



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD Science Committee Discusses Refinement of Indicators



The dais during UNCCD CRIC 9. L-R: COP President Francisco Armando Gandia, Undersecretary of Environmental Policies Coordination, Argentina; Director General, Africa and Global and Sectoral Affairs, BMZ, Friedrich Kutschelt, Germany; and Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD Executive Secretary.

The Second Special Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-2) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has concluded in Bonn, Germany, following three days of discussions on topics including: the establishment of a knowledge management system; the refinement of impact indicators; and ways to improve the organization of the 2nd UNCCD Scientific Conference. On the 2nd Scientific Conference, the final report notes that this Conference, to be held in 2012 at a special session of the CST, is to consider the theme, "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas." It notes that balanced geographic representation of scientists is essential, and recommends that the Secretariat avoid the risk of duplication of effort with the ongoing economics of desertification, land degradation and drought (E-DLDD) initiative. The final report also states that, on the topic of strengthening the provision of scientific advice, links to mechanisms dealing with desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the intergovernmental platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), should be explored, in order to see how DLDD scientific issues could be included within those frameworks. A number of e-Forums will follow up on topics, including the needs with regard to the development of a knowledge management system and the refinement of impact indicators to measure the implementation of strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year Strategic Plan. On 21 February 2011, the ninth session of the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 9) will begin a week-long session, also in Bonn (<http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cric9/>).

Continued on page 2

MEA Clusters In This Issue

- **Forests, Deserts and Land**
ITTO-supported Bamboo Center Opens Page 2
- **Chemicals and Wastes**
Stockholm Releases Climate Change and POPs Study Page 3
- **Sustainable Development**
UNCSD Secretariat Details Developments Page 3
- **Biodiversity and Wildlife**
CBD Highlights IPCC Work Plan of Relevance to Biodiversity; CITES Facilitates Access to Texts; Argentina and Chile to Conserve the South Andean Huemul Page 4
- **Trade, Finance and Investment**
GEF-CBD Retreat Discusses GEF Support; World Bank Institute Offers CDM and JI E-Learning Course; Germany Confers Legal Capacity to Adaptation Fund Board Page 5
- **Climate and Atmosphere**
Bulgaria's Participation in KP Mechanisms Approved; Task Groups Consult with IPCC Members; Ozone Parties Invited to Join Declaration Pages 5-6
- **Water, Oceans and Wetlands**
Ramsar Reports on Site Designations; *Ad Hoc* Working Group Convenes Page 6
- **International Organizations**
UNEP GC 26/GMEF Focuses on Rio 2012; EMG Presents Progress Report on Drylands Report Page 7

GUEST ARTICLE

Providing Scientific Advice to the UNCCD: Getting Science to Policy on Land Issues

By Richard Thomas, United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)

An electronic forum solicited 172 responses from 52 countries on how to improve the use of science by sustainable land management policy makers and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Continued on page 2

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication

(UNEP, 2011) The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) conducted this project as a key contribution of UNEP to the UNCCD. The publication indicates that 10 sectors where UNEP says investment would be key to building a green economy are: agriculture, buildings, energy supply, fisheries, forestry, industry including energy efficiency, tourism, transport, waste management and water (<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

The results of this forum were presented at a side event of the Second Special Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST-2), at its meeting in Bonn, Germany, on 17 February 2011.

The greatest number of responses was received from the Latin American and Caribbean region, although the analysis indicated that there were no significant patterns to the answers of the nine questions posed when examined either by geographic region or institutional affiliation. An overwhelming majority of respondents considered that science was not informing policy well on the issues of land degradation and that new avenues were required. Scientists opined that desertification remains a low priority by policy makers, even for affected countries, unless the issue is linked to either climate change or food security. This suggests that public awareness aspects of the convention should shift in focus: away from protecting the soil, and to strengthening knowledge of the links between land, food security and livelihoods. The analysis also suggests that more research needs to be done on the balance that dryland inhabitants achieve in their livelihood strategies through, on the one hand, production activities that depend mainly

on agriculture and, on the other hand, non-land dependent activities that add value, such as artisanal crafts, ecotourism and renewable energy generation. The respondents also indicated that the issues of employment creation and dealing with the water crisis are receiving insufficient attention from the Convention.

