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MEA BULLETIN

A newsletter on the activities of key multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and their secretariats
Issue No. 5 | Friday, 5 May 2006 | Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

IPCC APPROVES INVENTORIES GUIDELINES, OVERVIEW CHAPTER



IPCC-25 Chair Rajendra Pachauri (India)

The twenty-fifth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC-25) has ended with the approval of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories and adoption of its Overview Chapter (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc25/>). The meeting (26-28 April 2006, Port Louis, Mauritius) also took action in relation to the IPCC programme and budget for 2007-09, further work on emission scenarios, election procedures and a policy and process for admitting observer organizations. Delegates also considered the future work programme of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, a Special Report on Renewable Energy, and a review of the IPCC's terms of reference, as well as outreach activities, matters related to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and progress toward the Fourth Assessment Report.



Participants during IPCC-25

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2006

(World Bank, April 2006) The third annual Global Monitoring Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is subtitled "Strengthening Mutual Accountability – Aid, Trade and Governance" (<http://sit-eresources.worldbank.org/INTGLOBAL-MONITORING2006/Resources/2186625-1145565069381/GMR06Complete.pdf>). It examines progress achieved in meeting the MDGs and concludes that, despite significant progress in some countries, the world is still far from achieving the Goals. It highlights the need for a much greater effort to implement the vision of global action and mutual accountability for results.

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GUEST ARTICLE

Mainstreaming MEAs into the MDGs

By Bakary Kante, Director, UNEP/DEC

Abstract

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be addressed without also thinking about environmental implications. Environment underpins all the MDGs. Therefore it is critical to recognize the equal importance of environmental sustainability as one of the supporting pillars of the MDGs and acknowledge that MDG 7 cannot be achieved in isolation, or done sequentially before or after any other MDG.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

ACHIEVING THE MDGS IN ASIA: A CASE FOR MORE AID?

(UNESCAP, 2006) This report (<http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/events/DFID%20meeting/LondonJ.pdf>) analyzes aid to sub-regions in the world on a needs basis calculated on percentage share of underweight children and other Millennium Development Goal indicators, and suggests that Asia is being ignored in favor of Africa. This report was prepared by UNESCAP as background for the Asia 2015 Conference - Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty, London, 6-7 March 2006.

IIED MDG PUBLICATIONS

(IIED) This web page (<http://www.iied.org/Gov/mdgs/publications.html>) offers access to several publications by the International Institute for Environment and Development regarding the Millennium Development Goals, including: "How to Make Poverty History – the central role of local organizations in meeting the MDGs," "The Millennium Development Goals and Conservation - Managing Nature's Wealth for Society's Health," and "The Millennium Development Goals and Local Processes: Hitting the target or missing the point?"

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE: ANNUAL REPORT 2006

(World Economic Forum, 2006) The Global Governance Report (http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Initiatives/GGI_Report06.pdf) considers six major areas: peace and security, poverty and hunger, education, health, the environment and human rights. The report provides both a scorecard to measure the effort exerted by governments, international organizations, business and civil society during 2005 in these areas and a concise discussion of key actions taken and opportunities missed.

PILOT 2006 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX (EPI)

(Center for Environmental Law and Policy, Yale University, and Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University, 2006) The EPI (<http://www.yale.edu/epi/>) ranks 133 countries on 16 indicators tracked in six established policy categories, identifying targets for environmental performance and measuring how closely each country comes to these goals. The report finds that environmental policy results "can be tracked with the same outcome-oriented and performance-based rigor that applies to poverty reduction, health promotion, and other global development goals." It also argues that clearer targets, monitoring and mainstreaming are needed for environmental protection efforts.

