



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CHEMICALS AND WASTES

BASEL COP9 ADOPTS AHJWG RECOMMENDATION

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the Basel Convention convened from 23-27 June 2008, in Bali, Indonesia. COP9 adopted over 30 decisions prepared by the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on, *inter alia*: the recommendation of the



L-R: Katharina Kummer Peiry, Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention; COW Chair Mary Harwood; and Nelson Sabogal, Basel Convention Secretariat, during the final session of the COW.

Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Cooperation and Coordination of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions; evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention and the new strategic framework beyond 2010; the budget; and technical matters. On 26 June, ministers and heads of delegations gathered in the high-level segment to address the “World Forum on Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood,” and held an interactive discussion on ways in which the Basel Convention can contribute to the achievement of the wider policy objectives of human health and livelihood – the theme of COP9. Delegates also considered the legal interpretation of Article 17(5), relating to the entry into force of the Ban Amendment. During COP9, Switzerland and Indonesia announced a joint initiative to convene an informal gathering prior to OEWG7 on substantive issues related to the Ban Amendment (<http://www.iisd.ca/basel/cop9/>).

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GUEST ARTICLE I

New Focus on Rural Development: Where does the UNCCD figure?

By Christian Mersmann, Managing Director of the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD

Abstract

The food price crisis and climate resilience appear to open new windows of opportunity for sustainable land management, but are we really facing an unprecedented situation? The answer is both yes and no.

Continued on page 2

GUEST ARTICLE II

Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Biodiversity Conservation in Agricultural Landscapes

By Sara Scherr and Seth Shames, *Ecoagriculture Partners**

Abstract

Worldwide trends in the production demand of agriculture, the percentage of land dedicated to agricultural purposes and pressures on biodiversity require the conservation community to reassess its perspective on agriculture.

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GUEST ARTICLE I (cont.)

On the one hand, many challenges remain the same. We are still doing landscape restoration so that sound natural resource management drives production and productivity and environmental services are provided for sustainable livelihoods. Environment-induced migration to urban centers continues to leave in its wake an increasing number of women-headed households and uncertain land tenure rights. Governance and coordination, public debate, capacity building and knowledge exchange are still the call of the day. The validity of the paradigm shift from isolated project delivery towards programmatic approaches in development that came with the consensus on sustainable development at Rio in 1992 still holds true.

On the other hand, there are new aspects to the development change agenda. One is the urgent call for immediate action, finance and implementation. Yet we know there is no 'quick fix' when it comes to land issues in development. Long-term solutions that assess risks and weigh trade-offs as part of overall development planning processes are a prerequisite for sustainability. Could it be that we are putting programmatic approaches at risk, so as to avoid losing the political momentum offered by climate resilience and food security? We have no time, yet time is precisely what we need to develop commensurate, lasting solutions.

Secondly, there is a huge knowledge gap between implementing institutions in developing countries and those working at the international level and on global policy processes. The results of international negotiations need to be mainstreamed and re-

packaged for public consumption, to induce action on the ground, while national research institutes and civil society organizations have a role to play in transferring eco-compatible knowledge. Information on financial development opportunities under the emerging 'climate change finance regime' must be easier to come by. Action plans - including UN Framework Convention on Climate Change National Adaptation Plans for Action and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) National Action Plans - must be strategic documents that provide a framework enabling climate resilience and sustainable land management to be tackled in existing programmes, and not as a parallel process.

Thirdly, all stakeholders need to evaluate the potentially important role of subsistence and small-scale farming for the climate change market. Subsistence farming as the major driver behind adaptation in developing countries is a potential macro-economic force that the international community needs to reckon with when designing its approach to post-Kyoto. Forests outside tropical rainforests therefore have to be part of the debate on Reduced Emissions Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), opening up the climate market to the poorer segments of rural populations.

