



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

BASEL CONVENTION DISCUSSES FINANCING AND SHIP DISMANTLING ISSUES



OEWG Co-chair Anne Daniel (center), Basel Executive Secretary Sachiko Kuwabara-Yamamoto, and Finance Group co-chair Osvaldo Alvarez-Perez

The Fifth Session of the Open-Ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (OEWG-5) convened in Geneva, Switzerland from 3-7 April 2006 (<http://www.iisd.ca/basel/oewg5/>). The purpose of OEWG-5 was to follow up on decisions from the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-7) and to prepare for COP-8, which will take place from 27 November to 1 December 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya. A wide range of issues were addressed, with three topics occupying most of the delegates' time: financing and synergies among the chemicals-related conventions, technical guidelines on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and ship dismantling. Other issues considered at OEWG-5 included the Mobile Phone Partnership Programme, the strategic plan for implementation of the Basel Convention, illegal traffic, and the Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation. In total, the group adopted 14 decisions, several of which also contained draft decisions for consideration by COP-8. OEWG-5 also approved a dozen additional draft decisions that will be forwarded to COP-8.

Other activities related to the Basel Convention Secretariat include its recent note (<http://www.basel.int/legalmatters/ban-notice29-03-2006.doc>) on the role of the Depository and Article 17 (5) of the Convention on entry into force of amendments, prepared in response to a query received concerning the Ban Amendment adopted in decision III/1. Additionally, the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative (MPPI) is requesting comments on the third draft of overall Guidance Document on Environmentally Sound Management of Used and End-of-Life Mobile Phones by 12 May 2006 (<http://www.basel.int/industry/mppiwp/guid-comment/guidoc200406.pdf>).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

CLIMATE SCIENCE 2005: MAJOR NEW DISCOVERIES

(WRI, 2006) This review of 2005's climate science literature (http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_pdf.cfm?PubID=4175) states that, taken collectively, the scientific discoveries and new research suggest that the world may have moved past a key physical tipping point.

UNEP ANNUAL REPORT 2005

(UNEP 2006) This Annual Report (<http://www.unep.org/Documents/multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=67&ArticleID=5125&l=en>) looks at the organization's work during 2005.

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GUEST ARTICLE

Promoting Europe's Sustainable Development through New Regional MEAs

By Frits Schlingemann, Regional Director and Representative, Regional Office for Europe, UNEP

Abstract

Over the past 20 years, the world's governments have developed a series of global conventions aimed at managing the global commons and other environmental issues with transboundary implications. Together with key documents such as the Rio Declaration, these MEAs set out the principles that govern international cooperation on the environment and sustainable development. Regional MEAs build on these global norms to address problems with the "regional commons."

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

CLIMATE CHANGE: A GATHERING STORM

(ETH Zurich, March 2006) This report (<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?v21=62185&lng=en&id=15319>) by David Victor considers the international legal commitments for addressing climate change and issues in implementing the Kyoto Protocol, analyzing the various economic, social and political challenges in developing countries and policy instruments for combating climate change.

A GUIDE TO BIODIVERSITY FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

(IFC, 2006) The International Finance Corporation, a part of the World Bank Group involved in financing private sector initiatives, has launched a Web-based guide (<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/BiodiversityGuide>) to help companies operating in emerging markets to understand, manage and benefit from biodiversity.

TRADE AND MARKET-RELATED INSTRUMENTS TO REINFORCE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FISHING PRACTICES

(OECD HSTF, March 2006) This report (http://www.high-seas.org/docs/Roheim_Sutinen_Final_draft_March%2006.pdf) was published by the "OECD - High Seas Task Force. It identifies measures and methods that can be applied to strengthen the linkages between trade policy, fisheries management, and sustainable development objectives.

VALUING ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

(bepress, 2006) This article (<http://www.bepress.com/ev/vol3/iss3/art2/>), authored by Edward Barbier and Geoffrey Heal, appears in *The Economists' Voice* 3:3, an online peer-reviewed journal. It considers an emerging field aimed at valuing ecosystems.

