



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ENERGY DOMINATES CSD-14 REVIEW



Dais at Ministerial Segment with Jose Antonio Ocampo, Kofi Annan, and CSD-14 Chair Aleksis Aleksishvili, Georgia

The fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) (1-12 May 2006, New York) was tasked with reviewing progress in energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change, together with cross-cutting issues. The session was dominated

by the energy agenda, with discussions focusing on energy security, the impact of oil and gas prices, and the respective roles of renewable energy technologies and fossil fuels, which, as delegates were informed by oil-producing countries, will play a dominant role in the world's energy mix for the foreseeable future. The non-negotiating format of this "Review Session" helped to disguise tensions over the future of fossil fuels, nuclear power and the climate regime post-2012. CSD-15 will consist of a "Policy Session," during which these agenda items will again be discussed and policy options negotiated. The first week of CSD-14 featured a series of thematic discussions, facilitated by expert panels, and meetings to consider reports from the UN Regional Commissions on the status of implementation. One day was also dedicated to a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. During the second week, one day was dedicated to discussion on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with a review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy organized under the headings of the CSD-14 thematic cluster. The second week also saw a high-level segment, from 10-12 May, with over fifty ministers registered. Most came from environment ministries, and a third from trade, energy-related or other ministries. As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed at the opening of the high-level segment, CSD-14 was the first to be chaired by a finance minister. *Continued on Page 2.*

MEA Clusters In This Issue

- **Sustainable Development**
Energy Dominates CSD-14 Review *Page 2*
- **Trade, Finance and Investment**
Global Mechanism Helps Launch SolArid Programme; World Bank Issues Awards, Carbon Finance Unit Confirms Biogas Project in Nepal;
GEF Posts Update on RAF *Page 2*
- **Chemicals and Wastes**
Stockholm COP-2 Adopts Decisions on DDT, Financial Issues;
Basel Hosts Side Event at POPs COP-2; SAICM Releases Documents *Page 3*
- **Intergovernmental Organizations**
Environmental Governance Reforms Discussed in Nairobi; UNEP Contributes to CSD-14 and POPs COP-2 *Page 4*
- **Forests, Deserts and Land**
ITTO Hosts Forum on Private Sector Investment in Tropical Forests; Field Testing Begins for ITTO Guidelines; UNCCD Organizes Workshop *Page 5*
- **Biodiversity and Wildlife**
CBD Prepares for International Biodiversity Day; CMS EUROBATS Advisory Committee Meets *Page 5*
- **Climate and Atmosphere**
Ozone Secretariat Releases TEAP Report; Climate Meetings Underway in Bonn *Pages 5-6*
- **Water, Wetlands and Coasts**
Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea Releases Reports; Ramsar Announces New Center and Wetland Sites, Signs MOC with SPREP *Page 6*

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

UN REFORM

(Global Policy Forum) This website offers a section with links to documents and articles regarding the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence (<http://global-policy.igc.org/reform/initiatives/panelindex.htm#coherence>).

IEG-DOSSIER

(Stakeholder Forum, 2006) The International Environmental Governance (IEG) "ieg-dossier" (<http://www.stakeholderforum.org/policy/ieg.php>) summarizes and offers links to resources related to UN environment and development reform, including country positions and proposals, NGO and major group proposals, and UN activities and decisions.

Continued on page 2

GUEST ARTICLE

Environment Under Scrutiny as Major UN Reform Starts

By Susan Brown, Policy Analyst, WWF International

Abstract

After two decades of environment and development conferences, good ideas, good will and a few good panics, an increasing gap has opened up between expectations of the multilateral system (chiefly represented through the UN) and the outcomes flowing from it. To use a plumbing analogy, the tap had been turned on, but there were all sorts of blockages in the implementation and operational pipelines.

Continued on page 3

This issue of the *MEA Bulletin* © is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was researched and written by Soledad Aguilar, Alice Bisiaux, Reem Hajjar, Amber Moreen, Elisa Morgera, Marcela Rojo, Chris Spence, Elsa Tsioumani, and Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. The Digital Editor is Diego Noguera. The Editor is Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. <lynn@iisd.org>. The Deputy Director of IISD Reporting Services is Chris Spence and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The *MEA Bulletin* is published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in cooperation with UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC). Opinions expressed in *MEA Bulletin* are those of the authors and not the publishers. Excerpts from the *MEA Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on IISDRS publications, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 212 East 47th St. #21F, New York, NY 10017, USA.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

REFORM AT THE UNITED NATIONS

(UN) This UN website (<http://www.un.org/reform/>) contains links to reference materials and documents regarding UN reform proposals and activities.