The UNCCD is an important instrument to make ends meet in terms of climate resilience, food security and rural development. In order to achieve results, the UNCCD needs to be more flexible in its approach, grasp the opportunities that the Convention text presents, and continue to work to free itself from relative isolation. The Ten Year Strategic Plan and Framework

adopted by the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP 8) of the UNCCD in 2007, constitutes a solid consensus by Parties of the need to streamline and prioritize action, build scientific evidence and public awareness, develop and advocate for enabling policies, set standards, and mobilize financial resources. The basic issue of what the UNCCD has to lose or gain can effectively be addressed through strengthened debate at COP itself.

The new focus on rural development, agriculture and forestry induced by climate change and food security offers the UNCCD the opportunity to position itself at the interface of various processes, as an effective promoter of comprehensive and programmatic implementation of sustainable land management. Based on the Ten Year Strategic Plan, the UNCCD will be the service provider on integration urgently needed to package the results of various negotiations and emerging finance in a meaningful, action-oriented way that will assist country Parties in addressing sustainable land management issues more effectively. The outcomes of COP 9 in 2009 will be a measure of the Convention's capacity to turn the page and effectively support country Parties to meet the new demands on land, by providing social, economic and environmental services, as called for by the international community.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle51a.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, for further information.

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

WORKSHOPS DISCUSS STOCKHOLM AND ROTTERDAM CONVENTIONS

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's subregional office for Central Asia, in collaboration with the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, convened an awareness raising workshop from 1-3 July 2008, in Istanbul, Turkey. Representatives from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the workshop, which sought to facilitate a dialogue involving key stakeholders, share experience among countries (parties and non-parties), and



Participants during the awareness raising workshop (Photo courtesy of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants)

support the ratification and implementation of the two Conventions (<http://chm.pops.int/>).

In other news, the Coordinating Group of Pesticide Control Boards of

Caribbean countries convened for its annual meeting from 17-20 June 2008, in Belize City, Belize. Representatives of the Secretariats of the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions participated and provided information on the ratification and implementation of the two Conventions. Participants considered the new chemicals being considered for addition to the Stockholm Convention and noted that both lindane and endosulfan are being used by some countries in the region (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/COPs/Meetings/Belize2008/tabid/339/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

GUEST ARTICLE II (cont.)

Recent research and documentation of synergies between ecologic and agricultural systems are revealing enormous potential for maintaining ecosystem integrity while increasing agricultural production and rural livelihood opportunities. These joint production and conservation approaches that lead to positive-sum interactions in agricultural landscapes are often referred to as ecoagriculture. While ecoagriculture landscapes can enhance the efficacy of nearby protected areas and contribute to on-farm conservation of genetic diversity, they also boost agricultural productivity, food security and financial returns.

The management of agricultural landscapes jointly for conservation and production is particularly relevant to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), most specifically to the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity, in charting new directions for biodiversity conservation in agricultural areas. Five guidelines are presented to provide a foundation for policymakers and land managers to consider how the Ecosystem Approach can be applied to agriculture: 1) Adopt an 'agricultural landscape' perspective, 2) empower multi-stakeholder processes for landscape measures, 3) build the landscape management capacity of

farming communities, 4) adapt the role of conservationists in agricultural landscapes, and 5) coordinate environmental and agricultural policies for more effective landscape planning.

*Sponsoring Institutions: Ecoagriculture Partners; Biodiversity International; World Agroforestry Center; UNDP Equator Initiative; IUCN; Landcare International; Kijabe Environmental Volunteers (KENVO), Kenya; Kalinga Mission (KAMICYDI), Philippines; and Asociacion ANAI, Costa Rica.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle51b.html>

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES**ROTTERDAM CONVENTION PREPARES EXPORT NOTIFICATION FORM**

In response to a request by the third Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention has developed an export notification form for parties' use when making export notifications (<http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=t&id=261&sid=32>).