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

PILOT PROJECT BETWEEN ROTTERDAM, UNITAR UNDERWAY; LIST OF OFFICIAL CONTACT POINTS AVAILABLE

At its second session, the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention agreed to support a joint pilot project between the Secretariat and UNITAR for the development of national plans for implementation of the Convention. Starting in April 2006, with funding from the Government of Switzerland, UNITAR will be supporting five pilot countries in this endeavor, building on existing documentation, such as National Profiles and National Implementation Plans developed under the Stockholm Convention, and employing action plan development skills acquired through previous UNITAR training (<http://www.unitar.org/cwg/whatsnew.html>). Preliminary results of the pilot project will be presented to the third session of the Conference of the Parties in October. The Secretariat for the Rotterdam Conven-

tion has also made available on its website a list of all Official Contact Points (OCPs) from Parties and Non-parties and their contact details (<http://www.pic.int/en/ViewPage.asp?id=419>).

PREPARATIONS FOR STOCKHOLM COP-2 CONTINUE

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has posted "A Supplementary analysis of financial and administrative arrangements that would be needed to implement any changes that the three convention secretariats and UNEP may propose to enhance synergies between the chemicals and waste conventions" (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_2/meetingdocs/English/K0651106%20COP2-INF18.doc) and, in reference to the DDT issue, the Secretariat has facilitated a "Study group report on malaria vector control and personal protection" (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_2/meetingdocs/English/K0651107%20COP2-INF4.pdf).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD CO-ORGANIZES SEMINAR, RELEASES PUBLICATION

Within the framework of the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification (IYDD), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in partnership with the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) organized an international conference on Desertification, Hunger and Poverty (11-12 April 2006, Geneva, Switzerland) (<http://www.iydd.org/documents/symposium.pdf>). The two-day meeting considered political frameworks, agricultural development in drylands, and livelihoods and coping strategies, with participants concluding that more than additional foreign aid is needed. According to Liliane Ortega, SDC official and Swiss representative to the UNCCD, "It was not just a question of trying to find more money, but that there can be a partnership between the West and the developing world... that [the affected countries] have to act themselves but with the support of the West"

(http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/front/detail/Action_urged_over_desertification_and_poverty.html?siteSect=105&sid=6628243&cKey=1144930624000). A report from the seminar is expected by July 2006.

The UNCCD Secretariat has also posted a new publication on its website: *Ten African Experiences* (<http://www.unccd.int/regional/africa/docs/tenAfricanExpr-eng.pdf>). This publication was initiated and compiled by the UNCCD Secretariat as part of a Global Environment Facility regional project entitled "Supporting Capacity Building for the elaboration of national reports and country profiles by African country Parties to the UNCCD," co-funded by the World Bank through the UNCCD Global Mechanism and executed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

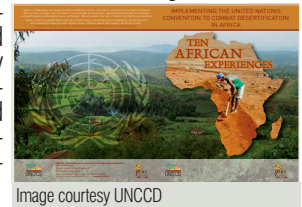


Image courtesy UNCCD

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD CO-ORGANIZES MEETING, RELEASES REPORT IN PREPARATION FOR MAY 2006 SESSION

In preparation for the climate change discussions at the May 2006 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14), the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Government of India, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) co-organized a meeting entitled "Climate Change and Sustainable Development: An international workshop to strengthen research and understanding" (http://www.teriin.org/events_inside.php?id_17264; http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdIssues/climate_change/climateChangeInter.htm). Participants at the 7-8 April 2006 workshop in New Delhi, India, considered: key elements of the climate change-sustainable development nexus; climate change, adaptation and sustainable development;

implications for least developed countries and small island developing States; integrating climate change concerns into sustainable development strategies; options for response measures; and options and measures for abating climate change in the context of sustainable development. In his keynote address, the acting head of the UNFCCC secretariat, Richard Kinley, called for urgent measures, arguing that "we have all the policy instruments we need" to act now (http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/statements/application/pdf/060407Kinley.pdf). TERI is preparing a report of the meeting.



Image courtesy United Nations Division for Sustainable Development

The CSD has released "Trends in Sustainable Development" (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/trends2006/index.htm>),

a compilation of maps and graphs related to the four interrelated areas to be discussed during CSD-14: energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmosphere and air pollution and climate change. This recurrent publication tracks progress in meeting sustainable development challenges, with this and future issues focusing on the themes under review in each two-year cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The draft programme of activities proposed for the CSD-14 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Day (8 May 2006) has also been released (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/sids_programme.pdf). SIDS Day was called for by CSD-13, to devote one day of the "review" session to review implementation of the Programme of Action for SIDS, focusing on the respective year's thematic cluster as well as new developments regarding the sustainable development efforts of SIDS.