CLASS OF 2006: INDUSTRY REPORT CARDS ON ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

(UNEP, 2006) This publication (<http://www.unep.fr/outreach/csd14/>) provides an update on progress made towards sustainable development. Forty-five international business and industry organizations and initiatives prepared the Report Cards in a voluntary process facilitated by UNEP.

2006 IUCN RED LIST

(IUCN, May 2006) The 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (<http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/redlist2006/redlist2006.htm>) shows ongoing decline of the status of plants and animals, with the number of known threatened species reaching 16,119.

LITTLE GREEN DATA BOOK 2006

(World Bank, 2006) This annual publication is a pocket-sized reference on environmental data for over 200 countries (<http://sitere-sources.worldbank.org/INTEEL/936214-1146251511077/20916989/LGDB2006.pdf>). It includes indicators on agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, energy, emission and pollution, and water and sanitation.

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD-14 REVIEW, continued.

Throughout the official session, a Partnerships Fair (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/PF/partnerships_fair.htm) hosted a programme of presentations and discussions focused on identifying barriers and constraints, lessons learned and best practices in the context of the Review's thematic cluster. Over sixty partnerships working on the CSD-14 themes have registered with the UN Division for Sustainable Development. A Learning Centre (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/learning_centre.htm) hosted teaching and training opportunities on various aspects of sustainable development.

At the conclusion of CSD-14, delegates adopted the report of the session, including the Chair's non-negotiated Summary containing an overview of the discussions, the SIDS day, the Multi-Stakeholder dialogue, the high-level segment, as well as the Partnerships Fair and the Learning Cen-

tre (Chairman's summary, Part I: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/documents/chairSummaryPartI.pdf>).

At the conclusion of CSD-14, CSD-15 briefly convened to elect its Bureau, including its chair: Abdullah Hamad Al-Attiah, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry, Qatar.

In addition to organizing the CSD session, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) also organized a workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies in Pacific Island States, which convened from 4-5 May 2006 in parallel to the CSD session (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/workshop/pacificislands.htm>). This workshop considered key issues identified in country specific assessments of fourteen Pacific SIDS, which were prepared by national consultants preliminary to formulating, implementing or strengthening national sustainable development strategies.



Abdullah Hamad Al-Attiah, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry, Qatar, CSD-15 Chair (right), with UN Under-Secretary-General Jose Antonio Ocampo

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GLOBAL MECHANISM HELPS LAUNCH "SOLARID" PROGRAMME

The SolArid programme, a framework for South-South cooperation between Saharan countries, was launched during an international workshop on "Decentralization and Local Development in Arid Zones" (13-16 April 2006, Marrakech, Morocco). The workshop was organized by the Global Mechanism and the Moroccan High Commissariat of Water, Forestry and the Fight against Desertification (http://www.gm-uncdd.org/frontpage/news/solarid_launched.htm). SolArid will promote cooperation between Saharan countries affected by drought and desertification through a joint work programme to: reinforce local actors' resource mobilization capacity at the local level; exchange experiences; and undertake a set of studies to analyze priority issues.

GEF POSTS UPDATE ON RAF IN PREPARATION FOR COUNCIL MEETING

The GEF has posted documents for the next GEF Council meeting, which will take place in Washington, DC from 6-9 June

2006. The documents include a progress report on implementing the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) (http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C28/documents/C.28.12RAF.pdf). The document highlights steps taken in three areas: finalizing and publicly disclosing allocations, and developing frameworks for programming country and group allocations and global and regional exclusions.