A majority of respondents indicated that science could be more effective in the policy arena if an independent, interdisciplinary panel could be established to inform the UNCCD in similar ways to the existing Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the proposed intergovernmental platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES). This panel would need to be as free from political influence as possible, with the agenda of a panel being set by all interested parties including practitioners and civil society organizations. As stated by Professor Joachim von Braun recently, science must be independent from political influence as non-independent scientific advice has zero credibility.

While the overwhelming desire of the scientists canvassed was in favour of the establishment of a new international body, current realities suggest that this process could start by linking

to either the IPCC or IBPES or both, via *ad hoc* technical working groups that could tackle a very specific aspect of land degradation and deliver sound outputs quickly. If successful, this incremental approach could gradually lead up to the establishment of a separate body. Therefore, there is a feeling that there needs to be a sort of ‘proof of concept’ phase. The recent initiative of BMZ and the UNCCD on the economics of land degradation (Measuring the value of land, UNCCD/GIZ/BMZ) offers a positive example of how broad-based partnerships can be created to deliver concrete outputs that are time bound.

Action is urgently needed on this issue, in order to maintain the newly awakened scientific communities’ interest in supporting the UNCCD. The UNCCD cannot afford protracted discussions, as scientists may turn their attention to other avenues, including the IPCC and the fledgling IPBES, to focus their attention and outlets for delivering scientific evidence and advice on land and water-based issues.

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

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND



The dais during the GGWSSI opening plenary. L-R: Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD Executive Secretary; Monique Barbut, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson, GEF; and Manfred Konukiewicz, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. (Photo courtesy of the UNCCD Secretariat)

Continued from page 1

In other UNCCD news, the Secretariat and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) co-hosted consultations on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI), on 18-19 February 2011, in Bonn, Germany, on the side of the CST S-2 meeting (<http://www.unccd.int/cop/cric9/menu.php>).

The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD recently released three new publications on aid for trade invest-

ments in agriculture and sustainable land management, titled: “Vers un agenda commun de l’Agriculture et de l’Aide pour le commerce pour la gestion durable des terres: L’expérience du Mali” (Towards a Common Agenda on Aid for Trade and Agriculture for Sustainable Land Management: the Experience of Mali); “Towards a common agenda on Aid for Trade and Agriculture for sustainable land management: the experience of Uganda;” and

“Knowledge Exchange Programme on Aid for Trade Finance for Sustainable Land Management: A manual for least developed countries (LDCs)” (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/news/aid-for-trade-investments-in-agriculture-and-sustainable-land-management->).

ITTO-supported Bamboo Center Opens in Peru

As part of a project funded by the Government of Japan through the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), on promoting the rehabilitation, management and sustainable use of bamboo forests, a bamboo crafts center was opened in the northwest region of Peru. The Center is intended to add value to bamboo for the local population. The project also aimed to rehabilitate bamboo in the region, establish plantations, and ensure sustainable management. Local families were trained in propagation and forest management techniques of the versatile and multi-purpose plants (http://www.itto.int/news_releases/id=2588).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

UNEP 2011 Year Book

(UNEP, 2011) This edition of the yearbook of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) highlights a number of emerging issues, including phosphorus pollution due to discharge from food production and plastic debris in the ocean, which can transport toxic substances that may end up in the food chain, causing potential harm to ecosystem and human health (<http://www.unep.org/yearbook/2011/>).

Measuring the Value of Land

(UNCCD Secretariat and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)) This brochure is based on the discussions of the Partnership Meeting on the Assessment of the Economics of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (E-DLDD), which took place from 14-15 December 2010, in Bonn, Germany. Participants discussed the need for efforts to raise awareness of the economic aspects of desertification, land degradation and drought, and of the costs and benefits of sustainable land management, including the need for other organizations and individuals to join in this undertaking (<http://www.unccd.int/knowledge/docs/ATT4J7FE.pdf>).