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Benefiting from a smaller membership, a regional MEA can take practical measures to apply the ecosystem approach to a shared environment. And, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has pointed out, they can soften political tensions by offering neighbors mutually advantageous goals on which to collaborate peacefully.

With the support of UNEP, the wider European region is currently finalizing two new regional MEAs and considering work on a third. These agreements fully support the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and other global treaties.

At the "Environment for Europe" conference in Kiev in May 2003, Ministers from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine adopted and signed the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. In addition to the global agreements cited above, their efforts were inspired by the 1991 Convention on the Protection of the Alps and by the 2002 International Year of Mountains.

In November 2003, Ministers from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan met in Tehran to adopt and sign the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea. The Convention focuses on ensuring the preservation of the marine environment, and addresses issues including pollution from land-based sources, seabed activities, vessels, dumping, invasive alien species, environmental emergencies, marine living resources, sea-level fluctuation, environmental impact assessments, monitoring, research and development, and the exchange of information.

The next regional MEA that may emerge in Europe would address the shared mountain environment of the Balkans. A number of policymakers in the sub-region have expressed their interest to UNEP in exploring an MEA that would promote sustainable development and environmental cooperation – while at the same time helping to stabilize and deepen recent peace agreements. Key environmental issues in the Balkans include river basins, the potential for a network of protected areas, cleanups of pollution "hot spots", and more generally the struggle to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development. Exploratory talks could start as early as this year.

For more information, see <http://www.carpathianconvention.org> and <http://www.caspianenvironment.org>

Read the Full Article at: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle4.htm>

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

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR MONTREAL PROTOCOL MULTILATERAL FUND HOLDS 48TH MEETING

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Montreal Protocol's Multilateral Fund convened in Montreal, Canada, from 3-7 April 2006 (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/news/1144959332772.htm>). The current members of the Executive Committee are: Brazil, Burundi, Guinea, India, Mexico, Syria and Zambia (for developing countries); and Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, Sweden and the US (for developed countries). With 2010 set as the target-year for the phase-out of CFCs and halons, the two most commonly used ozone depleting substances (ODS), the Multilateral Fund focused its attention on this issue. The Committee decided to: allocate a higher percentage of its triennial budget of US\$470 million to 2006 and 2007; endorse a three-year business plan for its implementing agencies with the aim of phasing out 42,175 ODP tonnes of ODS, scheduling projects, activities and bilateral cooperation worth US\$164.5 million for 2006; and request its implementing agencies to advance plans for CFC phase-out in the refrigeration servicing sector in smaller countries and present them, if possible, for consideration to the Executive Committee's 50th meeting in November 2006. The Executive Committee also approved US\$63 million for projects and activities to assist industries in phasing out an additional 2,453 tonnes of ODS consumption and 18,212 tonnes of ODS production in 47 developing countries.

WTO CTE-SS CONSIDERS RENEWABLE ENERGY, AIR POLLUTION ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS

The WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session (CTE-SS) met informally from 4-5 April 2006 to evaluate technical proposals seeking expedited liberalization of trade in certain renewable energy and air pollution control products (<http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-04-14/story1.htm>). According to ICTSD, the EU, Canada, Japan and Chinese Taipei submitted lists of products in two categories, which were examined on a product-by-product basis to evaluate which products have a single, clearly environmental end-use. Another technical discussion on products in the categories of wastewater management and hazardous waste management will be held on 10-12 May (ICTSD BioRes, 14 April 2006).

GEF HOSTS CLIMATE FUND MEETING IN BANGLADESH

A meeting on the Least Developed Countries Fund to offset the adverse impacts of global climate change was held on 4-6 April 2006 in Dhaka, Bangladesh (http://www.thegef.org/Whats_New/LDC_Bangladesh.html).

The meeting reviewed proposed arrangements to support projects identified in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) in light of recent decisions of the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, as well as NAPA outputs, and began the preparation of projects to address the most urgent and immediate adaptation needs of the Least Developed Countries.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE WORLD BANK AND GEF

An International Development Association (IDA) and a GEF grant totaling US\$30 million were approved for a "National Protected Areas Conservation Trust Fund Project" in Colombia, to support the development of the national protected areas system by consolidating a biodiversity and protected areas trust fund (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P091932>).

