



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF 9 Adopts Resolution on Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication

The ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 9), themed “Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication,” was held from 24 January-4 February 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. Over 700 participants attended the two-week session to address: the International Year of Forests (Forests 2011); forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication; and means of implementation for sustainable forest management (SFM). Delegates also



Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF Secretariat (photo courtesy of the UNFF Secretariat)

attended a two-day High-Level Segment, which included the official launch of Forests 2011, and four High-Level Roundtables on: forests and people; forests and finance; “forests-plus;” and forests and Rio+20. A Ministerial Declaration was adopted on Thursday, 3 February. Delegates also participated in a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue and a panel discussion on food, energy and economic challenges, with a special focus on women and children. Delegates spent much of their time discussing aspects of, and sharing national experiences and lessons learned related to the UNFF 9 theme, identifying concrete means through which SFM can contribute to poverty eradication and human well-being. Delegates adopted the Resolution on Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication, which includes sections on: assessment of progress for achieving the Global Objectives on Forests and implementing the Forest Instrument; regional cooperation; Forests 2011; enhanced cooperation; means of implementation; and actions regarding forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication (<http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff9/>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Ramsar Convention Marks 40th Anniversary

By Secretary General Anada Tiega, Ramsar Convention

2011 is a special year for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. On 2 February, it celebrated the 40th anniversary of the meeting of 18 countries in the Iranian city of Ramsar to create this intergovernmental treaty. Over the past 40 years, 160 countries have become party to the Convention, and 1,911 Wetlands of International Importance, which cover over 186 million hectares,

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Sustainable Development of Tourism

(UNWTO, 2011) The February 2011 issue of this newsletter, by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), includes articles on tourism and the green economy, the International Year of Biodiversity, and the climate change agenda. The UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories, Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and Council, and Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism are also addressed (http://www.unwto.org/sdt/ebulletin/en/pdf/E-bul_19_EN.pdf).

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► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND



UNCCD Selects Theme for World Day to Combat Desertification, Preparations for Bonn Meetings Ongoing

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has announced that the theme for 2011 World Day to Combat Desertification will be "Forests Keep Drylands Working." This World Day is celebrated annually on 17 June, and the 2011 theme was selected to contribute to Forests

2011, the International Year of Forests (http://www.unccd.int/media/pressrel/showpressrel.php?pr=press07_02_11).

Among the preparations being undertaken in anticipation of the Second Special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-2) and the ninth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 9), which will convene from 16-25 February 2011, in Bonn, Germany, was the Third Sub-regional Working Group Meeting of the UNCCD. This event convened in Kigali, Rwanda, from 20-21 January 2011, to facilitate Central African countries' efforts to prepare for the events. The meeting was organized by the Global Mechanism together with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Participants discussed the implementation

of a roadmap established at the Second Working Group Meeting (Libreville, Gabon, from 25-26 May 2009), which included recommendations to increase awareness of UNCCD related issues within national governments, strengthen frameworks for action for the elaboration of joint procedures on the UNCCD in international forums, and develop summaries of the sub-regional action plans to facilitate the work of new focal points in the sub-region (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/events/central-african-countries-step-up-action-ahead-of-cric-9/>).

In addition, the White Paper for the scientific peer review of the UNCCD set of impact indicators has been released (http://www.unccd.int/science/docs/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20White%20paper_Scientific%20review%20set%20of%20indicators_Ver1_31011....pdf).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE



An image of his Majesty the King of Thailand in front of the UN Conference Center

UNFCCC Announces March/April Negotiating Session in Bangkok

The UNFCCC Secretariat has announced the dates for the first round of formal negotiations in 2011. According to the information note to parties, the 16th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 16), the 14th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 14), as well as workshops organized pursuant to the Cancun Agreements and to other decisions, will take place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3-8 April 2011. These meetings and workshops are to be preceded by preparatory regional group meetings from 30 March-2 April 2011. The meetings will be held at the UN Conference Centre of the UN Economic and Social Com-

mission for Asia and the Pacific (http://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/notifications/application/pdf/notif_parties_20110128.pdf).

In other news, the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat has posted proposals on its website for projects from Uruguay, Ecuador, Eritrea, Solomon Islands and Tanzania. The proposals are open for comments from interested stakeholders. The Adaptation Fund Board particularly encourages comments from local communities and organizations working in proximity to the proposed project sites (<http://www.adaptation-fund.org/projectprogrammeproposals>).