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION PREPARES HANDBOOK ON POPRC

In response to the third Conference of the Parties' request to strengthen the capacity of parties in the work of the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee (POPRC), POPRC established an intersessional working group to address



Logo courtesy of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat

this issue. Two international experts were engaged to prepare a handbook on the work of the Committee, which will be tested at regional workshops in Uruguay and Thailand prior to POPRC4 (October 2008) (IISD RS Sources).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE**MONTREAL PROTOCOL'S 28th OEWG MEETING CONVENES**

The 28th Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer convened from 7-11 July 2008, in Bangkok, Thailand. The Working Group considered: issues arising out of the progress report of the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), including essential-use exemptions, a scoping study addressing alternatives to hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), and critical-use exemptions for the use of methyl bromide; and ozone depleting substances banks. Informal discussions also took place on hydrofluorocarbons, the primary category of replacements for HCFCs, on which an agreement was reached at the 19th Meeting of the Parties in 2007. The Working Group forwarded its recommendations on these and other matters to the 16-20 November 2008 Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/japan-major-economies-promote-montreal/story.aspx?guid=%7BA200FF86-2734-4C6F-9E5F-5368DE602EE6%7D>; http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/28oewg/index.shtml).

The Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol is convening this week, from 14-18 July 2008, in Bangkok, Thailand. The Executive Committee is considering, *inter alia*, the status of contributions and disbursements, the prospects of developing countries in achieving compliance with the next control measures of the Protocol, a desk study on the evaluation of terminal phase-out management plans for chlorofluorocarbons and HCFCs, and implementing agency progress reports (http://www.multilateralfund.org/55th_executive_committee_meeti.htm).

UNFCCC LAUNCHES FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME; AWG PREPARATIONS CONTINUE

The UN Climate Change Secretariat has launched a "fellowship programme" to help build capacity for addressing climate change in developing countries, particularly parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that are small island developing States or least developed countries. The programme aims to develop local expertise by supporting innovative analytical work on climate

change in the context of sustainable development, promoting a network of experts, and encouraging the leadership potential of promising young professionals in their fields. Applications are due by 31 August 2008 (http://unfccc.int/secretariat/fellowship_programme/items/4429.php).

In other UNFCCC news, preparations are continuing for the third session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA3) and the first part of the sixth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP6, part I), which will meet from 21-27 August 2008, in Accra, Ghana. The UNFCCC Secretariat has recently issued the annotated agenda for the AWG-KP, as well as an overview schedule for both bodies (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/awg6/eng/04.pdf>, http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/intersessional/accra/application/pdf/080627_accra_ov_sched.pdf). The Secretariat has proposed a more informal dress code for delegates "to take into account the tropical weather in Ghana" (<http://unfccc.int/meetings/intersessional/accra/items/4437.php>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

GPA OUTREACH – JUNE ISSUE

(Stakeholder Forum, June 2008)
 GPA Outreach is a newsletter that aims to raise awareness on issues and activities relating to the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities. The June issue focuses on the Fourth Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands (Hanoi, Viet Nam, April 2008). It contains a message from Anjan Datta, Officer-in-Charge, UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, an overview of the outcomes of the Fourth Global Conference by Biliiana Cicin-Sain and Miriam C. Balgos of Global Forum, and a description of the joint UNEP/GPA and Stockholm Environment Institute framework on mainstreaming coastal and marine resources into national development strategies (http://stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/GPA_Outreach/GPA_Outreach_June_2008.pdf).

REAL AND PRESENT DANGER: FLAG STATE FAILURE AND MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY

(WWF and International Transport Workers Federation, June 2008)
 This study, authored by Matthew Gianni, cites the number of fishing vessels registered to States without fishing authorizations and the extent to which these vessels have been mentioned in connection with illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. WWF calls for the establishment of a UN committee to negotiate a new implementing agreement to the UN Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that sets out enforceable measures to ensure flag States fulfill their responsibilities under UNCLOS and prevents States from operating vessel registers in breach of regulations and international agreements (http://assets.panda.org/downloads/flag_state_performance.pdf).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