WORLD BANK ISSUES DEVELOPMENT MARKETPLACE AWARDS; CARBON FINANCE UNIT CONFIRMS BIOGAS PROJECT IN NEPAL

The World Bank announced the winners of the 2006 Development Marketplace Global Competition on 9 May 2006. Thirty winners from 22 countries will share a US\$5 million award for community-based initiatives to provide clean water, hygienic sanitation and access to energy (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20916427~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>). The winners were chosen from 118 proj-

ects, drawn from 55 countries and include projects on biomass power plants in India, making fuel from aquatic invasive species in Senegal, and installing solar-powered milk refrigeration for dairy farmers in Kenya (http://www.gefweb.org/projects/projects-Projects/dm/dm_2006_winners.html). The Global Environment Facility (GEF), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, International Finance Corporation and Global Village Energy Partnership contributed to the award pool this year.

The World Bank Carbon Finance Unit confirmed, on 3 May 2006, the first greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reductions project in Nepal under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol through the signing of an emission reductions purchase agreement for the Nepal Biogas project (<http://carbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=Projport&ProjID=9596>). The project promotes the use of biogas in Nepal by expanding its use for cooking and lighting in rural households. Each household biogas unit can reduce almost five tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually.

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Frustrated countries voiced their concerns in the World Summit last year, which gave birth to a number of reform processes. One, System Wide Coherence (SWC), is tasked to clear the development, environment and humanitarian operational pipes of the UN. Another, referred to as informal consultations on the environment (the 169 consultations), is dissecting the way environment is handled in the UN, focussing particularly on whether the UNEP system meets the needs of member countries.

While the SWC and the 169 consultations are obviously related, differing priorities and processes have fuelled fears in the NGO community that the holistic examination of the environment and development area and agencies that we believe is clearly needed will be sidelined by a quick fix with an almost exclusively development focus.

You won't find much information on the web. The SWC panel are jittery, intending to publish very little, if anything, before its report goes to the Secretary General. Over at the 169 consultations it is a little more open, with civil society tolerated past the closed meeting sign. Both processes are informally welcoming submissions from NGOs.

Across both processes, a number of hopeful or radical proposals are being slid across tables. These include: guaranteed and increased funding for UNEP fully implementing the Bali Strategic Plan and Cartagena Protocol; a revived, though gentle, EU push towards an agency-level UN Environment Organization; collapsing 38 UN agencies into just three; having just one super development agency (where environmental concerns would no doubt have to struggle to be recognised); or for single country co-ordinators to decide and arrange implementation of all UN in-country programs.

The chairs of the 169 consultations promised a further set of questions to countries, then a published update in June, together with their suggestion for further work possibly to be rolled through the next General Assembly in September. If this is published in time, the SWC panel should be able to use it in their deliberations with their report expected in July/August.

What is clear, is that the initial politicking and suspicion around UN environment reform is being treated seriously by countries who say they want the UN and financing systems reformed to help them individually and collectively meet environment obligations and targets.

Read the Full Article at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle6.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.

▶ CHEMICALS AND WASTES

STOCKHOLM COP ADOPTS DECISIONS ON DDT, FINANCIAL ISSUES; SECRETARIAT RELEASES BAT AND BEP GUIDELINES; POPRC REQUESTS COMMENTS

The second Conference of the Parties (COP-2) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) has adopted a number of key decisions on issues such as DDT and the financial mechanism. (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/oewg_nc/notice.htm; <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pops/cop2/>). The meeting, which convened from 1-5 May 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland, drew over 450 participants. COP-2 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate and adopted 18 decisions on, inter alia, DDT, exemptions, financial resources and mechanisms, implementation plans, technical assistance, synergies and effectiveness evaluation. In particular, key issues at COP-2 included the first review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism of the Convention, and a process to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention at COP-4, in 2009. With the adoption of these decisions, COP-2 was widely perceived to have moved the process closer to the goal of eliminating or reducing the release of POPs into the environment.

As part of the Intersessional Work of the Expert Group on Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP), the Stockholm Convention Secretariat has released the draft guidelines on BAT and provisional guidance on BEP, relevant to Article 5 and Annex C of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The Revised working draft version (25 April 2006) was published following COP-2 (http://www.pops.int/documents/batbep_advance/intersessional_work/default.htm).

In accordance with paragraph 6 of Article 8 of the Stockholm Convention and with the standard work plan for preparation of a draft risk profile adopted by the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) at its first meeting (reference: UNEP/POPs/POPRC.1, paragraph 42), the draft risk profiles have been made available to Parties and observers to the Convention (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/poprc/tech_comments/default.htm). The draft risk profiles released are: pentabromodiphenyl ether, clordecene, hexabromodiphenyl, lin-

dane and perfluorooctane sulfonate. Parties and observers are requested to provide technical comments by 16 June 2006.