The UNFCCC Secretariat has also released the proposed agenda, annotated agenda and draft work programme for the 59th meeting of the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), scheduled to take place from

14-18 February 2011, in Bonn, Germany (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/Meetings/MeetingInfo/DB/3CHDFA208UPQL7Z/view>).

Multilateral Fund Releases Summary of Executive Committee's Decisions at 62nd Meeting

The Secretariat of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol has released a summary of the most significant decisions and discussions taken at its 62nd meeting. The Executive Committee approved 86 investment projects and work programme activities in 50 countries at a total value of US\$38,313,126, plus support costs of US\$8,601,535. Projects approved included: the first tranches of stage one of the Hydrochlorofluorocarbon Phase-out Management Plans (HPMPs) for 16 countries (Armenia, Belize, Burkina Faso, Chad, Dominica, Gabon, Grenada, Madagascar, Malawi, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Turkmenistan, Colombia, Nigeria and Pakistan); 16 HCFC stand-alone projects in nine countries (Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic); and support to 27 countries for the extension of their institutional strengthening projects. The Committee also approved the implementation of a pilot project for ozone depleting substance (ODS) waste management and disposal in Cuba to destroy a total of 45.3 metric tons of ODS waste (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/news/1296053185110.htm>).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

have been named by these countries. These “Ramsar Sites” represent the largest global network of protected areas.

Since 1997, 2 February also has been celebrated globally as World Wetlands Day (WWD), and this year WWD 2011 was focused on “Forests for water and wetlands,” recognizing that the UN General Assembly has declared 2011 as the “International Year of Forests.”

Ramsar defines wetlands as permanently or temporarily humid areas. They include lakes, rivers, ponds, marshes, swamps, peat bogs, beaches, reefs, mangrove forests ... and more. Wetlands are more than just a muddy swamp – many economists looking at the ecosystem services they deliver put their value higher than for any other ecosystem. Yet wetlands continue to be destroyed to make way for inland and coastal developments and degraded through poor water allocation decisions, pollution, and excessive water extraction.

The Convention has many tools to encourage sustainable management of

wetlands, but equally important are the tools that manage at an ecologically more ‘coherent’ scale, at the river basin level. Those tools help in dealing with the global reality that many wetlands and their river basins cross national boundaries and require transboundary initiatives for effective management. Another challenge for all environmental treaties is working across sectors. For Ramsar implementers, working with the water sector, which manages water rather than the wetlands that carry the water, requires raising officials’ awareness of the need to take full account of the suite of ecosystem services that wetlands deliver. Integrated water management initiatives can be counter-productive if wetlands and their ecosystem services are left out of them. Most of all, the Convention’s member countries need to harness the political will within their countries to raise the level of importance for sustaining the health of the wetlands that supply such essential services to all people whether rich or poor.

Communicators tell us that people respond better to positive messages than to doom and gloom, although the latter is an understandable response

from those of us alarmed by the loss and degradation of wetlands. Join us in a year of positive celebration by using this as an opportunity to publicize both the natural beauty and the practical utility of wetlands. The Ramsar Secretariat has prepared materials for use in celebrations, and each month we will be elaborating one of our 12 key messages about wetlands and the Convention to inspire action at international, national and local levels.



Anada Tiega, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention

To find out more about the 40th activities, go to www.ramsar.org/40-Anniversary. Additional information on World Wetlands Day is available here: <http://www.ramsar.org/WWD/>

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 Launches Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, Develops Procurement Guidelines

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) launched the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, which aims to influence policies on sustainable tourism, develop projects and provide a global platform for communication. The Global Partnership, which also aims to facilitate a shift towards a green economy, is made up of 18 governments, five UN organizations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Develop-



Image courtesy of UNEP

ment, 17 international and business organizations, and 16 non-governmental organisations. The Partnership will focus on seven thematic areas: policy frameworks; climate change; environment and biodiversity; poverty alleviation; cultural and natural heritage; sustainable tourism practices for the private sector; and finance and investments. The Secretariat will be housed with UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, in Paris, France. UNEP and UNWTO are currently finalizing the tourism chapter of the Green Economy Report (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=655&ArticleID=6886&l=en&t=lo> ng).

In addition, UNEP and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) have cooperated with Fleet Forum to develop guidelines on sustainable procurement of vehicles for the UN. The guidelines are intended to provide a summary of the key environmental and social impacts relating to the production, use and disposal of vehicles, together with technical specifications to assist procurers in attracting more sustainable suppliers. The UN spent US\$477 million on vehicles in 2009. The guidelines for the sustainable purchase of vehicles are one of a series on sustainable procurement (http://www.greeningtheblue.org/sites/default/files/UNSP_Product%20Sheet_Vehicles_basic%20and%20advanced_all%20regions.pdf).

BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES Secretary-General Highlights CITES Relevance for International Year of Forests

In a message recalling that 2011 is both the start of the UN Decade on Biodiversity and the International Year of Forests, John Scanlon, Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), has highlighted the CITES framework for

tracing international trade in the approximately 34,000 species it protects (which includes around 200 tree species) and ensuring that their derivative products are from legal and sustainable sources. Scanlon urged active cooperation to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of the world’s forests, referring to CITES’ existing collaboration with key international organizations in the field (http://www.cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110131_sg_statement_IYF.shtml).

[org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110131_sg_statement_IYF.shtml](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/SG/2011/20110131_sg_statement_IYF.shtml).



Logos courtesy of the CITES and UNFF Secretariats

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

ABS Protocol Opened for Signature

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) was opened for signature by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 2 February 2011, during a ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York, US. Representatives of Colombia, Yemen, Brazil and Algeria signed the Nagoya Protocol during the ceremony. On the occasion, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on all parties to expedite the early entry into force of this new legal instrument at the service of sustainable development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Monique Barbut, CEO and Chair of the Global Environment Facility, announced a US\$1 million dollar project to support the early entry into force of the Protocol, which will remain open for signature until 1 February 2012 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2011/pr-2011-02-02-abs-en.pdf>).

In other CBD news, the Secretariat has requested submission of views with regard to relevant safeguards in

reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks (REDD+). In addition, it has requested submission of possible indicators to assess the contribution of REDD+ to achieving the CBD objectives, as well as views on potential mechanisms to monitor impacts from REDD+ and other ecosystem-based approaches for climate change mitigation measures on biodiversity (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-018-forest-en.pdf>).

Regarding biosafety, the CBD Secretariat has announced the launch of an online forum under the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH). The forum seeks to promote a better exchange of information, views and experiences on the current status of the BCH (https://bch.cbd.int/user/signin.shtml?returnurl=%2fprotocol%2fcpb_art20_forums_nfps.shtml). The Secretariat has also circulated a notification on cooperation to identify capacity-building needs for research and information exchange on socio-economic considerations with regard

to living modified organisms (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-016-bs-en.pdf>).

Chair of Friends of CMS Receives Environment Prize

German actor, film producer and Chair of the Friends of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Hannes Jaenicke was awarded the NatureLife Environment Prize 2011 for his commitment towards saving en-



Hannes Jaenicke (photo courtesy of the CMS Secretariat)

dangered species. Friends of CMS is a German-based non-profit organization set up in 2005 to raise funds for conservation and sustainable development projects which support the aims of the CMS. The environment foundation Umweltstiftung Nature Life acknowledged Hannes Jaenicke's role in trying to preserve the world's last refuges of migratory and other threatened animal species and prevent further unsustainable exploitation (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2011/01_jan/nw_hannes_environment_award.htm).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

Ramsar Celebrates 40th Anniversary, Reports on Site Designation

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Secretariat) celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Conven-

tion, which was adopted on 2 February 1971, in the city of Ramsar, Iran. For the celebrations, the Ramsar Secretariat: developed a special 40th anniversary logo; prepared a 40th anniversary booklet about the Convention's past, present and future; planned special anniversary celebrations with the international community in Ramsar city, Iran, in March, and in Geneva, Switzerland, in May; drafted 12 key messages about Ramsar and wetlands, to be shared from 2 February 2011 to 2 February 2012; and launched a video clip contest on the anniversary and why we care about wetlands.

In addition, on 2 February 2011, the Ramsar Secretariat also celebrated World Wetlands Day 2011, under the theme "Forests for water and wetlands," in recognition that 2011 has been declared the International Year of Forests by the UN (<http://www.ramsar.org/40-Anniversary>; <http://www.ramsar.org/WWD>; http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-40ramsar-40-videoclips/main/ramsar/1-63-443-492_4000_0__).

In other Ramsar news, the Secretariat has reported that the United Arab Emirates has designated the Wadi Wurayah National Park as its second Wetland of International Importance (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-rs-uae/main/ramsar/1-26%5E24923_4000_2__).



The Wadi Wurayah National Park, UAE's second Wetland of International Importance (photo courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

IMO and Bangladesh Discuss Ship Recycling

Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), met Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, at IMO headquarters in London, UK, on 28 January 2011. During the meeting, Mitropoulos sought to enlist support and action for the ratification by Bangladesh of the Hong Kong International Convention on the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, and the implementation and enforcement of the Conventions' technical standards. The IMO Secretary-General also offered technical cooperation assistance for capacity building in Bangladesh (<http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/Briefing-03-2011-bangladesh.aspx>).