A GEF grant of US\$10 million was approved for the "Second National Fadama Development - Critical Ecosystems Management" in Nigeria, to enhance the productivity of fadama areas, as well as the human and community needs they support through capacity development for sustainable natural resource management and the establishment of integrated ecosystem management in selected watersheds (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64027221&piPK=64027220&theSitePK=368896&menuPK=368930&Projectid=P073686>).

An IDA credit and a GEF grant totaling US\$8 million were approved for a "Renewable Energy Project" in Armenia, to increase privately owned and operated power generation using renewable energy (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P083352>).

A GEF grant of US\$10 million was approved for "Strengthening Capacity for Managing National Parks and Biodiversity" in Gabon, to support the diversification of the economy and lay the foundation for possible development of eco-tourism in rural areas (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P070232>).

An IBRD loan and a GEF grant totaling US\$60 million were approved for an "Environmental Services Project" in Mexico, to decentralize environmental management and increase public participation, promote payment for environmental services programs, conserve biodiversity, and increase sustainable water resource management (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P087038>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD COP-8 CONCLUDES; MANY PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS LAUNCHED DURING COP PROCEEDINGS

Attracting the largest number of participants in the history of the Convention, a record participation of stakeholders and an unprecedented series of side events, the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (20-31 March 2006, Curitiba, Brazil) concluded its negotiations, although with few substantive results (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cop8/>). The adoption of the new island biodiversity work programme was hailed as a success by small island developing States, while the decision to reaffirm the COP-5 ban on field testing of genetic use restriction technologies and reject case-by-case risk assessments was celebrated by many countries, NGOs and indigenous representatives. However, on the two topics that largely dominated the meeting's agenda, access and benefit-sharing (ABS) and marine protected areas, discussions focused on process. The decision on ABS centered on identifying future steps with regard to the negotiation of an international regime on ABS, while discussions on marine protected areas sought to redefine the Convention's role in relation to high seas protected areas.

A large number of projects, initiatives and publications were launched at the meeting, including: a memorandum of understanding signed by the Convention and some of the world's leading research centers to assist developing countries' scientific, technical and policy skills in the areas of biodiversity and biosafety (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/press/2006/pr-2006-03-27-mou-en.pdf>); an agreement signed by the CBD Executive Secretary and the Governor of the State of Paraná to plant eight million trees to offset the environmental impacts of the meetings of the CBD and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/press/2006/pr-2006-04-05-tree-en.pdf>); a global island partnership launched to enhance marine and terrestrial protected areas (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/press/2006/pr-2006-03-29-island-en.pdf>); the establishment by three governments sharing the island of Borneo – Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia – of a conservation initiative to protect the biodiverse Heart of Borneo (<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/mar2006/2006-03-30-01.asp>); the launch of a UNEP, IUCN and the Indigenous Initiative for Peace initiative on the conservation of biodiversity-rich sacred natural sites ([\[ual/Default.asp?DocumentID=471&ArticleID=5230&I=en\]\(http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=471&ArticleID=5230&I=en\)\); the launch of a study on wildlife watching and tourism by UNEP/CMS \(<http://www.cms.int/publications/pdf/wildlifewatching.pdf>\); the presentation of a financial model to manage marine protected areas by WWF \(\[http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=64360\]\(http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=64360\)\), as well as a report entitled *Species and People: Linked Futures* \(<http://www.worldwildlife.org/pubs/wwfmdgreport2006final.pdf>\); and a study on *Invasive Alien Species and Trade: Integrating Prevention Measures and International Trade Rules* launched by the Center for International Environmental Law, Defenders of Wildlife and the Nature Conservancy \(\[http://cleantrade.typepad.com/clean_trade/files/iastraderpt0106.pdf\]\(http://cleantrade.typepad.com/clean_trade/files/iastraderpt0106.pdf\)\).](http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilin-</p>
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CITES, UNEP-UNCTAD CBTF AND IUED LAUNCH JOINT PROJECT ON REVIEWING NATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE POLICIES

The UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF) (<http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/>), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (<http://www.cites.org>) and the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of Development Studies (IUED) (<http://www.unige.ch/iued/greg>) recently launched a two-year joint project aimed at enhancing the capacities of national governments to review, design and implement effective and sustainable national wildlife trade policies. The project is funded by the Geneva International Academic Network and the European Union. During most of the 30-year history of CITES, implementation efforts have focused primarily on the biological aspects of wildlife trade. This initiative also considers the social and economic dimensions of wildlife trade to promote sustainable management and responsible trade in wildlife. When carried out sustainably, wildlife trade has the potential to benefit wildlife conservation and the development of local people. The core of this project is the implementation of pilot wildlife trade policy reviews in four developing countries from different geographic regions. As a first step, the project partners are developing



