



## RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

### ▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

#### UNFCCC HOLDS FIRST *AD HOC* WORKING GROUP MEETING, ADAPTATION FUND BOARD CONVENES

The first session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWGLCA 1) is taking place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 31 March to 4 April 2008. The AWGLCA is taking place alongside the fifth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG 5). Both bodies are convening as part of efforts to agree on a framework for addressing climate change after 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period expires. The deadline for an agreement is December 2009, when negotiators will gather in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Delegates to AWGLCA 1 have been discussing the Group's work programme for the period leading up to Copenhagen, which will cover issues such as mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing. In the AWG 5, negotiators were expected to hold an in-session thematic workshop, from 1-3 April. They were also analyzing the means for Annex I parties to reach their future emission reduction targets and identifying ways to enhance their effectiveness and contribution to sustainable development (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ccwg1/>).

In other UNFCCC news, the Board of the Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund met for the first time from 26-28 March 2008, in Bonn, Germany. The Fund, which was set up under the Kyoto Protocol and approved at the Bali Climate Change Conference in December 2007, will finance adaptation projects that assist developing countries to deal with the impact of climate change. It is currently funded from a 2% levy on projects from the Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). At its first meeting, the Board began its work in developing guidelines and procedures for accessing the Fund. The first Chair of the Fund is Richard Muyungi (Tanzania) ([http://unfccc.int/files/press/releases/application/pdf/af\\_board\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/press/releases/application/pdf/af_board_press_release.pdf)).

The CDM Executive Board has also convened recently, for its 38th meeting. The Board, which met in Bonn from 12-14 March 2008, reported progress on methodologies for emissions baseline setting and monitoring. The CDM now includes almost 1000 registered projects in almost 50 countries (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/index.html>, [http://unfccc.int/files/press/releases/application/pdf/af\\_board\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/press/releases/application/pdf/af_board_press_release.pdf)).



AWGLCA Chair  
Luiz Machado

### MEA Clusters In This Issue

- **Climate and Atmosphere**  
Ozone Implementation Activities Continue; IPCC Issues Documents for 28th Session *Page 2-3*
- **Sustainable Development**  
DSD Announces City and Farm Tours during CSD 16 *Page 3*
- **Trade, Finance and Investment**  
Monterrey Consensus Review Sessions Address External Debt and IFIs; World Bank Finances Projects *Page 3*
- **Forests, Deserts and Land**  
UNCCD Establishing Science Programme with CGIAR Centers *Page 4*
- **Intergovernmental Organizations**  
GEF-funded Biomass Gas Plant Inaugurated; UNEP Convenes Regional Meeting on Clean Fuels; FAO Supports Water Resource Project *Page 4*
- **Water, Oceans and Wetlands**  
UN Fish Stocks Agreement Meeting Agrees to Resume Review Conference in 2010; IMO-EC Meeting Addresses Ship Emissions; GPA Supports Development of NPAs and Caspian Sea Convention Protocols *Page 5*
- **Biodiversity and Wildlife**  
Biosafety Protocol Working Group on Liability and Redress Agrees to Convene Friends of the Chair Group before COP/MOP 4; CMS Agreement and MoU Meet *Page 6*
- **Chemicals and Wastes**  
Rotterdam CRC Recommends Chemicals for Prior Informed Consent; Basel Secretariat Posts 2009-2010 Budget *Page 6*

#### GUEST ARTICLE

##### Managing knowledge among the biodiversity-related agreements

By Peter Herkenrath (UNEP-WCMC), Elizabeth Mrema and Balakrishna Pisupati (UNEP DELC)

#### Abstract

UNEP, through its Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DEL/C) and UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), has been executing a project on knowledge management among biodiversity-related agreements since 2006.

*Continued on page 2*

#### RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

##### CROSS-SECTORAL TOOLKIT FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FOREST BIODIVERSITY

(Convention on Biological Diversity, 2008) Edited by I. Thompson and T. Christophersen, this technical series publication summarizes information on policy approaches that aim to minimize the negative impacts of other sectoral policies on forests and forest biodiversity (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-39-en.pdf>).