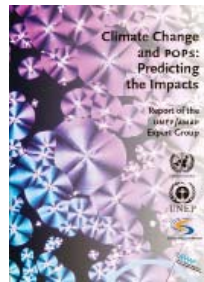
Incentive Measures for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity: Case Studies and Lessons Learned

(CBD Technical Series No. 56, 2011) This report provides concise key observations as well as critical conclusions and consolidated lessons learned on, respectively, the identification and removal or mitigation of incentives with harmful effects for biodiversity, and on the promotion of positive incentive measures. It also presents case studies, including good practice cases, from different regions. It is the final output of the third international workshop on incentive measures (October 2009, Paris, France), and was reviewed by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, which invited parties and other governments to take it into consideration in their work on incentive measures, bearing in mind that the possible impacts of incentive measures can vary from country to country, in accordance with national circumstances (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-56-en.pdf>).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

Stockholm Convention Releases Climate Change and POPs Study, Launches Webinar Series

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has released, in conjunction with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, a publication titled “Climate Change and POPs: Predicting the Impacts.” Providing an overview of the complex inter-linkages between climate and POPs, the report predicts significant climate-induced changes in relation to future releases of POPs into the environment, their long-range transport and environmental fate, and human and environmental exposure, subsequently leading to higher health risks for both human populations and the environment. The report also addresses the synergies between the climate change and POPs policy agendas and identifies areas of uncertainty and existing gaps in data, information and knowledge (<http://chm.pops.int/Programmes/GlobalMonitoringPlan/ClimateChangeandPOPsPredictingtheImpacts/tabid/1580/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).



Cover of the “Climate Change and POPs: Predicting the Impacts” publication (image courtesy of the Stockholm Convention)

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has also announced a new webinar series with the objective of raising awareness, enhancing understanding and scaling up learning related to the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. The POPs Webinars will target the following groups: Official Contact Points and National Focal Points nominated by their countries within the framework of the Convention; other government representatives concerned with the development and implementation of the Stockholm Convention; stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector, including members of national POPs coordinating committees; experts on issues of relevance to the Convention; and interested members of the general public. Webinar topics include: complying with the reporting requirements of the Convention; registering exemptions within the Convention; the process for reviewing and updating National Implementation Plans; issues to be addressed at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, including endosulfan, and procedural and organizational aspects (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/Meetings/Webinars/tabid/1529/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).



Image courtesy of the Stockholm Convention

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Cover of the “Rio 2012: Making it Happen” newsletter (image courtesy of the UNCSA 2012)

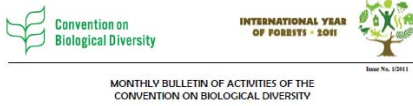
UNCSA Secretariat Details Developments in Rio 2012: Making it Happen

The third issue, volume two, of the UNCSA Secretariat’s biweekly newsletter, “Rio 2012: Making it Happen,” includes: highlights from the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (GSP), the launch of the International Year of Forests, and the General Assembly’s thematic debate on disaster risk reduction; interagency news; updates on publications and the activities of Major Groups; and several upcoming events.

This issue also indicates that the name of this biweekly Newsletter has changed to “Rio 2012: Making it Happen,” following an agreement that, for media purposes, the UN Secretariat communications will also use the short title “Rio 2012” for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSA) ([http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/Newsletter-Vol2Issue3\(17February\).pdf](http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/Newsletter-Vol2Issue3(17February).pdf)).

