the UNCCD Secretariat and UNDP-DDC (photo courtesy of the UNCCD Secretariat)

evant policy processes, and raise awareness about the Convention and its related issues, especially poverty alleviation. Noting the interest African governments have demonstrated in their joint policy analysis of Climate Change in the African Drylands, the two institutions agreed to advance work in this area. They also agreed to raise awareness on successful cases of alignment and mainstreaming, among other activities (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/undp/menu.php>).

The UNCCD has added a webpage on "Implementation Review," focusing on activities related to the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The webpage offers a link to the report of a recent CRIC Bureau meeting, during which the



Logo courtesy of the UNCCD Secretariat

revised dates and location for the next CRIC meeting were discussed (<http://www.unccd.int/cric/menu.php>).

In other news, registration for Land Day 2, which the UNCCD Secretariat will convene on 5 June 2010, in Bonn, Germany, in parallel to the Bonn Climate Change Conference, has opened. Land Day 2 will seek to: increase understanding among Bonn Climate Change Conference participants of the links between unsustainable use of land and worsening climate change; demonstrate the commitment of the three Rio Convention Secretariats to strengthen their cooperation through synergetic implementation of their respective action programmes – the NAPAs, NAPS and NBSAPs – at country level; and reinvigorate the commitment made by countries for the implementation of the 2007 Bali Action Plan as the main vehicle for generating concrete recommendations (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/land-day/2010/menu.php>).

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DSD PREPARES FOR CSD 18

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), which serves as the Secretariat for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), is finalizing preparations for the 3-14 May 2010 meeting of the 18th session of the CSD. Among other

updates and new documents, the organization of work has been updated (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/csd-18/csd18_organization_of_work.pdf). In addition, DSD, the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention and the UNEP Chemicals Branch have announced a

high-level launching event for the publication "Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals," which they prepared for CSD 18. The event will take place on 12 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York, US (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18_highlevelvegsm.shtml).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

RAMSAR COORDINATES AMERICAS REGION MEETING

The first meeting of the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Corals for the Americas Region, organized by the Mexican Government in coordination with the Ramsar Secretariat, took place in Mexico City, Mexico, from 24-26 March 2010. The event brought together representatives from 14 contracting parties, members of the Initiative, NGOs, and other organizations. During the meeting, country delegates presented the national state of the art for mangroves and corals. International and Mexican organizations introduced programmes that seek to articulate actions in the Regional Initiative's development. The session also included a field visit to the Mexican National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO). Participants approved the Regional Initiative's governance structure, as well as

its work and financial plan for the period 2010-2012, as per the request of the 40th session of Ramsar's Standing Committee (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-archives-2010-america-initiative/main/ramsar/1-26-45-437%5E24567_4000_0__).

CONFERENCE ON THE REVISION OF THE HNS CONVENTION OPENS

The International Conference on the Revision of the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS Convention) is taking place from 26-30 April 2010, at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in London, UK. The conference will consider for adoption a draft Protocol to the HNS Convention, which aims to bring the HNS Convention into effect and intends to address practical problems

that have prevented many States from ratifying the original Convention. Despite being adopted in 1996, to date, the Convention has only 14 ratifications and is some way from meeting the conditions for its entry into force. The HNS Convention seeks to establish a two-tier system for compensation to be paid in the event of accidents at sea, in this case involving hazardous and noxious substances, such as chemicals. Three issues have been instrumental in discouraging States from ratifying the HNS Convention, and are addressed by the Protocol, namely: the difficulties in setting up the reporting system for packaged goods; the enforcement of contributions to the liquefied natural gas (LNG) account by titleholders in non-State parties; and the omission by many States to submit reports on contributing cargo when ratifying the Convention (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1859&doc_id=12808).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

WORLD BANK AND IMF MEETINGS UNDERSCORE CHALLENGES OF MEETING MDGs

The Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) convened in Washington DC, US, from 24-25 April 2010. At the conclusion, the participating Ministers of Finance issued two Communiqués stating that the global financial crisis interrupted progress in reducing poverty to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and highlighting the need for a global commitment to implement policies that are collectively consistent with the goals for a balanced and stable global economy, renewed job creation and price stability, and to avoid protectionism in all its forms. Unlike previous years, the IMF and World Bank Spring Meeting Commu-

niqués did not mention climate change or green growth (<http://www.imf.org/external/spring/2010/index.htm>).

GEF SGP SUPPORTS GREENING ARMENIA'S HOUSING SECTOR

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) is piloting a residential project to showcase renewable energy and energy efficiency practices in apartment buildings in Armenia. Specifically, the project supports the installation of energy efficient (EE) doors and windows, EE lighting systems and solar hot water and heating systems. As a result of the project, a 40% reduction in the consumption of natural gas by residents and 10% reduction in electricity use has already been reported. It is envisaged that by the end of the project, in

August 2010, carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced by about 62 tons. The GEF SGP has provided US\$30,970 to the project, which has strategic importance for Armenia, a country with no domestic sources of fossil fuel. The direct beneficiaries of the project are 15 households and three public service facilities located in the pilot building (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/2908>).

In other GEF SGP news, on 27 March 2010, China officially became one of the countries implementing SGP projects. In 2009, China announced its first call for proposals for SGP grants, receiving 156 proposals within a 30-day period. The National Steering Committee of SGP China approved 22 projects, which encompass all of GEF's six focal areas (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/2878>).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- On 22 April 2010, the General Assembly re-elected Achim Steiner as **Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**. His second four-year term of office will begin on 15 June 2010, and end 14 June 2014 (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=620&ArticleID=6542&l=en>).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **41st Meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee and Management Working Group:** 26-30 April 2010. Kobuleti, Georgia. http://ramsar.rgis.ch/pdf/sc/41/sc41_doc23.pdf
- **CSD 18:** 3-14 May 2010. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd18/>
- **Seventh Session of the Basel Convention Open-Ended Working Group:** 10-14 May 2010. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.basel.int/meetings/frsetmain.php>
- **Workshop on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change in Transboundary Basins:** 10-11 May 2010. Geneva, Switzerland. http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/transboundary_adaptation_workshop.html
- **CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention:** 10-28 May 2010. Nairobi, Kenya. <http://www.cbd.int/sbstta14/> and <http://www.cbd.int/wgri3/>