*Continued on page 3*

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GUEST ARTICLE (*cont.*)

The project has involved the biodiversity-related Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its Indian Ocean - South-East Asian Marine Turtle MoU (IOSEA) and African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The project's major efforts have been related to establishing an Internet-based knowledge management portal allowing access to key documents of the biodiversity-related agreements; establishing an online reporting tool for the CMS, AEWA and CITES biennial reports; and conducting desk studies on various options for harmonization of reporting between those agreements.

To review the status of the project and identify future work on knowledge management among the biodiversity-related agreements, UNEP DELC and WCMC convened a workshop with the Secretariats of the six multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) from 7-9 March 2008, in Cambridge, UK. Workshop participants also examined links with the Tematea project on the development of issue-based modules for coherent implementation of biodiversity-related conventions, executed jointly by UNEP DELC and IUCN, through the Countdown 2010 Programme, and the work of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) on synergies between MEAs. Participants recognized the role played by the Tematea project, in particular its focus on making information about party obligations and commitments from MEAs available to parties for

their national implementation. The EMG highlighted the progressive approach to institutional cooperation – which has connotations for effective knowledge management – among the chemical cluster of MEAs.

The meeting was informed by the interoperability efforts between the Rio Conventions, who share information on national focal points and events. It was agreed to further develop the knowledge management portal (including with French and Spanish versions) prior to its launch at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD in May 2008. In the longer term, a strategy on knowledge management for the biodiversity-related MEAs should be drafted, viewing the efforts as part of the UN-system wide approach to synergies.

The online reporting tool developed by WCMC within the project allows for easy generation of online reporting facilities for other MEAs and other types of questionnaires. For a follow-up project, developing a tool that analyses the information reported online is key for the Secretariats. In the longer-term, online reporting would become part of the envisaged system of interoperability of information management among MEAs.

The project explored the feasibility for the biodiversity-related MEAs emulating the approach to reporting by the Human Rights Treaty System, where parties submit a core report to all treaties and shorter specific reports to the individual treaties. The exploration of a joint reporting framework on inland waters for CBD and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, as undertaken by the project, was seen

to be particularly promising, as was harmonization of reporting among the family of CMS Agreements. It was stressed that, given the parties' reporting burden, coordination at the national level between focal points to the various MEAs is crucial. Participants agreed that next steps should be to draft a document on preconditions for harmonization of reporting, aimed at parties, along with a concept paper on guidance for national information management.

The new UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013, as adopted by the UNEP Governing Council in February, acknowledges the role of identifying synergies and linkages between the MEAs. It stresses, as does the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building, the significance of collaborative efforts to build developing countries' capacity to implement environmental conventions. Using modern technology, a system of interoperable information among the biodiversity-related agreements offers unique chances to enhance MEA implementation if supported by capacity-building efforts for developing countries. It is expected that the governing bodies of the Agreements involved will recognize the value of the knowledge management work, including the role for parties to test and use its outputs.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle44.html>

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

## ► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

### OZONE IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES CONTINUE

Numerous regional meetings relating to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol were held over the past two weeks. The Regional Ozone Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia held its annual meeting from 25-28 March 2008 in Tirana, Albania ([http://jpl1.estis.net/sites/ecanetwork/default.asp?site=ecanetwork&page\\_id=8CCA0773-632D-47CC-BBDE-99599B7A15DA](http://jpl1.estis.net/sites/ecanetwork/default.asp?site=ecanetwork&page_id=8CCA0773-632D-47CC-BBDE-99599B7A15DA)). The meeting focused on: metered-dose inhaler (MDI) transition strategies; hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) surveys, strategies and policy options; compliance; licensing systems; and illegal trade.

The Ozone Officers Network for Western and Northern Africa held its Thematic Meeting on Terminal Phase-Out Management Plan Implementation from 17-20 March 2008, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Participants discussed the status of phase-out management plans, as well as the future direction of the Protocol ([http://www.unep.fr/scripts/events/events\\_details.asp?id=390&lang=%20](http://www.unep.fr/scripts/events/events_details.asp?id=390&lang=%20)).