Sturgeon. (Photo courtesy TRAFFIC Europe/Caroline Raymakers)

a Wildlife Trade Policy Assessment Framework that will guide countries in conducting the policy reviews and offer them a set of possible assessment methodologies and indicators. National institutions in the participating countries, working in close cooperation with relevant government ministries, will then adapt and apply the framework, selecting those methodologies and indicators that best fit local conditions and needs. Outcomes from the review will lead to the development of national policy action plans. Working in parallel with this review process, IUED will study the social impacts of existing wildlife trade practices, the functioning of national project steering committees and the impacts of the review itself. The outcomes of the project, including the country studies and all IUED research, will be summarized in a Final Synthesis Report, and an international meeting will be organized to disseminate the results and encourage the use of wildlife trade policy reviews in other countries.

CMS CELEBRATES WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY, ORGANIZES SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR ON AVIAN INFLUENZA



World Migratory Bird Day
Logo courtesy UNEP/AEWA

Launched by the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the first World Migratory Bird Day was celebrated on 8-9 April 2006 (<http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/wmbd/index.php?option=content&pcont=1&task=view&id=23&Itemid=47>). In support of the initiative, national authorities and NGOs from across the globe were encouraged to organize public events. The launching event, named "WINGS," was a cultural event reflecting the symbolic value of birds and their historic significance to humans, and was held in Laikipia Nature Conservancy, Great Rift Valley, Kenya.

A Scientific Seminar on Avian Influenza, the Environment and Migratory Birds, organized by UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment in cooperation with CMS and AEWA, met from 10-11 April 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya (<http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/ais/>). The Seminar reviewed the latest scientific studies concerning the evolution and spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, subtype H5N1, and its impact on wild birds and the wider environment. Its output included a summary document with recommendations for decision makers, the media and other stakeholders.

► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

MARPOL CONSIDERS DRAFT INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT ON SHIP RECYCLING

At its 54th session (20-24 March 2006), the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization considered the first draft of a proposed new international instrument on ship recycling

(http://www.imo.org/About/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1320&doc_id=6250). A Working Group on Ship Recycling developed a work plan for the further development of a draft legally binding instrument, which proposes further developing the draft during 2006-2007, with a view to completion, consideration and adoption in the 2008-2009 biennium.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF UNICPOLOS-7 AVAILABLE

The format and annotated provisional agenda of the seventh meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS-7), which will meet from 12-16 June 2006, is now available (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/format_agenda2006advance.pdf).

► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

RAMSAR'S STANDING COMMITTEE MEETS; MOC SIGNED, REPORTS AVAILABLE

The 34th meeting of Ramsar's Standing Committee took place from 10-13 April 2006 in Gland, Switzerland (http://www.ramsar.org/sc/34/key_sc34_agenda_papers.htm). Among its approximately 25 decisions was the agreement that the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties will convene in Changwon, Republic of Korea, from 28 October to 4 November 2008 (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm).

The Ramsar Secretariat and the International Commission of the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin signed a memorandum of cooperation (MOC) on 20 March 2006, during the IV World Water Forum in Mexico (http://www.ramsar.org/moc/key_cicos_moc_2006.htm). The MOC provides for enhanced

information exchange about activities and work programmes and for the possibility of joint activities between the Commission and the Ramsar Convention and its international organization partners.



L-R: Benjamin Ndala, CICOS, and Peter Bridgewater, Ramsar (Photo courtesy Ramsar)

A DVD of the results of the Action programme for wetlands in the Mediterranean region, also known as MedWet Regions, is available in Spanish (http://www.medwet.org/medwetnew/en/01.news/01.1.new_page.asp?ARTICLE_id=530&id=1) and a report of the Ramsar workshop on legal support for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in West and Central Africa, which took place from 27-28 March 2006 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, is now available (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_cameroon_legal_2006.htm). The Ramsar Secretariat also announced the creation of the Crane Bank Ramsar Award for the Wise Use of Wetlands. The prize will be awarded to two young African professionals who will travel to Uganda for a two-week tour with Uganda's Wetlands Inspection Division (http://www.ramsar.org/w/w.n.cranebank_award.htm).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE REFORM PROPOSALS BEFORE THE UN COHERENCE PANEL

