



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DSD CO-ORGANIZES HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Division for Sustainable Development (DESA/DSD), which serves as the Secretariat for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), co-organized the “High-Level Meeting: African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution,” which convened from 9-10 February 2009, in Windhoek, Namibia. Agenda items addressed: how to make a sustainable green revolution in Africa, including how to incorporate sustainable land management and agricultural practices into African agriculture and how to increase agricultural productivity in Africa; the vision for African agriculture; integrating African agriculture into global markets; and managing Africa’s agricultural transition. This meeting was organized as an inter-sessional event for the 17th session of the CSD (CSD17). At the conclusion of the meeting, delegates adopted the Windhoek High-Level Ministerial Declaration on African Agriculture in the 21st Century, which notes a number of recommendations for consideration by CSD17, including: an increase in financial support for agriculture on the continent; the empowerment of women farmers; the availability of credit and other financial services to farmers; and increased North-South and South-South cooperation (<http://www.iisd.ca/africa/hlmaa/>; <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/africa/events/index.htm>).



CSD17 Chair Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands

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GUEST ARTICLE

The WEDC International Conference: focusing on water and sanitation issues in low-income countries since 1973

By Julie Fisher and Brian Reed, Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC)

Overview

In 1973, 63 delegates gathered at the Department of Civil Engineering at the Loughborough University of Technology for the first two-day international conference on

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

TRENDS ANALYSIS: CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION OF OZONE DEPLETING SUBSTANCES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(UNEP DTIE, January 2009) This updated trends analysis presents updated information for chlorofluorocarbons, halons, and methyl bromide and includes an analysis of the hydrochlorofluorocarbon consumption and production trends in developing countries (<http://www.unep.fr/ozonation/information/trends/>).

Continued on page 3

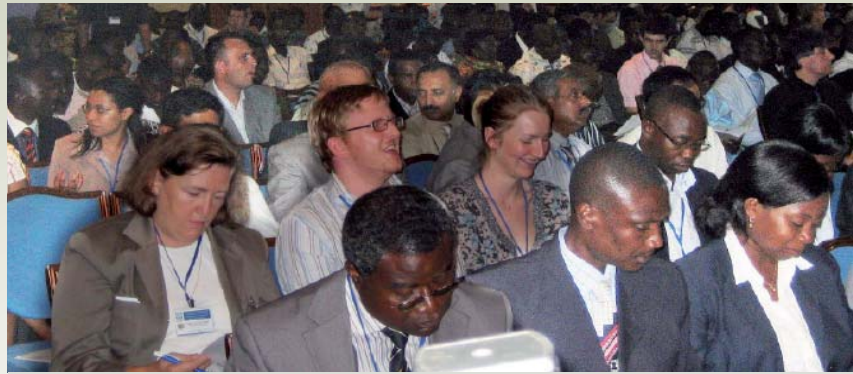
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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

“Environmental Health Engineering in Hot Climates and Developing Countries.” Since then, 32 conferences, which have become known as the “WEDC Conference,” on the provision of infrastructure services for low- and middle-income countries have been held in either Africa or Asia. The topics addressed over the years reflect the demands and solutions within the sector and show the development thinking and approaches of the time.

Looking at the list of conference titles over the years, the major concerns of the sector are clear. For example, conferences in the early 1990s were influenced by the Dublin Statement, issued at the International Conference on Water and Environment in 1992, which stressed the need for action “to reverse the present trends of overconsumption, pollution, and rising threats from drought and floods.” Titles such as “Water, Sanitation, Environment and Development” (Ghana, 1993) and “Water and Sanitation for All: Partnerships and Innovations” (South Africa, 1997) show how the focus of the WEDC Conference contributes to the debate and learning on current issues. Similarly, in 2003 in Nigeria, in the third of the 15 years set for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the conference reviewed progress “Towards the Millennium Development Goals.” Most recently in 2008, the International Year of Sanitation, sanitation was the specific focus in “Access to Sanitation and Safe Water: Global Partnerships and Local Actions.”

Hosted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Water Resources, this year’s conference



33rd WEDC conference (2008) in Accra, Ghana

on “Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Sustainable Development and Multi-sectoral Approaches” will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 18-22 May. Improving water supplies and environmental sanitation has moved from being a subject only for technical specialists to one involving a wide range of people, from policy-makers to community workers, from social scientists and economists to faith-based groups and campaigners for women’s rights. Increasingly, these actors have to work in partnership. Water services rely on sustainable development and management of water resources. Similarly, health improvements depend on the quality of water supply and sanitation facilities as well as hygiene practices and health services. This requires good communication and exchange of information between differing institutions, so that they can understand and contribute to the greater goals.