In related news, an advance, unedited copy of the Report of the Secretary-General on the objectives and themes of UNCSA has been released by the UNCSA Secretariat. The report (A/CONF.216/7) was issued ahead of the UNCSA Preparatory Committee’s second session, which will convene from 7-8 March 2011, in New York, US (<http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/prepcom/SG-report-on-objective-and-themes-of-the-UNCSA.pdf>). The UNCSA Secretariat has also released the Co-Chairs’ Summary of the first intersessional meeting for the Conference, which took place in New York, US, from 10-11 January 2011 (<http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/intersessional/Co-Chairs-Summary-of-1st-Intersessional-Meeting.pdf>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



MONTHLY BULLETIN OF ACTIVITIES OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

JANUARY 2011

First meeting on the implementation of the Plan of Action on Sub-National Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities on Biodiversity

Pursuant to COP Decision X/22, adopted at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit last October 2010, the City of Montpellier, with the support of the French Government, hosted the first meeting on the implementation of the Plan of Action on Sub-National Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities on Biodiversity on 17-19 January 2011. The meeting was attended by 38 participants representing more than 2,100 cities and regions (through networks including ICLG), the Local Action on Biodiversity programme and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, the EU Committee of the Regions and the associations of Mayors of Large Cities and of Regions of France, as well as the Government of France, Brazil, Sweden, Portugal, Singapore and South Africa, international agencies such as UN-Habitat and IUCN, leading research institutions such as the Stockholm Resilience Centre and cities such as Mexico, Montreal, Bonn and Curitiba. Opening remarks were made by Stéphane Mondon, Mayor of the City of Montpellier, Jean-Pierre Thérault, France's Ambassador for the Environment, and Ahmed Djaliloff, CBD Executive Secretary.



Cover of the CBD Monthly Bulletin of Activities for January 2011 (image courtesy of the CBD Secretariat)

CBD Secretariat Circulates Publications, Highlights IPCC Work Plan of Relevance to Biodiversity

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has recently circulated a number of publications, including its Monthly Bulletin of Activities for January 2011, containing reports on meetings in India in preparation for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD and the sixth meeting of the COP acting as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; and the January volume of its REDD+ and Biodiversity newsletter, containing updates on regional workshops on biodiversity safeguards, CBD's presence at the Cancun climate meetings, and online resources on carbon, biodiversity and ecosystem services (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/mba/2011/mba-2011-01-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/forest/newsletters/redd-13.htm>).

With regard to cooperation with other organizations, the CBD Secretariat has issued a notification including information on the upcoming work plan of the Intergovernmental



View of the January volume of the CBD REDD+ and Biodiversity e-Newsletter (image courtesy of the CBD Secretariat)

Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of relevance to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, drawing attention to a number of chapters addressing the increasing links between biodiversity and climate change (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-026-cc-en.pdf>).

In preparation for the 16th meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), tentatively scheduled for May 2012, the CBD Secretariat has invited island parties and parties with islands to provide information for the in-depth review of implementation of the programme of work on island biodiversity; and has requested submission of examples of best practices for addressing invasive alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-032-island-en.doc>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-034-ias-en.pdf>).

CITES Secretariat Facilitates Access to CITES Texts in Different Languages

The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has proposed to link from the CITES website to translations into any language of adopted texts that parties have produced and are willing to share.

While the three working languages of CITES are English, French and Spanish, and translations to other languages will have no official status, the links will be provided to facilitate implementation of the Convention (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E016.pdf>).

In other CITES-related news, the Secretariat has circulated a notification explaining the policy and procedures with regard to the CITES logo. According to the notification, the CITES logo is protected under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and may not be used without the express authorization of the CITES Secretary-General (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E018.pdf>).

In preparation for the 61st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (15-19 August 2011, Geneva, Switzerland), the Secretariat has requested parties to submit information regarding trade in, and enforcement of measures on, humphead wrasse; and conservation and trade control measures on tigers and other Appendix-I Asian

big cat species (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E015.pdf>; <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E014.pdf>).