In Langkawi, Malaysia, a Regional Workshop on Phasing out CFC-based MDIs for South Asia was held from 13-15 March 2008, following which the Joint Meeting of the Southeast Asia Pacific and South Asia Networks of

Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) Officers was held from 17-19 March 2008 to discuss meeting the 2010 phase-out goals (<http://www.roap.unep.org/press/NR08-03.html>; <http://www.roap.unep.org/press/NR08-02.html>).

In national implementation news, the UN Development Programme is providing Zimbabwe US\$ 60,000 for the phase-out of ODS (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200803130654.html>; [http://www.undp.org.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=181&Itemid=9](http://www.undp.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=181&Itemid=9)). The funding will be used for improved data management and training to minimize illegal ODS trade.

**RESEARCH AND RESOURCES**

**FOREST GOVERNANCE IN COUNTRIES WITH FEDERAL SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT: LESSONS FOR DECENTRALIZATION**

(Center for International Forestry Research, January 2008) Written by Arnaldo Contreras-Hermosilla, Hans M. Gregersen and Andy White, this brief examines the experience of twelve countries in managing their federal, decentralized systems of forest governance. The authors conclude that, for effective decentralized forest governance, there must be, *inter alia*, an effective sharing of responsibilities and authority among levels of government, and participation of stakeholders in deciding on needs and benefit sharing from forest conservation and use (<http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/index.php?pubID=316>).

**MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES IN ARAB COUNTRIES**

(UNEP/GPA, 2008) As a contribution to the International Year of Sanitation, the UNEP/Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) Coordination Office, jointly with the Arab Water Council, the Egyptian Ministry for Water Resources and Irrigation, and Delft-Environment, coordinated the delivery of a regional training course on wastewater management for decision-makers from Arab Countries, held 3-5 January 2008 in Cairo, Egypt. This is the final report of this course, which was subtitled "Improving Municipal Wastewater Management" ([http://www.training.gpa.unep.org/documents/25\\_training\\_report\\_cairo2regional\\_english.pdf](http://www.training.gpa.unep.org/documents/25_training_report_cairo2regional_english.pdf)).

**MAKING SENSE OF THE VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKET: A COMPARISON OF CARBON OFFSET STANDARDS**

(Stockholm Environmental Institute, 2008) This report discusses the role of the voluntary carbon offset market, and provides an overview and guide to the most important currently available standards, using the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a benchmark ([http://www.sei-us.org/wwf\\_standcomp\\_080305%20web.pdf](http://www.sei-us.org/wwf_standcomp_080305%20web.pdf)).

**CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE**

**IPCC ISSUES DOCUMENTS FOR 28TH SESSION**

The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a number of new documents for the IPCC's upcoming 28th session (Budapest, Hungary, 9-10 April 2008). Reports related to the IPCC programme and budget, the agenda item on the "future of the IPCC," further work on scenarios, and the Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Assessment are now available, along with the provisional annotated agenda and draft report of the previous session (<http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session28.htm>).



Logos courtesy of IPCC

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**DSD ANNOUNCES CITY AND FARM TOURS DURING CSD 16**

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has announced a "City and Farm Linkages Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Showcase: Food System Tours and Learning Events in New York," which will involve a series of farm and greenmarket tours and events outside the UN,



Image courtesy of Sustainable Food Monitor

on the weekend of 10-11 May 2008, to highlight the issues on the CSD's agenda (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>).

In other DSD news, the Natural Resources Forum, a publication issued by the DSD, has called for views on two questions, to be included in the journal's Viewpoints section: "What are the most important constraints to achieving food security in various parts of Africa?" (May 2008 issue); and "How can sustainable land management contribute to mitigating climate change?" (August 2008 issue) ([http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/nat\\_res\\_forum.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/nat_res_forum.htm)).

**TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT**

**MONTERREY CONSENSUS REVIEW SESSIONS ADDRESS EXTERNAL DEBT AND IFIs**

Review Sessions on Chapters V and VI of the Monterrey Consensus took place from 10-12 March 2008, at UN headquarters in New York, US. Chaired by Ambassadors Adbelaziz (Egypt) and Løvold (Norway), the review sessions provided a forum for sharing information and proposals in the lead-up to the Follow-up International Conference to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha, Qatar, 29 November-2 December 2008).



Johan Løvold, Norway's Ambassador to the UN

The session on Chapter V addressed the topic of "External debt" and the session on Chapter VI featured discussions on "Addressing systemic issues: enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial, and trading systems in support of development." Participants addressed, among other issues, coordination between the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN and governance reforms at the World Bank and IMF. The outcomes of the sessions will be used as a basis for the outcome document that will be prepared for negotiation during the second semester of 2008 (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>).

**WORLD BANK FINANCES BIOSAFETY AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST AND WATER MANAGEMENT**

The World Bank approved, on 25 March 2008, a US\$ 4 million Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant to strengthen the capacity of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21700449~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

On 18 March 2008, the Bank approved a US\$ 56.41 million loan and a US\$ 7 million GEF grant to improve the sustainable and efficient management of forest resources in Argentina (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21691829~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

On 11 March 2008, the World Bank approved a US\$ 100 million loan for the "Bengbu Integrated Environment Improvement Project," a project that aims to improve water supply, reduce incidents of land submergence from flooding, and enhance wastewater management in the Bengbu Municipality, China (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?Projectid=P096925&Type=Overview&theSitePK=40941&pagePK=64283627&menuPK=64282134&piPK=64290415>).

**RESEARCH AND RESOURCES**

**CLEARINGHOUSE FOR NATIONAL SCP PROGRAMMES**

(UNEP, February 2008) The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has developed an online clearinghouse for national sustainable consumption and production (SCP) programmes that contributes to the UN Marrakech Process on SCP, and offers users the opportunity to search programme criteria including priority areas, status, type of programme, region and country name. Query results are displayed as country lists that link to individual national programme summaries. Relevant national SCP documents are also available for download in several languages (<http://www.unep.fr/pc/sustain/initiatives/actionplans/clearinghouse.asp>).

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND UNEP WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

(European Communities, 2008) This brochure highlights collaboration between the European Commission and UNEP at the global and regional level, including international environmental governance, sustainable consumption and production, chemicals management, protecting biodiversity, water and sanitation, and post conflict environmental actions ([http://www.unep.ch/roe/documents/unep-eu/EC\\_UNEP\\_brochure\\_january\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unep.ch/roe/documents/unep-eu/EC_UNEP_brochure_january_2008.pdf)).

**COPING WITH WATER SCARCITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: WHAT ROLE FOR AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGIES?**

(FAO, 2007) This document summarizes a moderated e-mail conference, hosted by the FAO Biotechnology Forum from 5 March-1 April 2007, on the role agricultural biotechnologies can play in helping developing countries cope with water scarcity. It outlines the main issues discussed, namely the application of biotechnologies to develop crops with improved drought resistance or water-use efficiency; the use of bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi in water-limited conditions; and the use of biotechnology in wastewater treatment (<http://www.fao.org/biotech/logs/C14/summary.htm>).

**► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND**

**UNCCD ESTABLISHING SCIENCE PROGRAMME WITH CGIAR CENTERS, ANNOUNCES 193rd PARTY**

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat hosted a meeting, on 12-14 March 2008, jointly organized by two CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) Centers, ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas) and ICRI-SAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics), to finalize a global proposal for a science programme to combat agriculturally-caused dryland degradation and desertification. This "Oasis Challenge Program" will be submitted to the CGIAR Science Council and Executive Council for consideration, and will focus on integrating bio-physical with socio-economic science through alliances with stakeholders to build their capacities while ensuring that the outputs meet



Participants at the joint UNCCD-CGIAR Centers meeting (Photo courtesy of UNCCD)

their needs and can be scaled-up for global impact (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/oasis/menu.php>). UNCCD has also prepared a provisional agenda for the High-Level Dialogue it will host on 27 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. Participants will focus on "Coping with Today's Global Challenges in the Context of the UNCCD Strategy" (<http://www.unccd.int/meetings/global/hldp/menu.php>). On 17 March 2008, Serbia became the 193rd party to the UNCCD (<http://www.unccd.int/convention/ratify/entries/menu.php>).

**► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**GEF-FUNDED BIOMASS GAS PLANT INAUGURATED IN RURAL INDIA**

The latest biomass gasifier plant that converts wood or agricultural residues into a combustible gas mixture was inaugurated in Boregunte, a remote village in the Karnataka region of southern India, on 24 March 2008, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The plant was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Government of India, the Government of Karnataka, and UNDP. Additional plants are scheduled to be commissioned in the same region during 2008 (<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2008/march/green-power-for-rural-areas-in-india.en>).

70 representatives from governments, the Arab League, oil companies, the vehicle industry and civil society to discuss cleaner fuels and vehicles, as well as challenges and recommendations towards regional harmonization. Participants also deliberated the goals of PCFV, which was launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to achieve a global ban on leaded petrol and to attain the widest possible use of low sulphur petrol and diesel fuels (<http://unep.org/pcfvr/regions/MENAWAregional.asp>; [http://www.fiafoundation.com/policy/road\\_safety/news/Gulf\\_States\\_Urged\\_To\\_Adopt\\_Clean\\_Fuels\\_Target.html](http://www.fiafoundation.com/policy/road_safety/news/Gulf_States_Urged_To_Adopt_Clean_Fuels_Target.html)).

**UNEP CONVENES REGIONAL MEETING ON CLEAN FUELS**

A regional policy development meeting on 'Clean Fuels and Vehicles,' organized by the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) and supported by the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia, convened from 12-13 March 2008, in Manama, Bahrain. The event gathered more than

**FAO SUPPORTS PROJECT TO MANAGE WATER RESOURCES IN AFGHANISTAN**

On 26 March 2008, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced the launch of a new hydrological station at the Qargha Dam near Kabul, as part of an effort to better manage water resources in Afghanistan. The hydrological station is one of a network of 174 hydrological stations and 60 snow gauges and meteorological stations being erected around Afghanistan, attributable to a joint endeavor of FAO, the World Bank and the national Ministry of Energy and Water, to measure water levels, precipitation, temperature and water quality (<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/News.aspx?ncat=an&nid=348&ad=26-03-2008>).



Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (Logo courtesy of UNEP)

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

**UN FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT MEETING AGREES TO RESUME REVIEW CONFERENCE IN 2010**

The seventh round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) met from 11-12 March 2008, in New York, US. The meeting was attended by some 160 participants and focused on reviewing progress towards the implementation of the UNFSA, including outcomes of its 2006 Review Conference, and considered the date of the resumed Review Conference and the next round of informal consultations. Participants discussed obstacles to wider participation in the UNFSA by non-parties and developing countries, and agreed on resuming the Review Conference in 2010 and the modalities for its preparatory process (<http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/lsaic7/>).



David Balton (US) chaired the UN Fish Stocks Agreement meeting

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has released the provisional agenda for the eighteenth meeting of the States parties to UNCLOS, scheduled to be held in New York, US, from 13-20 June 2008 ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting\\_states\\_parties/eighteenthmeeting-statesparties.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/eighteenthmeeting-statesparties.htm)). In related news, DOALOS has also released the list of candidates nominated by States party to the election of the seven members of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which will be held during that meeting (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=SPLOS/171>). DOALOS also has released a series of documents: the provisional agenda for the second meeting of the *Ad hoc* Open-Ended Informal Working Group to Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction (New York, US, 28 April-2 May 2008) ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/prov\\_agenda2008.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/prov_agenda2008.pdf)); the advance copy of the Report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea to the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly of the UN and the ninth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (New York, US, 23-27

June 2008) ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general\\_assembly/documents/oceans\\_los\\_advance\\_unedited.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/documents/oceans_los_advance_unedited.pdf)); and Resolution 62/177 on “Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments” ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general\\_assembly/general\\_assembly\\_resolutions.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_resolutions.htm)).