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC SECRETARIAT GEARS UP FOR SB24

The UNFCCC Secretariat has released a number of documents and reports ahead of the upcoming 24th sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies (18-26 May 2006, Bonn, Germany). New documents posted on its meeting webpage (<http://unfccc.int/meetings/sb24/items/3648.php>) include a list of side events taking place alongside the official meetings (http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/reports/events_list.html). The Secretariat has also posted a synthesis report on technology needs (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbsta/eng/inf01.pdf>) identified by non-Annex I Parties to the Convention (mostly developing countries). Another synthesis report deals with steps to be taken to monitor capacity building activities in developing countries (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbi/eng/05.pdf>). The Secretariat has also released a document on privileges and immunities for individuals serving on bodies established under the Kyoto Protocol (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbi/eng/06.pdf>). The possible exposure of those serving on Kyoto bodies to third-party litigation was discussed at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2005, and is likely to be considered by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its 24th session. Six submissions from parties have been received on this is-

sue in recent months, the latest from Brazil (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbi/eng/misc06a01.pdf>). In addition, a new report has been released analyzing technical problems and constraints identified by the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from non-Annex I Parties (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbi/eng/04.pdf>).

TEAP DISCUSSES PROGRESS REPORT; NATIONAL OZONE UNITS RECEIVE HELP IN DEVELOPING WEBSITES

The Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) of the Montreal Protocol (<http://ozone.unep.org/teap/index.asp>) met from 24-28 April in Beijing, China, to discuss issues needing to be resolved prior to the publication of their annual Progress Report. TEAP is reported to be giving particular attention to the conflict of interest guidelines circulated by Canada, an issue that has become more salient in recent years (IISDRS sources).

In other news, the OzonAction Branch of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics has joined with the International Environmental Technology Centre to provide a template to facilitate National Ozone Units' development of web sites (<http://www.unep-tie.org/ozonaction/compliance/estis/index.htm>). The free service is available in all official UN languages, and enables information sharing within and across countries.

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD BEGINS REVIEW OF ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE

The fourteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) opened on 1 May 2006 in New York, NY, and will continue until 12 May 2006 (<http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd14/>). CSD-14 is reviewing progress in energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution and the atmosphere, and climate change, together with cross-cutting issues. CSD-14 Chair Aleksis Aleksishvili, Georgia's Minister of Finance, sent a message to the body indicating he was unable to attend due to a series of shocks to the Georgian economy, including an increase in gas import prices. As part of the session, delegates will also focus on the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with the discussion guided by the CSD's mandated themes. Based on the CSD's two-weeks of deliberations, a non-negotiated Chair's summary of the opening and general statements on the progress of implementation and High-level statements and a record of the Partnerships Fair, the Learning Center, and the Multi-stakeholder dialogue session will be forwarded to CSD-15, which will negotiate policy recommendations. In preparation for the session, the CSD Secretariat released an updated version of the Matrix (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/documents/matrixCSD14.pdf>), which it prepared at the request of the Bureau as an information tool. The Secretariat will update the Matrix based on information shared at CSD-14 and during the preparatory process leading to CSD-15.



Dais at CSD-14

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

CLEAN ENERGY AND DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS AN INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

(World Bank, 2006) This report ([http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVCOM-MINT/Documentation/20890696/DC2006-0002\(E\)-CleanEnergy.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVCOM-MINT/Documentation/20890696/DC2006-0002(E)-CleanEnergy.pdf)) was prepared as a follow-up to the G-8 Gleanagles Summit Communiqué and Plan of Action for Climate Change and covers three interdependent issues: the investments needed to meet modern energy needs of developing countries over the long-term in a sustainable and efficient manner; the additional steps required in energy, transport, and industrial sectors to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gases; and what developing countries need to do to adapt to the impacts of climate change and weather variability.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS TROPICAL TIMBER LOGGING AND TRADE

(Fridtjof Nansen Institute, April 2006) This report (http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/FNI_Norwegian_Procurement.pdf) looks at international and regional initiatives to control illegal logging, focusing on the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) and Trade (FELGT) processes and various forest certification schemes.