Argentina and Chile Sign Agreement to Conserve the South Andean Huemul

A new Memorandum of Understanding aiming to conserve the South Andean Huemul was signed between Argentina and Chile. The agreement is part of the countries' Specific Protocol on the Conservation of Wildlife, developed in the margins of the 20th Ibero-American Summit on 4 December 2010, with the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) being the depositary. It aims to address illegal hunting, habitat degradation and the introduction of diseases concerning the only large herbivore to inhabit sub-Antarctic Patagonia, which is considered the national animal of Chile and "natural monument" in Argentina. The two countries are expected to develop a bi-national action plan in 2011 to: promote the exchange of scientific, technical and legal information as well as training of professional staff and park rangers to coordinate conservation measures; promote research to better understand the ecology and biology of the species and the factors preventing the recovery of individual groups; enhance monitoring; and organize educational activities and media campaigns to raise awareness about the Huemul's poor conservation status (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2011/02_feb/nw_160211_South_Andean_Huemul.htm).

In other CMS-related news, representatives of wildlife management authorities in Kazakhstan and experts met from 17-18 February 2011, in central Kazakhstan, to discuss the implementation of the CMS memoranda of understanding on the Saiga Antelope and the Bukhara Deer. The meeting explored opportunities for action under the CMS Eurasian Aridlands Mammals initiative, pilot projects for further development of the initiative in the region and potential new species listings under the Convention. At the meeting, the UNEP/CMS Secretariat concluded an agreement with two environmental NGOs, the Association of the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan and the Saiga Conservation Alliance, which will provide technical support to urgent conservation activities under the international work programme (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2011/02_feb/CMS_Press_Release_priority_action_saiga_antelope.pdf).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

World Bank Institute Offers CDM and JI E-Learning Course

The World Bank Institute is offering a free e-learning course on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI). The “self-paced” e-learning course offers ten modules oriented at explaining the Kyoto Protocol’s project-based mechanisms, their governance structures, how to start a CDM or JI project, and understanding the CDM and JI project cycles and corresponding rules and procedures. It also includes practical tips for successful implementation of CDM and JI projects. Learners are encouraged to allocate approximately 20 hours of time to complete the course over a 4 week period (<http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/learning-product/clean-development-mechanisms-and-joint-implementation-navigating-kyoto-project-base>).



Image courtesy of the World Bank

Germany Confers Legal Capacity to the Adaptation Fund Board

Through an Act of Parliament, the German Government conferred legal capacity to the Adaptation Fund Board, making the Fund an independent international legal entity. The act enables the Adaptation Fund Board to enter into contracts with recipients, particularly in the case of direct access to the Fund by developing countries. The decision for the Adaptation Fund Board to be conferred legal capacity came at the Poznan Climate Change Conference in 2008, and resulted in the Adaptation Fund Board accepting Germany’s offer to host the Fund (<http://www.adaptation-fund.org/node/1198>).

In other news, the Board of the Adaptation Fund has released the report of its 12th meeting, which convened from 14-15 December 2010, in Cancun, Mexico. Among other issues, the Board considered the report of the third meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee, including projects from Turkmenistan, Tanzania, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Nicaragua, the Maldives, Mauritius,

India, Georgia, Fiji, Eritrea, El Salvador, and the Cook Islands. The Board also decided on its meetings for 2011, proposed guidelines for Designated Authorities for selecting National Implementing Entities and presented a project formulation grant template (http://www.adaptation-fund.org/system/files/AFB_12-Report_0.pdf).

GEF-CBD Retreat Discusses GEF Support to Parties’ Reporting Requirements

The Secretariats of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held a retreat on 27 January 2011 to discuss themes of mutual interest, including GEF support to reporting requirements of parties, the revision of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration between the two Secretariats. Further to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the CBD, held in Nagoya, Japan, the staffs of both Secretariats committed to help accelerate the implementation of the new Strategic Plan of the CBD and planned to make the retreat an annual occurrence (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/4064>).

In other GEF news, Monique Barbut, GEF CEO, has endorsed three GEF projects within the climate change fo-

cal area, related to transport, energy efficiency in industry and in commercial buildings. CEO endorsement is the final step in GEF project cycle approval. A Green Truck Demonstration Project in China will invest US\$4.2 million to address market failures in order to demonstrate energy efficient truck technologies and freight logistics operation technologies and build confidence in the performance of proven green technologies. Also on transport, the GEF approved a US\$2.85 million project to work towards implementing sustainable transport solutions in three major cities in East Africa, namely in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Kampala.