IPCC ISSUES DOCUMENTS FOR 29th SESSION

The Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a number of documents in preparation for the IPCC's upcoming 29th session. The session, which will take place from 31 August-4 September 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland, marks the 20th anniversary of the IPCC. Events will begin with a special session to mark the anniversary, and will be attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and a

number of other special guests. Documents that have been posted online include letters of invitation, and the provisional annotated agenda. The agenda will include the programme and budget for 2009-2011, use of funds from the Nobel Peace Prize, election of the IPCC Bureau and the Task Force Bureau, procedural matters, future IPCC activities (including preparatory steps for planning the Fifth Assessment Report), outreach activities and matters relating to the UNFCCC (<http://www.ipcc.ch/meetings/session29.htm>).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

ADB ESTABLISHES CARBON FUND

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has established a new US\$100 million fund to finance clean energy projects in the Asia-Pacific region that generate carbon credits beyond 2012. The new Future Carbon Fund is designed to stimulate investments in clean energy projects, keeping the momentum until an agreement on a post-Kyoto climate framework is reached. Participants in the fund may include both public and private sector entities in ADB's 67 member countries (<http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2008/12516-asian-carbon-funds/default.asp>).

der the UNFCCC is implemented, the CIFs are expected to raise US\$5 billion from donors and scale up public and private finance for the deployment of clean technologies, the prevention of deforestation and development of climate resilient economies in developing countries (<http://www.worldbank.org/cif>).

GEF HOLDS SUBREGIONAL MEETING, FUNDS PROJECTS

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) held a Sub-Regional Workshop for GEF Focal Points in the Caribbean, as part of its National Dialogue Initiative. During the 8-10 July 2008 workshop in Havana, Cuba, representatives of sixteen Caribbean countries addressed several issues of interest to Focal Points, including the GEF's focal area strategies, the Adaptation Fund, the GEF's Small Grants Programme and civil society participation (http://www.gefcountrysupport.org/report_detail.cfm?projectId=128).

On 24 June 2008, a US\$5.8 million GEF grant was approved as part of a wider sustainable agriculture project to help the Malawi Government improve food security and sustainable land management (<http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=21794>). The World Bank also approved, on 26 June, a US\$15 million GEF grant to increase energy efficiency and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Argentina (<http://go.worldbank.org/9DGSQ9OQQ0>).

WORLD BANK BOARD APPROVES CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved two Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) on 1 July 2008, following an extensive public consultation process that culminated with an agreement on the CIFs by 40 developing and industrialized countries in Potsdam, Germany, on 21-22 May 2008. Designed by the World Bank to complement existing bilateral and multilateral efforts until a post-2012 framework un-



Logo courtesy of The World Bank

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD16 REPORT RELEASED



CSD16 participants

The Division for Sustainable Development, which serves as the Secretariat of the Commission

on Sustainable Development (CSD), has released the report for CSD16 (E/CN.17/2008/17), as well as an update of the CSD16 matrix (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd16.htm; <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/matrix.pdf>). The Secretariat is also in the process of restructuring its website.

▶ WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS



A view of Zasavica (Photo courtesy of Ramsar)

RAMSAR REPORTS ON NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Ramsar Secretariat has reported on a number of national implementation activities by Serbia, Austria, the Republic of Korea and Italy. The Government of Serbia has designated "Zasavica" as its ninth Wetland of International Importance (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.serbia_zasavica.htm). The Government of Austria has recalculated its Danube site called Donau-March-Thaya-Auen, resulting in an area of 36,090 hectares instead of the former estimate of 38,500 (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm). The Government of the Republic of Korea has designated Muan Tidal Flat, a Wetland Protected Area and an important wintering stop for migratory birds along the East Asian-Australasian flyway (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_korea_muan.htm). The Government of Italy has completed the



The ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), the nesting species of Zasavica (Photo courtesy of Ramsar)

formalities for the removal of one of its Ramsar sites, called Stagno di Molentargius, from the Montreux Record of sites "where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur." This action indicates that rehabilitation actions have been taken to recover this area's natural conditions (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.italy_molentargius_montreux.htm).