DOES BUREAUCRACY REALLY MATTER? THE AUTHORITY OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL TREATY SECRETARIATS IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

(MIT Press, 2006) This article (<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/glep.2006.6.1.23>), authored by Steffen Bauer, appears in *Global Environmental Politics* 6:1. It explores the role of intergovernmental treaty secretariats in world politics, focusing on the Ozone and Desertification Secretariats.

▶ WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

REPORT FROM FISH STOCKS CONSULTATIONS RELEASED, UNICPOLOS-7 AGENDA AVAILABLE

The report from the Fifth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (20-24 March 2006, New York) is now available (http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/fishstocksmeetings/icsp5report.pdf). These Consultations served as preparation for the Review Conference for this Agreement, to be convened by the Secretary-General from 22-26 May 2006, in New York. Also in preparation for the Review Conference, the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has posted submitted information and views from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_inputsIGOs.htm).

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has also recently posted 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 (http://www.un.org/depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm), which is scheduled to take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 12-16 June 2006.

RAMSAR RELEASES STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT, DRAFT STRP AGENDA; NEW RAMSAR WETLAND SITES DESIGNATED

The Ramsar Secretariat has posted the report (http://www.ramsar.org/sc/34/key_sc34_report.pdf) and decisions (http://www.ramsar.org/sc/34/key_sc34_decisions_e.pdf) adopted by the 34th meeting of Ramsar's Standing Committee (10-13 April

2006, Gland, Switzerland). The Secretariat has also made the draft agenda for the 13th meeting of Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) (30 May – 2 June 2006, Gland, Switzerland), the Convention's subsidiary advisory body, available (http://www.ramsar.org/strp/strp13_doc01.htm).

The Ramsar Secretariat also announced that two new Ramsar sites have been designated. The Romanian Ministry of Environment and Waters Management designated Lake Techirghiol as that Party's fifth Ramsar site, effective 23 March 2006 (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_romania_techirghiol.htm). The site provides an important roosting place for waterfowl, especially geese and ducks, and its reed beds offer ideal breeding grounds for many bird species. A management plan is expected to be completed in 2006. The Republic of Belarus designated its eighth Wetland of International Importance, effective 18 October 2005 (http://www.ramsar.org/wl/w.n.belarus_prostyr.htm). Prostyr, a national landscape reserve and important bird area, is located along the banks and floodplain meadows between the rivers Pripyat, Prostyr and Styr, continuing as a transboundary wetland across the Ukrainian border. It is a breeding ground of the globally endangered Aquatic Warbler and an important nesting site during the migration season.

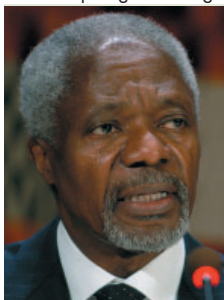


Prostyr, Belarus. Image courtesy Ramsar

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

BRETTON WOODS' "SPRING MEETINGS" FOCUS ON CLEAN ENERGY, IMF REFORM; BWIs HOLD HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WITH ECOSOC

The International Monetary Fund-World Bank "Spring Meetings" (22-23 April 2006, Washington DC) focused on ways to finance clean energy in developing countries and on the role of governance in meeting worldwide social, health, and economic goals (<http://www.imf.org/external/spring/2006/index.htm>). Aid, trade and debt relief were also



Secretary-General Annan addresses the High-Level discussion with ECOSOC

on the agenda of the joint World Bank-IMF Development Committee, the body that sets policy on development issues and advises on financial resources required to promote economic development in developing countries. The Committee considered reports on "Clean Energy and Development: Towards an Investment Framework" ([http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVCOMMIT/Documentation/20890696/DC2006-0002\(E\)-CleanEnergy.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVCOMMIT/Documentation/20890696/DC2006-0002(E)-CleanEnergy.pdf)) and the third annual "Global Monitoring Report on the Millennium Development Goals" (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGLOBALMONITORING2006/Resources/2186625-1145565069381/GMR06Complete.pdf>). Reforms to the IMF generated the most media interest, particularly questions on how to adapt the IMF to changing global circumstances, including crisis prevention and the possible monitoring of exchange rates.