Regarding energy efficiency, a project in Cambodia will invest US\$1.24 million to target the most energy intensive sectors (brick-making, food services, rice-milling, garment, and rubber) to demonstrate the technical and financial feasibility of industrial energy efficiency. A US\$5.2 million GEF grant will also address energy efficiency improvements in commercial buildings in India, focusing on the implementation of the Energy Conservation Building Code and on demonstration projects for buildings in five different climatic zones (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/geffsp>). The GEF will also fund Argentina’s third national communications to the UNFCCC (<http://go.worldbank.org/3OGS8FGRG0>).



GEF and CBD Secretariats group photo at the retreat held on 27 January (photo courtesy of the GEF Secretariat)

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

Task Groups Consult with IPCC Members

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has announced that, following recommendations of an independent review carried out by the InterAcademy Council (IAC), IPCC

member governments agreed to work in four task groups to take forward the IAC’s recommendations on: Procedures; Governance and Management; Conflict of Interest Policy; and Communications Strategy. The Task Groups are now consulting with the members of

the IPCC for their initial comments following discussions in Geneva in February. After this, revised proposals by the task groups will be submitted for formal consideration by the Panel at its 33rd Session, in Abu Dhabi, UAE, from 10-13 May 2011 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

Bulgaria's Participation in the Kyoto Protocol Mechanisms Approved by the UNFCCC Compliance Committee

The Enforcement Branch of the Kyoto Protocol Compliance Committee



Logo courtesy of the UNFCCC Secretariat

The Enforcement Branch of the Kyoto Protocol Compliance Committee has recently decided that Bulgaria is now fully eligible to participate in the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms under Kyoto Protocol Articles 6 (Joint Implementation (JI)), 12 (Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)) and 17 (Emissions Trading). This decision was adopted during the 12th meeting of the Enforcement Branch, which was held from 3-4 February 2011. The question of implementation related to the national system of Bulgaria, which is required for a country to account for its emissions and demonstrate compliance. Bulgaria submitted

its 2009 annual inventory submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat on 13 April 2009. The submission was reviewed by an expert review team (ERT), which, in its report, raised a question of implementation, which triggered the compliance mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. The question of implementation was taken up by the Enforcement Branch, which, after considering written submissions on the issue by Bulgaria, found the country to be in non-compliance with national system requirements for countries with 2012 targets (Annex B Parties). Bulgaria submitted a plan to address its non-compliance, as requested. It also subsequently submitted a revised plan (http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/compliance/questions_of_implementation/application/pdf/bgr_update_to_informal_information_note_after_reinstatement_20110204.pdf).

North American Countries Invite Ozone Parties to Join Declaration on Global Transition from HCFCs

The Ozone Secretariat has posted on its website the "Declaration on the Global Transition Away From Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)" from the Governments of Canada, the US and Mexico. The Declaration states the signatories' "intent to pursue further action under the Montreal Protocol aimed at transitioning the world to environmentally sound alternatives to HCFCs and CFCs." Drafted at the 22nd Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (MOP 22), the Declaration is currently supported by 90 parties and the EU. Additional parties wishing to associate themselves with the Declaration are invited to do so by 31 March 2011 (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/mop/22mop/HCFC-CFC-Declaration-22mop.pdf).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole Considers Options to Achieve 2014 Deadline

The *Ad Hoc* Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly on the Regular Process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (*Ad Hoc* Working Group of the Whole) met from 14-18 February 2011, in New York, US. Participants focused on the consideration of options to achieve the deadline of 2014 for the completion of the first cycle of the Regular Process, and of a management and review mechanism. They also discussed the status of the Trust Fund established for the purpose of supporting the operations of the first cycle of the Regular Process and the recommendations to the 66th session of the UN

General Assembly (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm).

Ramsar Reports on Site Designations

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) has reported that the Governments of Sri Lanka, Mexico and the Republic of Korea have recently designated new Wetlands of International Importance.