BASEL SECRETARIAT HOSTS SIDE EVENT AT POPS COP-2; LAUNCHES ONLINE REPORTING DATABASE

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention held a side-event at the POPs COP, on the implementation of projects related to POPs wastes through the Basel Convention Regional Centres (<http://www.basel.int/stockholm-ppt/index.html>). This event included presentations on: POPs wastes related projects and capacity building activities coordinated through the BCRCs; projects related to POPs wastes implemented through the BCCC-Uruguay; demonstration of a regional approach to environmentally sound management of PCB liquid wastes and transformers and capacitors containing PCBs; and preparation of national inventories and national plans for the environmentally sound management of equipment containing PCBs and PBCs in Central America.

Based on decision OEWG-V/13, the Basel Convention Secretariat has published draft revised versions of the forms for the notification document and the movement document with its related instructions (<http://www.basel.int/techmatters/harmonization/germany-forms-110506.doc>). The document was prepared by Germany as lead country on 11 May 2006. Comments by Parties and others are requested by 15 July 2006.

The new online Reporting Database of the Basel Convention (<http://www.basel.int/nareporting/questables/frsetmain.html>) provides for the management, processing and retrieval of information and data transmitted by Parties to the Secretariat pursuant to article 13(3) of the Basel Convention.

SAICM RELEASES TEXTS AND DRAFT REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TRUST FUND

The Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Secretariat has published its "core texts," including the: Dubai Declaration, which expresses the commitment to SAICM by Ministers, heads of delegation and representatives of civil society and the private sector; Overarching Policy Strategy, which sets out the scope of SAICM; and Global Plan of Action, which sets out proposed "work areas and activities" for implementation of the Strategic Approach (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/K0651302%20Standalone%20SAICM%20txt%20.pdf>).

The draft report of the First Meeting of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee of the Quick Start Programme of the SAICM, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 19 April 2006, has also been published: http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsp_tf1/TF1_4%20report.pdf. The draft is subject to comment from Committee participants. The report is expected to be formally adopted at the Committee's next meeting on 18 October 2006.



The dais in the financial resources contact group at POPs COP-2 (Maria Cristina Cardenas, Secretariat, and Chair Jozef Buys, Belgium)

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE REFORMS DISCUSSED IN NAIROBI

Informal discussions on environmental governance were held at the beginning of May in Nairobi, Kenya. UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson outlined the ongoing process of UN reform, including management issues and global environmental governance, before the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP and UN-HABITAT in Nairobi, Kenya, on 3-4 May 2006. In a press conference, he also stressed the importance of: embracing the reform programme to help strengthen the UN; regional cooperation and multilateralism; and the urgency to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and integrate security, development and human rights (www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18375&Cr=Eliasson&Cr1). A seminar of the High-level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence was also held in Nairobi during the same week. With regard to the normative and analytical work of the UN in the field of the environment and the institutional framework for the UN's environment activities, participants suggested: a comprehensive assessment of existing global environmental governance, a strategic review of UNEP and its comparative advantages, the creation of a new position of UN Under-Secretary-General for the Environment, a focus on knowledge generation and scientific assessment and monitoring, the strengthening of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, and the development of a strong norm- and policy-setting body with direct links to operational activities. On the issue of mainstreaming environment in development decision-making, participants called for: incremental change and further cooperative work between UNEP and the UN Development Programme, strong environmental expertise with direct links to UNEP in each country office, strengthening implementation of UNEP's Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and better provision of technical assistance to developing countries for producing new MDG-consistent national development strategies in 2006 (IISDRS sources). Meanwhile, media reports highlight the "extremely short period of time to deal with a tremendously ambitious agenda" that characterizes the work of the Panel, and call attention to the "radical" reform proposals submitted by a group of developed countries to merge in the next 10 years over thirty UN agencies into three organizations. Some argue that the process is biased by Western views, and support the group of developing countries (G-77/China) that oppose the separation of development from humanitarian action and the environment, and the closure of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (<http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/initiatives/panels/coherence/0428attack.htm>). Others suggest that the G-77/China should focus on the benefits of the proposal instead of polarizing the debate (http://www.weltwirtschaft-und-entwicklung.org/cms_en/assets/s2dmain.html?http://www.weltwirtschaft-und-entwicklung.org/cms_en/index.html). The High-level Panel will hold further meetings in Islamabad, Geneva, Vienna and Barbados to gather regional perspectives.