Immediately following this gathering in Washington, DC, a high-level meeting of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the Bretton Woods institutions, World Trade Organization and UN Conference on Trade and Development convened at UN headquarters in New York (24 April 2006). This meeting focused on issues such as the Doha trade round and trade-distorting subsidies for agriculture, the "Aid for Trade Initiative," matters relating to financing for development, debt relief and the risks of protectionism. Round table discussions were held under the overall theme "Coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit Outcome" (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ecosoc6193.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/bwi2006/index.html>).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

This thinking needs to be mainstreamed not only into development policy but also into the environmental side of the equation. Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) focus on specific, ground-truth-based activities, but more critically, MEAs are legally binding instruments capable of mobilizing effective social, political and economic action and change.

Already many MEAs have taken up the issues of the MDGs into their work. Concerning MDG 1 (combating poverty and hunger), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) sets out as one of its primary objectives socio-economic aims such "as achieving food security and sustainable development and management of agricultural, livestock-rearing, forestry and multipurpose activities" and integrating "strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought." The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) COP-9 decisions creating the Special Climate Fund and the Least-Developed Countries Fund took note of the fact that these two funds contribute "to the achievement of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the MDGs, and contribute to the integration of climate change considerations into development activities." In Decision VII/32 of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) COP-7, the Parties recognized the links between MDG 1 (Combating poverty and hunger), MDG 6 (combating diseases) and MDG 7 and the dependence "on the effective conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources." The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea's Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish, organizations such as the FAO, and regional fishery agreements are playing key roles in ensuring the sustainability of global and regional fisheries. Lastly, the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) are working in collaboration with the CBD on significantly reducing biodiversity loss by 2010.

At present, the MDGs have no concrete governance framework for implementation. MEAs could provide a concrete medium for MDG action. Although challenging, we must succeed in this task because the lessons are already clear: poverty alleviation strategies that do not integrate environmental concerns are unlikely to succeed.

Read the Full Article at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle5.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.

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UN BUDGET VOTE THREATENS REFORM

UN membership appears to be polarized over the budgetary implications, the pace and the modalities of proposed UN reforms. Opposing some of the specific recommendations for UN management reform proposed in UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report "Investing in the United Nations: For a Stronger Organization Worldwide," the group of developing countries (G-77/China) called for several further reports and studies and opposed modifications to budgetary procedures or financial regulations without the General Assembly's prior review and approval, as well as the proposal for strategic discussions to be held in "meetings of manageable size," possibly through dividing up the workload of the Fifth Committee among select working groups of limited membership. The G-77/China prioritized the General Assembly's oversight role for administrative and budgetary matters, with a view to ensuring full, effective and efficient implementation of all mandated programmes and activities and protecting the right of each Member State to have an equal say in UN decision-making regardless of financial contribution to the UN budget. The G-77/China proposal was opposed by several developed countries that feared a slow down of the whole UN reform process – including environmental governance reforms – and cautioned against "cherry-picking" among the Secretary-General's interrelated proposals. Breaking a longstanding tradition of consensus decision-making, the Administrative and Budgetary (Fifth) Committee approved the resolution proposed by the G-77/China by a vote of 108 countries in favor to 50 against with 3 abstentions on 29 April 2006. The measure will not take effect until it is formally adopted by the General Assembly plenary (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/gaab3732.doc.htm>). Developed countries that voted against the resolution collectively represent over 80% of budget contributions, thus giving rise to concerns that approval of the UN budget on 30 June 2006 will be tied to progress on management reforms ([\[net.org/thenews/newsdesk/114616329093.htm\]\(http://www.alert-net.org/thenews/newsdesk/114616329093.htm\)\). Expressing regret about the vote, Secretary-General Annan urged States to work together to rebuild the spirit of mutual trust and remain committed to the principles of UN reform \(<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sgsm10437.doc.htm>\).](http://www.alert-</p>
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UNEP FI LAUNCHES "INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES," BIODIVERSITY-FINANCE PLAN