**NEW RAMSAR SITES DESIGNATED, SC37 AGENDA RELEASED**

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced that the governments of Nigeria and Argentina have designated new Wetlands of International Importance. The Nigerian designation of “Lake Chad Wetlands in Nigeria,” effective 30 April 2008, was announced at the summit of heads of State and government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, which took place in Abuja, Nigeria, on 25-26 March 2008 ([http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.nigeria\\_lakechad.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.nigeria_lakechad.htm)). The Argentinean site is the Reserva Natural Otamendi, located near the Paraná River in the province of Buenos Aires ([http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives\\_trans\\_argentina\\_otamendi.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_argentina_otamendi.htm)).

In addition, the Secretariat has released the agenda for the 37th session of the Standing Committee, which will take place from 2-6 June 2008, in Gland, Switzerland ([http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key\\_sc37\\_doc01\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/sc/37/key_sc37_doc01_e.pdf)).

**IMO-EC MEETING ADDRESSES SHIP EMISSIONS, ESTONIA SIGNS SHIPWRECK TREATY**

On 14 March 2008, the heads of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the European Commission (EC), within the framework of cooperation between the two organizations aimed at promoting maritime safety and environmental protection, met in London, UK. Emissions from ships was among the topics addressed, with IMO



L-R: Efthimios Mitropoulos, IMO Secretary General, and Margus Laidre, Ambassador of Estonia to the United Kingdom (Photo courtesy of IMO)

Secretary-General Efthimios Mitropoulos briefing Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the EC and Commissioner for Transport, on work progressing within the IMO in this area ([http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic\\_id=1709&doc\\_id=9080](http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9080)).

In other IMO news, the Government of Estonia was reported to be the first country to sign the Nairobi Wreck Removal Convention, which was adopted in May 2007. The Convention is open for signature until 18 November 2008, and will then be open for ratification, accession or acceptance. It will enter into force 12 months following the date upon which ten States have taken such approval actions ([http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic\\_id=1709&doc\\_id=9090](http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9090)).

**GPA SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF NPAs AND CASPIAN SEA CONVENTION PROTOCOLS**

With the support of UNEP/Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) Coordination Office, Indonesia, Kenya and Mauritius have embarked on the development of a National Programme of Actions (NPAs) to address land-based sources of coastal and marine pollution. The Coordination Office has reported that Belize has finalized its NPA, supported by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and UNEP/GPA. The NPA identifies sewage, nutrients, physical alteration and destruction of habitats, solid waste management, sedimentation, as well as hazardous and chemical substances as priority issues to be addressed. The GPA Coordination Office has also provided legal support to conclude the preparatory work on four Protocols to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, which are now ready for national internal procedures of approval and signing: the Protocol on Biodiversity Conservation; the Protocol concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents; the Protocol on Land-Based Sources and Activities; and the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context. It is expected that the Protocols will be formally adopted by the second conference of the parties to the Caspian Sea Convention, which is tentatively scheduled to take place in September 2008, in Teheran, Iran (IISD RS Sources; <http://www.caspianenvironment.org/newsite/Calendar.htm>).

### ► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

#### BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL WORKING GROUP ON LIABILITY AND REDRESS AGREES TO CONVENE FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR GROUP BEFORE COP/MOP 4

The fifth meeting of the Open-ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress in the context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety took place from 12-19 March 2008, in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The Working Group agreed on certain core elements, reduced the number of options for operational text and categorized the remaining options to reflect the main choices for elaborating international rules and procedures on liability and redress. The Working Group also agreed to convene an intersessional Friends of the Chair group to further negotiate the core elements immediately prior to the fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) serving as the MOP to the Protocol, which will convene in Bonn, Germany, from 12-16 May 2008 (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wglr5/>).