IMO WORKING GROUP MAKES PROGRESS ON GHG EMISSIONS

The first meeting of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Working Group on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships was held from 23-27 June 2008, in Oslo, Norway, to develop the technical basis for reduction mechanisms that may form part of a future IMO regime to control GHG emissions from international shipping. Delegates drafted actual reduction mechanisms for further consideration by the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC). In particular, the Oslo meeting made progress on developing a mandatory CO₂ Design Index for ships and an interim CO₂ operational index. Once finalized, the Design Index will serve as a fuel-efficiency tool at the design stage of ships, enabling the fuel efficiency of different ship designs, or a specific design with different input. Delegates also held extensive discussions on best practices for voluntary implementation and economic instruments with GHG-reduction potential. The MEPC, which is expected to approve the proposed reduction mechanisms, will meet for its 58th session in London, UK, from 6-10 October 2008. IMO is currently working in accordance

with a plan that is due to culminate in 2009, with the adoption of a binding instrument, with the ultimate objective of having measures in place to control GHG emissions from international shipping before the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol expires at the end of 2011 (http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D22072/June2008preOslosummary.pdf; http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9753; http://www.imo.org/home.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9443).

ICP9 REACHES AGREEMENT ON MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY

Delegates at the ninth meeting of the UN Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP9), which convened from 23-27 June 2008, at UN Headquarters in New York, US, discussed cooperation and coordination on oceans issues, particularly as they relate to maritime security and safety, and identified issues that could benefit from future work of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on oceans and the law of the sea. Sticking points in the final hours of negotiations related to the inclusion of references to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and transport of nuclear waste, although compromise language was agreed on both of these elements and delegates forwarded their recommendations to the UNGA for consideration at its 63rd session under the agenda item "Oceans and the law of the sea" (<http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/icp9/>; http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/documents/agreed_consensual_elements_advance_text.pdf).

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

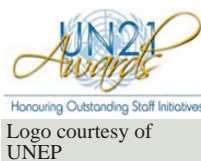
UNGA DISCUSSES CLIMATE CHANGE

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) held an Informal Meeting on 8 July 2008, at UN Headquarters in New York, US, to consider "Climate Change and the Most Vulnerable Countries - the Imperative to Act." The meeting followed up on the February 2008 UNGA High-Level Thematic Debate on Climate Change, and was addressed by a panel of experts. Member States heard a call for the UN to enact the right for people in vulnerable countries to live in a "safe, secure and sustainable environment," as well as the need to: integrate climate change adaptation into broader planning and risk management processes; facilitate the sharing of adap-

tation knowledge; and make resources available (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/ThematicDebates/ccact.shtml>).

UNEP PROJECTS RECEIVE UN21 AWARDS, EXPERTS TO INVESTIGATE TOXIC CARGO

Three projects of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) - the Billion Tree Campaign, the Indian Solar Loan Programme and the Iraqi Marshlands projects - have received UN21 Awards. These awards are given by the UN Secretary-General to recognize outstanding UN initiatives (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Mul>



Logo courtesy of UNEP

tilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=540&ArticleID=5870&l=en).

In other UNEP news, a team of experts from the Joint UNEP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit (JEU) - a collaborative effort that mobilizes and coordinates international response to environmental emergencies - was sent on 10 July 2008 to the Philippines to assess the situation of a capsized ferry containing large quantities of highly toxic chemicals, including endosulfan. The team, which also includes EU experts, is expected to spend one week in the Philippines to assess the situation, including determining the priority needs, and report on its findings (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.sp?NewsID=27329&Cr=UNEP&Cr1>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



L-R: CITES Secretary-General Willem Wijnstekers and SC Chair Cristian Maquieira open the CITES SC meeting

CITES STANDING COMMITTEE APPROVES IVORY SALE

The 57th session of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is being held from 14-18 July 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting's agenda includes strategic and administrative matters, and issues related to interpretation and implementation of CITES, including review of resolutions and decisions, compliance and enforcement, trade control and marking, exemptions and special trade provisions, species trade and conservation, and amendment of the appendices. By mid-week, the Committee approved the one-off sale of ivory that was agreed in principle by the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to CITES (June 2007, The Hague, the Netherlands). Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

are now authorized to make a single sale of a total of 108 tons of government-owned ivory. The Committee also agreed to designate China as an importing country. Japan had been allowed to import ivory in 2006. Both countries stated that they would closely monitor their domestic markets (<http://www.iisd.ca/cites/sc57/>; http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press_release.shtml).