The Finance Initiative of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP FI) together with the UN Secretary-General and the UN Global Compact has launched the Principles for Responsible Investment. The six voluntary Principles, which were developed during a nearly year-long process, aim to integrate environmental, social and corporate governance considerations into investment decision-making. The heads of leading institutions from 16 countries, representing more than \$2 trillion in assets owned, officially signed the Principles on 26 April 2006 (<http://www.unep.org/Documents/Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=475&ArticleID=5265&I=en>). UNEP FI, together with Flora and Fauna International and Insight Investment, has also launched a follow-up phase of its activities on integrating biodiversity concerns into the finance sector, following a side-event presentation at the Convention on Biodiversity's COP in Curitiba in March 2006. In consideration of the current trends for evaluating biodiversity risk within the finance sector, as well as biodiversity-specific lending and investment practices that promote and reward biodiversity good practice within the industry, UNEP FI is working on the expansion of a biodiversity benchmark as a comprehensive framework that provides investors with appropriately framed information to consider biodiversity in their investment decisions and an objective and consistent basis for shareholder engagement. The next phase of the project will be devoted to including in the benchmark companies listed in emerging markets and supply-chains, and the addition of on-the-ground audit information (<http://www.unepfi.org/events/2006/curitiba/>).

▶ BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES ANNOUNCES 2006 EXPORT QUOTAS

The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) published the 2006 export quotas for specimens of species included in the CITES Appendices (<http://www.cites.org/common/quotas/2006/ExportQuotas2006.pdf>). The list of quotas establishes the volume of legal trade in the species covered by the Convention. On the controversial issue of shared caviar stocks in the Caspian Sea, the Secretariat has decided that only Iran is allowed to export. The other Caspian Sea countries – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan – have failed to submit the required information on

the long-term survival of the fish that would allow the CITES Secretariat to publish export quotas. This year, Iran will be able to export up to 44,370 kilograms of caviar (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18156&Cr=caviar&Cr1=>).

CBD CIRCULATES ADVANCE VERSION OF COP/MOP-3 AND COP-8 DECISIONS

The CBD Secretariat has circulated advance, unedited versions of the decisions adopted by the third meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (13-17 March 2006) (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/bs/mop-03/mop-03-decision-advance-en.pdf>) and the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (20-31 March 2006) (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-08/cop-08-decision-advance-en.pdf>).



Trade in *Acipenseriformes*
(Photo UN News Centre)

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

**STOCKHOLM CONVENTION
POPS COP-2 OPENS;
NON-COMPLIANCE WORKING
GROUP MEETS;
POPS TRAINING ANNOUNCED**

The second Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs COP-2) is taking place this week in Geneva, Switzerland (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_2/meetingdocs/default.htm; <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pops/cop2/>). Participants at this five-day meeting are considering decisions related to: evaluation of the continued need for DDT for disease vector control and alternative strategies to replace DDT; criteria for the review process for entries in the register of specific exemptions; guidelines on best available techniques (BAT) and provisional guidance on best environmental practices (BEP); and identification and quantification of dioxin and furan releases. Other issues being addressed by the COP include: the report of the Global Environment Facility on its activities and other issues related to the financial mechanism; procedures and institutional mechanisms for determining non-compliance and for treatment of Parties found to be in non-compliance; issues relating to liability and redress; adoption of the budget for the Secretariat; and improving cooperation and synergies between the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. As the meeting reached the halfway point, financing issues appeared to be requiring a great deal of attention and discussion. A programme of side events for COP-2 can be found at: http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/oewg_nc/COP2_side_events.htm.