With regard to national implementation, an international workshop held in Beijing, China, from 6-7 March 2008, sponsored by the EU-China Biodiversity Programme, offered an opportunity for policy-makers and experts to discuss bio-

diversity management in order to reduce the effects of climate change, as well as measures to protect ecosystems from the effects of climate change. During the workshop, Wu Xiaoping, vice minister of China's State Environmental Protection Administration, announced the drafting of a revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to address key areas and priorities for the CBD's implementation ([http://www.china.org.cn/environment/news/2008-03/07/content\\_11878359.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/environment/news/2008-03/07/content_11878359.htm); [http://www.china.org.cn/environment/news/2008-03/07/content\\_11879211.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/environment/news/2008-03/07/content_11879211.htm)).

#### CMS AEWAS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETS, AFRICAN TURTLE MoU MEETING REVIEWS PROGRESS

The eighth meeting of the Technical Committee of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), an agreement developed within the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), convened from 3-5 March 2008, in Bonn, Germany. During this final gathering before the AEWA's MOP 4, to be held in September 2008 in Antananarivo, Madagascar, the Committee considered several international reviews covering a variety of waterbird conservation issues, and approved a total of ten

resolutions for submission to the Standing Committee and MOP 4. The Committee also agreed on a timeframe for the finalization of seven additional resolutions, and reviewed a number of possible amendments to the AEWA Action Plan, suggesting a revision of the frequency of international reviews and the addition of new paragraphs on conservation measures for waterbirds in the marine environment. The Committee also considered priority activities for the following triennium ([http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news\\_elements/2008/8th\\_tc\\_meeting.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2008/8th_tc_meeting.htm)).

The second meeting of signatories to the African Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was also developed under the auspices of CMS, met from 5-7 March 2008, in Dakar, Senegal, to review progress made and discuss implementation issues. The meeting adopted an amendment of the MoU text, to establish an Advisory Committee, officially adopt the Coordination Unit which is already operating, and include a specific encouragement for important range States to join the MoU. Delegates also attended presentations on various topics from the field of marine turtle conservation ([http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/03\\_Mar/nw\\_120308\\_Dakar.htm](http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/03_Mar/nw_120308_Dakar.htm)).

### ► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

#### ROTTERDAM CRC RECOMMENDS TWO CHEMICALS FOR PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT

The Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee (CRC) held its fourth meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10-13 March 2008. The CRC recommended including two additional pesticides in the Convention's Prior Informed Consent procedure: alachlor, an herbicide; and aldicarb, an insecticide. The recommendation is based on a review of regulatory decisions to ban the use of these chemicals in several countries due to unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. Parties to the Rotterdam Convention will decide

whether to accept the recommendations for aldicarb and alachlor, as well as endosulfan and tributyl tin, at the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties in Rome, Italy, from 27-31 October 2008 (<http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=b&id=6&sid=18&tid=42>).

#### BASEL SECRETARIAT POSTS BUDGET FOR 2009-2010

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention has posted the 2009-2010 budget which, in response to requests by parties for timely information on the financial consequences of different options, includes three scenarios: the Executive Secretary's assessment of the required

rate of growth of the programme budget; maintaining the operational budget at the 2007-2008 level in nominal terms; and increasing the operational budget from the 2007-2008 level by 10% in nominal terms. The presentation of these alternative scenarios is intended to facilitate agreement by parties on the activities to be included in the programme of work, and on the allocation of the necessary financial resources to ensure implementation of the agreed activities. The budget will be considered by parties at the ninth Conference of the Parties, scheduled to convene in Bali, Indonesia, from 23-27 June 2008 (<http://www.basel.int/convention/contributions/pb2009-10.pdf>).

### ► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- John Hough was appointed as the **UN Development Programme-Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) Deputy Executive Coordinator** in the Environment and Energy Group of the Bureau for Development Policy on 27 March 2007. Most recently, he served as Acting Deputy Executive Coordinator in the UNDP-GEF team.

### ► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **28th SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE:** 9-10 April 2008. Budapest, Hungary. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc28/>
- **SPRING MEETING OF ECOSOC WITH BWIs, WTO AND UNCTAD:** 14 April 2008. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ecosoc/springmeetings/2008/index.htm>
- **17th MEETING OF THE CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE:** 15-18 April 2008. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/17/index.shtml>