The UN High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment convened at UN headquarters in New York for its first, closed formal meeting on 5 April 2006 (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18069&Cr=UN&Cr1=reform>). The meeting reportedly focused on organizational issues, in particular establishing its schedule comprising consultations with civil society and governments, and a series of workshops including one specifically on environmental issues. The concept paper prepared by the Panel's secretariat illustrates the context and challenges for the UN and ongoing reform processes; clarifies the focus of the Panel's study; and identifies financing, governance, effectiveness and coherence as key issues. It is suggested that the Panel focus on development cooperation, looking into mainstreaming the environment in overall UN development activities; and identifies the environment, sustainable development and natural resources as "cross-cutting" issues to be taken into account in decision-making. The paper refers to the need to reduce the fragmentation and loss of coherence of UN environmental activities, as a stand-alone pillar together with development and humanitarian assistance, to ensure that the UN adequately addresses global issues, such as climate change. Four non-papers have also been circulated by developed countries. A group of 13 donor countries (G-13), comprising Canada, Switzerland, Norway and ten EU countries, suggested merging in the next 10 years over thirty UN agencies into a UN Development Agency, a UN Humanitarian Agency, and a UN Environment Organization (UNEO), with some specialized agencies continuing as "centers of excellence." At the country level, the UN would operate with one UN team under one single coordi-

nator and one UN programme. Specifically on the proposed UNEO, some countries favored its creation on the basis of the activities currently undertaken by UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements. Positions differed as to whether the Global Environment Facility should be retained as a stand-alone funding instrument or absorbed in the UN Development Agency or UNEO (<http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/docs00/0328bigchanges.htm>). Anticipating a developing countries' non-paper, the G-77/China has highlighted the need to prioritize the UN's role in coordinating global economic and social issues, and in delivering services on social, economic, humanitarian and environmental matters at national and regional levels. The G-77/China also cautioned against confining the UN's role to "niche issues" such as the environment, while leaving development strategies, trade, finance and macro-economic policy to other international organizations (www.reformtheun.org/index.php?module=upload_s&func=download&fileid=1372&).

Some observe that the work of the Panel will extend beyond September 2006, when the General Assembly is expected to discuss the Panel's report. Others also anticipate that the Panel could absorb the parallel process on international environmental governance led by the General Assembly President, whose first round of formal consultations is scheduled for 19 and 25 April 2006, and informal consultations with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi, Kenya, in early May.

UNEP FORMS PARTNERSHIP ON METHYL BROMIDE ALTERNATIVES; ORGANIZES WORKSHOP WITH RAMSAR IN GABON

Thousands of farms that have phased out methyl bromide or will do so by September 2007 have joined with UNEP, other organizations and companies to form an International Partnership for Phasing-out Methyl Bromide

(<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=475&ArticleID=5244&l=en>). The Partnership, which aims to speed transition to methyl bromide alternatives, plans to link grocery stores seeking products grown without methyl bromide to farmers that do not use the ozone-depleting fumigant.

To strengthen the capacity of Parliamentarians and other stakeholders to comply with and enforce biodiversity-related MEAs, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the Ministry for the Environment and the Protection of Nature of Gabon and UNEP co-organized a workshop for Gabonese Parliamentarians and Commissioners of Parliaments of the Member-States of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa on 3 April 2006 in Libreville, Gabon. Gabonese Vice-Premier Minister for social affaires, well-being, solidarity and fight against poverty, Maître Louis Gaston Mayila, also participated in the workshop, which signaled a process aimed at closer cooperation between the Gabonese administration and both chambers of Parliament on questions related to MEAs. Participants gained first-hand insight in the implementation of the Ramsar Convention, CITES, UNCCD and the CBD in Gabon through presentations by national focal points. UNEP also briefed participants on questions related to the coordination of environmental issues in the UN-system and recent attempts to strengthen system-wide coherence. Vice-Premier Minister Mayila announced that Gabon has begun the process to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and that it is reinforcing its commitments to fulfilling its MEA obligations, including by taking more seriously its financial obligations.