The Sri Lankan site, the Kumana Wetland Cluster Ramsar Site, falls within two existing protected areas, Kumana National Park and the Panama-Kudumbigala Sanctuary, and is the country's fifth Wetland of International Importance (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-rssri-lanka/main/ramsar/1-26%5E25012_4000_2__).

The two new Mexican Wetlands of International Importance bring the country's total number of Ramsar Sites to 121. The sites are the Laguna de Hueyapan (El Texcal) site and the Ecosistema Arroyo Verde APFF Sierra de Álamos Río Cuchujaqui (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-2rs-mexico/main/ramsar/1-26%5E25013_4000_0__).

The Korean site, its 14th Wetland of International Importance, consists in the Gochang and Buan Tidal Flats, which include two protected areas, the Buan Julpo Bay Wetland Protected Area and the Gochang Tidal Flat Wetland Protected Area (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-rssouthkorea/main/ramsar/1-26%5E25014_4000_0__).



Kumana Wetland (left) and Gochang Flat (right) (photos courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

► INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP GC 26/GMEF Focuses on Rio 2012

The 26th session of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC 26/GMEF) is convening from 21-24 February, in Nairobi, Kenya. Ministerial consultations at the session are focused on emerging policy issues under the overall theme of UNEP's contribution to the preparatory process for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, also known as Rio 2012), to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. Working groups considered the budget and programme of work, and chemicals and waste (<http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/26unepgc/>).

The UNEP 2011 Year Book was released in advance of GC 26/GMEF, convening from 21-24 February 2011. According to the publication, significant amounts of phosphorus fertilizer are being discharged to oceans as a result of food production, specifically farming inefficiencies and a failure to recycle wastewater. Phosphorus pollution is linked with a rise in algal blooms, impacting water quality, poisoning fish stocks and undermining tourism. The Year Book also indicates that carbon dioxide emissions from solid fuel con-

sumption are stabilizing in Europe and North America, but are increasing in Asia and the Pacific (<http://www.unep.org/yearbook/2011/>).

On the first day of GC 26/GMEF, UNEP released a report titled "Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication," as a key contribution of UNEP to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio 2012) (<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>).

UNEP also convened the twelfth Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-12) from 19-20 February 2011, in Nairobi, Kenya. The event provided a platform for information exchange and consultation on key environmental issues to be addressed by Member States during GC-26/GMEF. Discussions focused on international environmental governance (IEG), Green Economy, and partnerships with major groups and stakeholders towards Rio 2012 (<http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/26unepgc/gmgsf12/>).

In other news, together with the European Energy Centre and the Terre Policy Centre, UNEP convened the 14th European Conference on the Latest Technologies in Renewable Energy, Heating and Cooling Applications, in Edinburgh, UK, on 24 January 2011.

Panellists highlighted the need to address the drastic shortage in trained renewable energy installers and technicians, with UNEP representatives underscoring the need for business and academic partnerships, tax rebates, tax holidays and other incentives (http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/information/mmcfiles/7470-e-Edinburgh24Jan11_PR.pdf).

EMG Presents Progress Report on Drylands Report

The Environment Management Group (EMG) has presented a progress report on its work to prepare a UN system wide rapid response and action report on drylands. The EMG's Issue Management Group (IMG) on Land prepared the report in a process designed to interface with the intergovernmental process under the UNCCD, and the progress report was submitted to CST S-2 and CRIC 9. Key findings from the report are expected to be presented to the high-level event on desertification at the opening of the UN General Assembly session in September 2011, and the final report will be presented to the 10th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the UNCCD, in October 2011 (<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cric9/pdf/crp1eng.pdf>).



The dais during Mark Halle's speech on Green Economy

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for CST 19:** 28 February-4 March 2011. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/ipm19/>
- **UNCSD PrepCom II:** 7-8 March 2011. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/prepcom2/>
- **ECOSOC Meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and UNCTAD:** 10-11 March 2011. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ecosoc/springmeetings/2011/index.htm>