Prior to COP-2, the first meeting of the Open-ended *Ad hoc* Working Group on Non-Compliance (OEWG NC) convened from 28-29 April 2006 at the Geneva International Conference Center (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/oewg_nc/meetingdocs/default.htm). Delegates agreed to

use, as the basis for discussion, a bracketed draft text on procedures and institutional mechanisms on non-compliance prepared by the Secretariat. Delegates addressed issues such as: establishment, composition and meeting frequency of the Compliance Committee; procedures for triggering non-compliance submissions to the Committee; measures to be taken by the Committee to facilitate compliance; and the decision-making process. Delegates added new proposals and brackets to the text, and agreed on a recommendation to COP-2 for the OEWG NC to reconvene as soon as appropriate. The OEWG NC report will be presented to delegates during COP-2.

An initiative has been launched to provide national-level training on Action Plan development and related technical and financial support to 15 Least Developed Countries that have signed or are Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (http://www.unitar.org/cwg/whats_new.html). This initiative is being undertaken by UNITAR, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its other Implementing Agencies. The project is being funded by the GEF, with support from the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU). The project builds on the experience gained and lessons learned through projects in more than 40 countries to-date (including a previous 25-LDC project) to assist in developing a wide variety of action plans on priority topics for sound chemicals management.

**BASEL CONVENTION PUBLISHES
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER,
REQUESTS COMMENTS;
GUIDELINES FOR POP WASTES,
DDT AND PESTICIDES PUBLISHED**

The Basel Convention Secretariat has released its latest quarterly newsletter (<http://www.basel.int/press/bulletin0406.pdf>). The April issue includes articles about activities

the Secretariat has performed during the period December 2005-April 2006. Featured activities include: events on the 3R initiative, Basel Convention participation at ICCM, ship recycling, regional workshops and an update on the activities of the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative.

The Secretariat has also published a listing of comments requested from parties and other participants after the Fifth Session of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG-5) (<http://www.basel.int/convention/rfc/rfc-oewg5.html>). Comments have been requested on: abandonment of ships, ship dismantling, synergies, and protocol on liability, among others.

The OEWG-5 has agreed to replace the General Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of POP wastes and PCB Technical Guidelines adopted at COP-7 with new revised versions, which are expected to be adopted at COP-8. The drafts of the new guidelines can be found at: <http://www.basel.int/techmatters/pops/guidelines/pops110406.doc> (POPs) and <http://www.basel.int/techmatters/pcbs/guidelines/pcb120406.doc> (PCBs). New drafts of the following guidelines are also available: Technical Guidelines on DDT (<http://www.basel.int/meetings/oewg/oewg5/docs/i09r1e.doc>); Environmentally Sound Management of Pesticides Wastes arising from the production of Aldrin, Chlordane, Dieldrin, Endrin, Heptachlor, Hexachlorobenzene (HCB), Mirex and Toxaphene (<http://www.basel.int/techmatters/pesticides/guidelines/pest110406.doc>); and environmentally sound management of wastes containing or contaminated with unintentionally produced polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (PCDDs), polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) or hexachlorobenzene (HCB) (<http://www.basel.int/techmatters/dioxifuran/guidelines/dioxifur110406.doc>).



Dais at POPS COP-2

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

CCD REPORTS ON E-FORUM'S FIRST PHASE; RELEASES NOTE ON JIU FOLLOW-UP

A summary of the first phase of the electronic forum on best practices and traditional knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was hosted by the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), has been released. The first phase (20 March to 7 April 2006) was organized in two sessions. The summary of the first session (http://www.unccd-deselac.org/uploads/s1summary_en.pdf), which discussed opportunities for establishing a regional network on best practices and traditional knowledge, presents participants' comments regarding the potential for and bottlenecks of a regional thematic network, the criteria and mechanisms that should be considered in establishing such a network and in involving local communities in the network, and the key elements to be considered to promote effective discussion and information exchange on traditional knowledge. The summary of the second session (http://www.unccd-deselac.org/uploads/s2summary_en.pdf), which discussed challenges in the rescue and application of sustainable traditional practices, technologies and knowledge to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, presents participants' comments regarding the key challenges in the rescue and application of sustainable traditional knowledge to control/revert land degradation processes, the stakeholders who have to deal with and are mainly affected by these challenges, the extent to which access to resources prevent

or encourage local stakeholders to rescue and apply traditional practices, the extent to which the application of traditional knowledge has an economic impact for local producers, and factors that should be taken into account to protect the rights of the holders of traditional knowledge. The second phase of the electronic forum will be held from 3-30 May 2006 (<http://services.unccd.int/Forums-LAC/index.htm>).