Banner courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Agriculture Greenhouse Emissions in Latin America and the Caribbean: Current Situation, Future Trends and One Policy Experiment

(IDB, 2011) The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have presented this discussion paper on the implications of a hypothetical complete ban on land clearing for agriculture in tropical areas of Latin America and the Caribbean, which underscores that the carbon market will not be sufficient to compensate the rural poor for lost income. The study, authored by Stephen Vosti, Siwa Msangi, Eirivelthon Lima, Ricardo Quiroga, Miroslav Batka and Chad Zanocco, is part of ongoing efforts by the IDB to improve information on and understanding of the potential costs and benefits of policies seeking to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The paper concludes that a complete ban on land clearing in the tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean would require compensatory policies to make the ban feasible and to prevent local poverty from increasing (<http://idb-docs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=35584254>).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES



Cover of the seventh edition of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat's technical assistance newsletter

Stockholm Secretariat Releases Technical Assistance Newsletter

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has released the seventh edition of its technical assistance newsletter. The December 2010-January 2011 issue includes articles on: taking stock of 2010 and planning for 2011; activities of the Stockholm Regional Centre in Spain; addressing the challenges posed by new Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);

the Safe Planet Campaign at the Cancun climate Summit; information exchange under the PCBs Elimination Network; a workshop on effective participation in the POP Review Committee and the Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee; and a synergies workshop in San Salvador, El Salvador (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/Media/Newsletters/tabid/778/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

Mercury INC 2 Makes Progress on New Treaty

Delegates at the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury (INC 2), which convened from 24-28 January 2011, in Chiba, Japan, agreed to negotiate the new treaty based on an elements paper prepared by the Secretariat (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.2/3), and offered initial responses to the paper element-by-element. By the end of the week-long meeting, delegates had achieved a full first reading of the elements paper, and mandated the Secretariat to prepare a new draft text, taking into account discussions at INC 2, for further negotiation at INC 3, scheduled to convene in October 2011 (<http://www.iisd.ca/mercury/inc2/>).

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD and UNCSO Bureaus Preparing for Upcoming Meetings

The third meeting of the Bureau of the 19th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 19) took place in four parts on the side lines of the 13-14 January 2011 meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), in Panama City, Panama.



A view of Panama City (photo courtesy of UN-DSD)

Among other things, the Bureau reviewed the Chair's Summary of the SCP meeting, and noted that, while it was a "good reflection of what has happened during the meeting, the meeting was of the view that it did not represent the full spectrum of regional views due to under representation of some regions in the meeting." The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the UN Environment Programme have been requested to prepare jointly a background document on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP by 15 February 2011, in order to facilitate the discussions during the Intergov-

ernmental Preparatory Meeting (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_pdfs/csd-19/Minutes-of-the-Third-Bureau-meetingfinal.pdf).

The Bureau for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) held two meetings in January. On 7 January, Georgios Kostakos, Officer-in-Charge of the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, discussed that Panel's preparations and indicated that a second meeting is expected to take place in late February 2011 in South Africa. The Panel will brief the Member States about its activities under the auspices of the General Assembly in



Georgios Kostakos, Officer-in-Charge of the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability (photo courtesy of the UN)

mid-March 2011. Bureau members were informed that Regional Commissions have started planning and organizing regional meetings and events in support of the preparatory process, but progress on national preparations remains slow due to lack of funding (http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/bureau_doc/Minutes-of-the-9th-Bureau-Meeting.pdf).

On 11 January, Bureau members learned, among other things, that in conversations with Brazil, it has been proposed that an interval of a few days be scheduled between the final Prep-Com and the UNCSD, to permit time for thematic discussions and conference related activities, including activities by the Major Groups. Bureau members also discussed when the zero draft for the outcome document should be prepared (http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/bureau_doc/Minutes-of-10th-Bureau-Meeting.pdf).