A workshop participant (Photo courtesy UNEP)

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES UPDATED REPORTING FORMS AND OTHER INFORMATION

The Ozone Secretariat has posted a provisional agenda (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/26oewg/OEWG-26-1E.pdf) and an online pre-registration form (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/26oewg/26oewg-reg-form.shtml) for the July 2006 Twenty-sixth Open-Ended Working Group meeting, as well as revised data reporting forms (http://ozone.unep.org/Information_for_the_Parties/data_reporting_forms-en.xls). The major agenda items for the Open-Ended Working Group meeting include a Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) progress report, methyl bromide, stockpiled ozone-depleting substances, need for chlorofluorocarbons for use in metered-dose inhalers in developing countries, and disclosure of interest guidelines for TEAP and its technical options committees.

UNFCCC POSTS VIEWS ON POST-2012 KYOTO COMMITMENTS, DEFORESTATION

Views on further commitments under the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012 have been

published by the UNFCCC Secretariat as part of preparations for a meeting on the subject in May (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/awg1/eng/misc01.pdf>). Submissions were prepared by Algeria, China, Colombia, Iceland, India, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland and Austria (on behalf of the European Community and its member States, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania and Serbia and Montenegro). Following an agreement in December 2005 at the first meeting of Parties serving as the Conference of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP1), long-term action and commitments under both the UNFCCC and its Protocol will be explored through several parallel processes, including an "Ad Hoc Working Group on further commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol." This group will consider commitments beyond 2012 under Article 3.9 of the Protocol, which addresses actions taken by "Annex I Parties," a group comprised of industrialized countries and the "newly industrializing economies" of the former Soviet Bloc. These Parties to

the Protocol have already taken on commitments to reduce their emissions for the period 2008–2012.

The UNFCCC Secretariat has also published submissions from 18 Parties on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and recommendations on a process to move forward on this issue. The submissions, which were published online on 11 April (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbsta/eng/misc05.pdf>), were part of the follow-up to COP/MOP1. The issue is on the agenda for SB24 in May, and a workshop is to take place prior to COP/MOP2 in November.

IPCC SEEKS COMMENTS ON DRAFT WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released a "second order draft of the contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report" (AR4) for simultaneous government and expert review (<http://www.ipcc.ch/WG1letter.pdf>). The draft is part of the ongoing work to complete AR4 in 2007. The deadline for comments is 2 June 2006.

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- UNEP's Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel (Pakistan) is serving as **acting Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** from 31 March to 15 June 2006, when Achim Steiner will succeed Klaus Töpfer as UNEP Executive Director (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=471&ArticleID=5241&l=en>)
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) announced its **new GEF Council Members**, including Raphael Peter Kabwaza (Malawi); Dhanendra Kumar (India), Mauricio Montalvo (Ecuador) and Kenneth L. Peel (US) (http://thegef.org/outreach/talking_points/06/march/english/documents/council_members.pdf).
- Following the recent departure of Ahmed Djoglaf to head the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Olivier Deleuze (Belgium) was appointed to **head UNEP's GEF Division** (http://www.gefweb.org/Outreach/Talking_Points/06/march/english/10_news_implem.html).



UNEP's Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel (Pakistan)

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **GEF DIALOGUE INITIATIVE:** 20–21 April in Dakar, Senegal; 24–25 April in Pretoria, South Africa; and between April and July in Alexandria, Egypt, Bratislava, Slovakia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Panama City, Panama. http://www.thegef.org/Outreach/Talking_Points/06/march/english/7_national_dialogue.html
- **WORLD BANK AND IMF SPRING MEETINGS:** 22–23 April. Washington, DC, US. <http://www.imf.org/external/spring/2006/index.htm>
- **ECOSOC HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WITH BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS, WTO AND UNCTAD:** 24 April. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/bwi2006/index.html>
- **SECOND MEETING OF THE ITPGR CONTACT GROUP ON THE STANDARD MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT:** 24–28 April. Alnarp, Sweden. <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/cgmta2.htm>
- **INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL FOREST INVESTMENT FORUM: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN NATURAL TROPICAL FORESTS:** 26–27 April. Cancún, Mexico. <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=1022>
- **TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC-25):** 26–28 April. Port Louis, Mauritius. <http://www.ipcc.ch/meet/session25.htm>
- **OPEN-ENDED AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON NON-COMPLIANCE OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION (OEWG-NC):** 28–29 April. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.pops.int>
- **SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION (POPS COP-2):** 1–5 May. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.pops.int>
- **FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-14):** 1–12 May. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html>