UNEP ORGANIZES SIDE EVENTS AT CSD-14 AND POPS COP-2

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) offered several contributions to CSD-14. In the area of industrial development, UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) unveiled the report "Class of 2006: Industry Report Cards on Environment and Social Responsibility," according to which significant progress with respect to key global environmental issues has been achieved by the private sector since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The report also highlights the challenge to rapidly advance towards the life-cycle economy and the need for accountable reporting against corporate responsibility commitments and to ensure the engagement of smaller companies in industrialized countries and industry from emerging market economies (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=477&ArticleID=5267&l=en>; <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd14/enbots/10may2006.html>). UNEP also contributed to side events related to the Marrakech Process (10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production). All task forces presented their SCP-related activities and contributions at one event, and policies and initiatives were presented and analyzed, showing the contributions of SCP to energy efficiency at another (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=477&ArticleID=5267&l=en>). In the area of air pollution, UNEP in association with the International Association of Public Transport and the African Association of Public Transport shared experiences and best practices on increasing energy efficiency using present technology, reducing dependence on fossil fuel, and

decreasing greenhouse gas emissions from the urban transport sector, with specific attention to the African continent (<http://www.unep.fr/energy/act/tp/CSDsideevent.htm>). Finally, another side-event hosted by UNEP at CSD-14 focused on UN reform and the environment, with several NGOs calling for increased transparency in the reform consultations and better implementation of existing environmental agreements (<http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd14/enbots/9may2006.html>).

Among the side events organized at the second Conference of the Parties (COP-2) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (1-5 May 2006, Geneva, Switzerland) (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/oewg_nc/COP2_side_events.htm) was one organized by UNEP's Division on Environmental Conventions and the Geneva Environment Network on how the Stockholm Convention's National Implementation Plans (NIPs) might be used to simultaneously support the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The event was chaired by Franz Perrez of Switzerland, who explained that the three chemicals conventions on PIC, POPs and hazardous wastes face similar challenges and obstacles. Panelist Jérôme Karimumuryango of Burundi described his country's efforts to integrate the three conventions at the national level. He emphasized that limited human and financial resources make the exploitation of synergies at the national level a necessity. Tarek Eid Mohamed of Egypt presented his country's integrated database for national data on the three MEAs and described the institutional challenges of ensuring collaboration and information flow among the three convention teams. Craig Boljkovac, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), discussed the approach his organization has pursued in supporting countries in their efforts to develop NIPs. He also offered lessons learned about the institutional challenges of building collaborative processes and teams, and suggested how these challenges could be met. For more information contact: <Michael.williams@unep.ch>



Dais from side event on Reducing Energy Consumption and GHG Emission from Urban Transport: Mark Radka, UNEP Maria Ljung, Stockholm Public Transport, Philippe Attey, Chairman of the African Association of Public Transport, and Gerd Johnsson-Latham, Swedish Ministry of Sustainable Development

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

ITTO HOSTS FORUM ON PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN TROPICAL FORESTS; FIELD-TESTING BEGINS FOR ITTO GUIDELINES

Participants at the International Tropical Forest Investment Forum (26-27 April 2006, Cancún, Mexico) have considered opportunities and constraints for investments in natural tropical forest based enterprises and the information and types of tools available or needed to promote more responsible investment (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelId=223&id=1213>). Co-hosted by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Forest Trends and the Mexican National Forestry Agency CONAFOR, approximately 170 participants from 30 countries attended the Forum. Key presentations and panel discussions addressed global issues affecting investments in tropical natural forests, including: meeting forestry investment needs of the private sector; the role of governments and international organizations in enabling an investment climate; the role of international investors; new investment tools and approaches; and ecosystem service payments. ITTO will refer to the Forum's deliberations in preparing for three subsequent Regional Investment Forums to be convened in Latin America, Asia and Africa in the coming year.