Banner courtesy of UNCSD 2012

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT



Ban Ki-moon during the World Economic Forum (photo courtesy of the World Economic Forum)

World Economic Forum Leaders Discuss Climate Change and Green Growth

The 41st World Economic Forum Annual Meeting was held in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, from 24-28 January 2010, gathering over 2,500 leaders from industry, government, international organizations, academia and civil society. Discussions focused on green growth, climate change and the water-food-energy nexus. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon delivered remarks to the Forum, highlighting that growth in a resource-constrained environment requires rethinking towards a “free market revolution for global sustainability” by connecting the dots between climate change, water, energy and food. He underlined the urgency of: ensuring sustainable, climate-resilient green growth, generating a clean energy revolution; linking the development and climate agendas; combining the efforts of business, government and civil society; and linking discussions on global security and global sustainability. Ban highlighted the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (GSP) that he had appointed and said he had asked the panel to consider two questions: how we organize ourselves economically, and how we manage increasingly scarce resources. He said the GSP would finalize its recommendations by the end of December 2011 so they could feed into inter-governmental processes leading up to the UNCSO (<http://climate-1.iisd.org/news/world-economic-forum-leaders-discuss-green-growth/>).

Adaptation Fund Receives Large Contributions

The Swedish Government has contributed US\$15.69 million (100 million Swedish Krona) to the Adaptation Fund Trust Fund. Recent pledges to the Adaptation Fund include approximately US\$10 million from Australia and US\$1.38 million (Euro 1 million) from the Brussels Capital region of Belgium. The Adaptation Fund has approved four project proposals for funding and an additional nine project concepts have been endorsed (<http://www.adaptation-fund.org/node/1103>).

GEF CEO Endorses Energy Efficiency Projects in Climate Change and Biodiversity Focal Areas

During the month of January, Monique Barbut, CEO of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has endorsed several GEF projects with a strong focus on energy efficiency. CEO endorsement is the final step in GEF project cycle approval. Full-sized projects approved include a provincial energy efficiency scale-up programme in China, a regional programme on promoting energy efficiency in the Pacific, a project on industrial energy efficiency in Thailand, a project to promote energy efficiency in Indonesian industries through system optimization and energy management standards, and a project to promote energy efficiency in the residential and public sectors in Nigeria. A medium-sized pilot project was also approved for biogas generation from animal manure in Moldova.

Regarding biodiversity-related projects, those endorsed during January focus on protected areas, biodiversity conservation in production lands and biosafety. Full-sized projects endorsed include: a regional project to promote forestry and protected area management in Fiji, Niue, Vanuatu and Samoa, under GEF's programme Pacific Alliance for Sustainability; and a project on strengthening the protected area network in Southern Tanzania to improve the effectiveness of national parks in addressing threats to

biodiversity. Medium sized projects approved will focus on strengthening institutions and policy to increase biodiversity conservation on production lands in Colombia, and projects to support the implementation of national biosafety frameworks in Turkey and Tajikistan. A medium sized project was also endorsed for the disposal of POPs pesticides and initial steps for containment of dumped POPs pesticides in Georgia (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/geffsp/geffmsp>).

World Bank to Hold Virtual Consultations on its Technology Strategy for Development, Strengthens Partnership with Republic of Korea

The World Bank has announced that it will begin, on 4 February 2011, virtual consultations on its new Technology Strategy. The consultations will guide the Bank's work in using technological improvements as a driver for human development during the next five years. Major goals of the strategy include: increasing the number of people with affordable Internet access; boosting the use of cell phones and other information technologies to deliver health, education and other development outcomes; and helping make governments, service providers and development agencies accountable for results. Real-time consultations will be held for the Americas, Europe, Africa and Middle East, and Asia (<http://go.worldbank.org/AMAYKG85X0>).

In related news, the World Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Republic of Korea's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), on 24 January 2010, to strengthen cooperation for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation. The MoU aims to strengthen the partnership between NEMA and the World Bank in the field of DRR and climate change adaptation by enhancing the capacity of relevant stakeholders across Asia and the Pacific (<http://go.worldbank.org/FX07MDNA40>).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **16th Meeting of Ramsar STRP:** 14-18 February 2011. Gland, Switzerland. http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-meetings/main/ramsar/1-26-405_4000_0__
- **UNCCD CRIC 9 and CST SS-2:** 16-25 February 2011. Bonn, Germany. <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cric9/>
- **CBD AHTEG Meeting on Invasive Alien Species:** 16-18 February 2011. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=AHTEG-IAS-02>
- **International Conference on Building Partnerships for Moving towards Zero Waste:** 16-17 February 2011. Tokyo, Japan. http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml
- **ITTO/CITES Workshop on Improving the Implementation of CITES for Mahogany:** 16-18 February 2011. Brasilia, Brazil. <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>
- **UNEP GC26/GMEF:** 21-24 February 2011. Nairobi, Kenya. <http://www.unep.org/gc/gc26/>