CMS LAUNCHES PUBLICATION ON SIBERIAN CRANE, AEW MOP PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) have recently published the fourth edition of "Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane." Available as CMS Technical Series no. 16, the publication offers a manual for all countries involved in the conservation of the Siberian Crane. It outlines the results of recent work and priorities for future management of the species and its habitats (http://www.cms.int/publications/TechSeries/Sib-Crane16/siberian_crane_TC16.htm).

The Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), an agreement developed under CMS, has provided an update in preparation for the fourth Meeting of the Parties, to be held from 15-19 September 2008, in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The MOP will focus

on the theme "Flyway Conservation at Work – review of the past, vision for the future." The AEW Secretariat plans to post all documentation before 15 August 2008 (http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2008/mood_mop4.htm; http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop4_docs/info_page.html).

CBD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ADDRESSES ECOSOC

In his address to the Annual Ministerial Review of the High-level Segment of the 2008 substantive session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), stressed that the UN's priority challenges as identified by the UN Secretary-General – natural disasters, climate change, the food crisis and the surge in fuel prices – are deeply rooted in the unprecedented loss of biodiversity (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/speech/2008/sp-2008-07-01-ecosoc-en.pdf>).

In other CBD news, the CBD Secretariat has posted an advance version of the decisions adopted at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD, as well as the report of the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (<http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop9/>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/bs/mop-04/official/mop-04-18-en.pdf>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF HOSTING WEB FORUM

During the month of July 2008, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat is hosting a web forum on "Forests and Climate Change." Input from this discussion will feed into the discussion on this theme at UNFF8, which will convene from 20 April-1 May 2009, in New York, US (<http://esaconf.un.org/WB/default.asp?action=10&boardid=46&fid=669>).

UNCCD AT EU CLIMATE CONFERENCE, GM PROMOTING INTEGRATED FINANCING STRATEGIES

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has recently gathered submissions of proposed indicators of the operational objectives of the Ten Year Strategy, in preparation for the 3-14 November 2008 meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) (<http://www.unccd.int/focalpoints/notifications/docs/Letterfocal%20pointsENG.pdf>).

In other news, Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja addressed the EU Con-

ference on Climate Change on 12 June 2008, during which he emphasized the global importance of enhanced land and soil management and suggested that increased attention to land and soil in the climate change negotiations could provide a "platform for developing countries to engage into the adaptation and mitigation agendas, considering that for many of them soil is the single most important capital and asset for development" (IISDRS sources).

The Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD has recently entered into agreements with Mali and Norway in relation to its work to help governments develop Integrated Financing Strategies (IFS). Through its cooperation agreement with the Government of Mali, the GM will provide US\$626,000 along with technical assistance during 2008 and 2009, to help the Government develop an IFS aimed at mobilizing domestic, bilateral and multilateral resources to increase the effectiveness in the sustainable land management sector. Norway has agreed to contribute US\$3.8 million to support the GM's "IFS for UNCCD Implementation" initiative, which will finance activities

in eight countries with a view to establishing investment frameworks for UNCCD implementation.

In related news, the GM supported the organization of a multistakeholder workshop on advancing the development of an IFS for Combating Desertification in Jordan, which took place from 8-9 July 2008 (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events>). Participants agreed that the next steps will include: focus-group discussions to fill information gaps and deepen analysis; electronic consultations with all stakeholders; a final workshop; and joint submission of the National Action Programme and the IFS for approval by the Cabinet of Ministers. The GM, the UNCCD Secretariat and the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic are collaborating in an initiative that will include an expert consultation and workshop on "Financial Resources Mobilization for UNCCD Implementation in the Central and Eastern European countries" (10-13 September 2008, Brno, Czech Republic) (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/annexfundraiser/menu.php>).