The field tests that were mandated by the governing body of the ITTO, the International Tropical Timber Council, as part of the biennial work program for 2006-2007 and adopted by the Council at its last meeting in November 2005 have begun (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelId=217&id=1089>). IUCN-World Conservation Union has started a 15-month process of field-testing the revised ITTO guidelines for the conservation of biological diversity in tropical timber production forests in Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia and Guyana (http://www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2006/05/1_forest.htm).

UNCCD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ADDRESSES CSD-14; SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP ORGANIZED IN CUBA

Hama Arba Diallo, the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), addressed the CSD-14 high-level segment on 11 May 2006. He noted that the 191 Parties to the Convention have observed the link between sustainable energy and socio-economic development and have highlighted the need to explore renewable sources as alternatives to conventional energy sources, stressing that "renewable

energy is a strategic area that cannot be separated from combating desertification and poverty eradication." He called attention to the Convention's Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) on Renewable Sources of Energy, which have been developed in the context of Regional Action Programmes to Combat Desertification to facilitate the development, promotion and use of sustainable energy sources.

Representatives from ten Caribbean states participated in a workshop organized by the UNCCD Secretariat (8-10 May, Havana, Cuba) to discuss the establishment of a sub-regional initiative for environmental rehabilitation (<http://www.iydd.org/pages/lahavana.htm>). The project would focus on sustainable agro-forestry and land management issues to address land degradation, drought and poverty, while fostering youth employment. Participants suggested changes to a draft for the project and stressed the importance of training to ensure that the project is self-sustaining. They also discussed the need for a monitoring mechanism and considered possibilities for an implementing agency or agencies. Participating countries are expected to finalize their national proposals by 15 June, and the project will be officially launched the first week of August 2006.

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



Celebrating Diversity in Drylands: Algeria (Photo courtesy CBD)

CBD SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY

In preparation for the International Day for Biological Diversity, to be celebrated on 22 May, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has launched a webpage with resources on celebrations planned around the world and fact sheets focusing on biodiversity in drylands – this year's theme (<http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2006-ctrs.shtml>).

CMS: EUROBATS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

Held from 8-10 May 2006 in Luxembourg, the 11th meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (http://www.eurobats.org/documents/List_of_documents_AC11.htm) discussed the establishment of a Standing Committee and of an implementation mechanism tailored

to the Agreement to enhance law enforcement, as well as budgetary matters (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/May/nw120506_eurobats_ac.htm). The meeting's recommendations will be forwarded to the fifth Meeting of the Parties to EUROBATS, to be held from 4-6 September 2006, in Ljubljana, Slovenia. CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth emphasized progress made so far and drew attention to the development of an African Bats Agreement (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/May/RH_openingstatement.pdf). With 31 Parties to date, EUROBATS, set up under the Convention on Migratory Species, aims to protect all 45 species of bats identified in Europe.



Robert Hepworth (Photo courtesy CMS)

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

CLIMATE MEETINGS UNDERWAY IN BONN

A series of meetings under the umbrella of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are underway in Bonn, Germany. The first workshop of the UNFCCC "Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention" convened from 15-16 May

(<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/sb24/>). The event involved several hundred participants in "open and non-binding exchanges of views, information and ideas" on various issues, including: advancing development goals in a sustainable way, addressing action on adaptation, realizing the full potential of technology, and realizing the full potential of market-based opportunities. The workshop had no negotiated outcome, although a co-facilitators' report will be

distributed. The event is expected to be the first of up to four workshops on this topic, all of which are to be organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Following the UNFCCC Dialogue, the first session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (17-25 May) began on Wednesday, with the twenty-fourth sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB 24) of the UNFCCC scheduled for 18-26 May.

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES TEAP REPORT, OTHER INFORMATION

The Ozone Secretariat has posted the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel's (TEAP) May 2006 Report (http://ozone.unep.org/teap/Reports/TEAP_Reports/TEAP-Progress-Report-may2006.pdf), a note by the Secretariat for the 26th OEWG (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/26oewg/OEWG-26-5E.pdf),

and the Report of the 35th Meeting of the Implementation Committee (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/impcom/ImpCom-35-10E.pdf). The May 2006 TEAP Report consists of two volumes. The first contains the May 2006 TEAP Progress Report on: essential uses; all technical options committees; the methyl bromide quarantine and preshipment, as well as critical use nominations (CUNs), reports; military uses; draft Terms of Reference for

case studies; and TEAP organization and working modalities. The second volume contains the Special Report "Validating the Yield Performance of Alternatives to Methyl Bromide for Preplant Fumigation," information that was used by the methyl bromide technical options committee in evaluating some CUNs. The Secretariat's note focuses on stockpiling of ozone-depleting substances relative to compliance.

► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

DIVISION FOR OCEAN AFFAIRS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA RELEASES SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT, WORKING GROUP REPORT

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has released the UN Secretary General's report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea to the 61st session of the General Assembly (http://www.un.org/depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm). The report will serve as a basis for discussion at the seventh meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (12-16 June 2006, New York). The report contains information on developments and issues relating to ecosystem approaches and oceans, the topic chosen for the seventh meeting, as recommended by the General Assembly.

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has also released the report of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (<http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversity-workinggroup.htm>), which convened from 13-17 February 2006 at UN headquarters in New York. The report contains the Co-Chairpersons' summary of discussions.

RAMSAR ANNOUNCES NEW CENTER, FIJI RATIFICATION AND NEW WETLAND SITES; ORGANIZES WORKSHOP; AND SIGNS MOC WITH SPREP

The "UnderWaterWorld" Ramsar Centre in Schrems Nature Park, Austria (www.underwasserreich.at) opened on 28 April 2006. The Ramsar Centre is planned to attract at

least 30,000 visitors a year to see its underwater zoo, cinema and science lab. The center is supported by WWF Austria and the municipality of Schrems, Austria, that cooperate to make the UnderWaterWorld part of an international network (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.austria_schrems_centre.htm).

The Ramsar Secretariat announced Fiji's accession to the Ramsar Convention (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.fiji_joins.htm). Its instrument of ratification was received by the Director-General of UNESCO, the depository of the Convention, on 11 April. The treaty will come into force for Fiji on 11 August 2006, making it the 152nd Party to Ramsar.

The Ramsar Secretariat also announced actions by three Parties regarding Ramsar sites. Latvia extended the boundaries of its Lake Kaneiris Ramsar site, which now covers the Slocene River delta swamps with several islands, large reed beds and surrounding floodplain forests at the adjacent areas to the west of the lake (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm). Portugal has designated five new Wetlands of International Importance, effective 2 December 2005 (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.portugal_five.htm). The Czech Ramsar Committee has published "*Wetlands of the Czech Republic: The list of wetland sites of the Czech Republic*," a 36-page booklet on the Ramsar sites and other wetlands in the Czech Republic (for a copy contact Libuše Vlasáková: libuse_vlasakova@env.cz). This publication presents the methodology and results of a nationwide inventory of wetlands completed in 1999 and provides detailed descriptions of the country's twelve Ramsar sites.

The Ramsar Convention, with other organizations, sponsored a workshop for Guatemala teachers on the importance of

mangrove wetlands from 18-21 April 2006 in Tilapa, Guatemala (http://www.ramsar.org/wff/wff_rpts_guatemala_tilapa2006.htm). The workshop brought together over 20 teachers from five countries to learn how to deliver simple and practical activities to their students for them to gain basic understanding of the science behind mangrove ecology.

The annual Board meeting of the Ramsar Regional Center for Wetland Training and Research in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO), based in Panama, was held on 2 May 2006 (http://www.ramsar.org/key_creho_board2006_e.pdf). The Board emphasized the need for conservation and wise use of wetlands, through strengthening technical capacities of decision makers and wetland managers in the Americas, and highlighted the role of CREHO as a driving force of capacity building processes.

Finally, the Secretary-General of Ramsar, Peter Bridgewater, signed a memorandum of cooperation (MOC) with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) during his visit to Samoa from 10-11 May 2006 (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.sprep_moc2006.htm). In the three-year long MOC, the two secretariats agree to a number of joint collaborative activities aimed at promoting and strengthening the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources in the Pacific Islands region.



Perches swimming in the underwater zoo at Schrems Nature Park (Photo courtesy Ramsar)

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **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
- **40TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL:** 29 May - 2 June 2006. Mérida, Mexico. <http://www.ittito.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelid=179&id=1139>
- **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
- **GEF COUNCIL MEETING:** 6-9 June 2006. Washington DC, US. http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C28/gef_c28.html