The UNCCD Secretariat has also released an informal note regarding the process to follow-up the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and to develop a ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (<http://www.unccd.int/convention/docs/IIWG-note.pdf>). COP-7 called for the creation of an intersessional intergovernmental working group (IIWG) to do this work, and specified a number of details regarding the timetable for launching and completing its work. The informal note indicates that, at the request of two regional groups, the IIWG's first meeting, which COP-7 specified should take place in April, has been postponed until 22-23 May 2006. The IIWG is expected to develop its work programme during this meeting. The informal note also identifies the IIWG members that were nominated by the regional groups.

ITTO WORKSHOP CONSIDERS CHALLENGES FOR CDM FORESTRY PROJECTS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The Regional Workshop on Perspectives of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Forestry Projects in Asia and the Pacific (22-24 April 2006, Phnom Penh, Cambo-

dia) highlighted the need for much more work to advance the implementation of CDM forestry projects in the region. Co-hosted by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the workshop (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelD=223&id=1131>) brought together representatives from 15 countries, several NGOs, research institutes and the private sector. The workshop focused on: enabling conditions, specifically public frameworks; investment opportunities and business incentives; checks and balances, focusing on civil society needs; and reducing emissions from deforestation in tropical countries. Assessments of the current situation on afforestation and reforestation (A&R) CDM in the Asia-Pacific region showed that some countries are quite advanced in considering A&R CDM projects, but a series of barriers continue to slow implementation, including the lack of facilities to support project developers in planning methodologies and accessing buyers, and companies hesitating to become involved in A&R projects because of the perceived debt risk due to the non-permanence of forestry projects. It was also recognized that there is still a lack of awareness in many Asian countries on the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation, leaving much work to be done before this issue can be properly integrated into a future climate regime. The workshop outcomes include a matrix with key information to assist in national implementation, including respective country priorities and policies, and a list of recommendations.

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **14TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** 1-12 May 2006. New York, NY, US. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html>
- **SECOND PHASE OF THE UNCCD ELECTRONIC FORUM ON BEST PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** 3-30 May 2006. Internet. <http://services.unccd.int/Forums-LAC/index.htm>
- **24TH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE:** 15-26 May 2006. Bonn, Germany. <http://www.unfccc.int>
- **ITTO EXPERT MEETING ON THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INCLUSION OF RAMIN (GONYSTYLUS SPP.) IN APPENDIX II OF CITES:** 16-19 May 2006. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelD=223&id=1148>
- **NEAR EAST SUBREGIONAL MEETING OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION:** 21-24 May 2006. Muscat Sultanate, Oman. <http://www.pic.int/en/ViewPage.asp?id=405>
- **REVIEW CONFERENCE FOR THE STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT:** 22-26 May 2006. New York, US. http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm
- **ASIAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE RATIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION:** 23-26 May 2006. Hanoi, Vietnam. <http://www.pic.int/en/ViewPage.asp?id=405>
- **BEIJING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND DESERTIFICATION:** 29 May – 1 June 2006. Beijing, China. http://www.iydd.org/index_beijing.htm
- **40TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL:** 29 May – 2 June 2006. Mérida, Mexico. <http://www.itto.or.jp>
- **13TH MEETING OF RAMSAR'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL:** 30 May - 2 June 2006. Gland, Switzerland. http://www.ramsar.org/strp/strp13_doc01.htm