Sectors can also work together, learning lessons from each other. For example, developments in promoting sanitation at village level have implications for low-cost water supply, environmental protection and gender.

Benchmarking the performance of institutions can influence the training of staff to ensure capacity building is focussed on the sector’s real needs. Consultation with vulnerable groups such as women, children or disabled people can inspire technical staff to develop new solutions that meet the users’ requirements. Hygiene promotion can be carried out by a range of people, from schoolteachers to the mass media.

The 34th WEDC International Conference will focus on these issues, bringing together practitioners, decision makers and researchers from different sectors and from the field, government office or university laboratory, to exchange views and present the latest findings through presentations, discussions and informal networking.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-1/guestarticle63.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.

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DSD RESTRUCTURES, ORGANIZES INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING

The DSD has also announced its reorganization. It is now structured in five branches: communication and outreach; emerging issues; global policy; policy analysis and networks; and water, energy and strategies (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd/dsd_orgchart.shtml).

From 28-30 January 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand, DESA jointly organized a Capacity Development Workshop for Improving Agricultural Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and Rural Livelihoods, with UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

This inter-sessional event for CSD17 discussed issues and challenges concerning agricultural development and food security, agricultural water management, rural development, land use planning and management, and the need for adaptation to climate change. Among the key messages participants agreed to convey to the CSD were: improving agricultural productivity will require policy actions to enhance smallholder competitiveness and profitability, including access to markets and policies that will encourage appropriate investments in agricultural research, irrigation, education, rural finance, insurance, information systems, roads and market infrastructure; efforts related to water security should be directed at bridging

capacity gaps at all levels, investing in new infrastructure, modernizing existing water delivery systems, and adopting improved water management practices and appropriate technologies; the formulation of national land policies must allow for participation of the full spectrum of land users, and necessary assistance should be provided to poor and vulnerable groups; and mitigating climate change through the sustainable management of land, forests and other natural resources should be encouraged by providing appropriate incentives to rural people, while adaptation needs to be viewed as a part of the coping strategy for poor rural people (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_wat/wat_ws0109.shtml).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

TRAINING MANUAL FOR CUSTOMS OFFICERS: SAVING THE OZONE LAYER – PHASING OUT OZONE DEPLETING SUBSTANCES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(UNEP, 2008) UNEP has launched the second edition of this manual, meant to enhance enforcement of national controls on ozone depleting substances (http://www.unep-tie.org/ozonaction/information/mmcfiles/6226-e-CTM_Second_Edition.pdf?r=3164).

GREEN CUSTOMS GUIDE TO MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

(UNEP, 2008) This guide aims to orient customs officers and border protection officers to provisions of multilateral agreements that are relevant to their work (<http://www.greencustoms.org/reports/guide.htm>).

NAVIGATION AND WETLANDS - FOLLOW UP TO RAMSAR ADVISORY MISSION 53

(Ramsar, February 2009) This report provides a summary of the background, issues involved, and Ramsar Secretariat's recommendations as elaborated during a visit that took place from 28-30 July 2008, to the Kyliiske Mouth Ramsar site, Danube Delta. In October 2003, in response to Ukraine's intention to re-establish a deep waterway through the Ukrainian part of the Danube delta, a joint Ramsar-UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) mission assessed the different options and provided its recommendation in Ramsar Advisory Mission Report 53. Discussions on the issue have continued, with a number of environmental conventions and organizations collaborating closely on helping the Government of Ukraine to find the best way to accomplish its goals and meet its international treaty obligations (http://www.ramsar.org/ram/ram_rpt_53e_update2008.pdf).

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS



Banner courtesy of UNEP

UNEP PREPARES FOR GOVERNING COUNCIL

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is preparing for the upcoming 25th session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), which will convene in Nairobi, Kenya, from 16-20 February 2009. Among the issues to be discussed during the meeting, ministers will consider two themes, Global-

ization and the Environment: Global Crises: National Chaos? and International Environmental Governance and United Nations Reform – IEG: Help or Hindrance? (<http://www.unep.org/GC/GC25/index.asp>). The tenth session of the Global Civil Society Forum will convene prior to the GC/GMEF, from 14-15 February 2009 (http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF/indexGCSF10.asp).

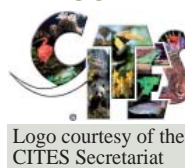
▶ BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



Map courtesy of the CITES Secretariat

CITES WELCOMES NEW PARTY, GLOBAL ONE-DAY CITES OPERATION CARRIED OUT BY WCO

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has welcomed Bosnia and Herzegovina as its 175th party (<http://www.cites.org/eng/news/party/bh.shtml>). In other CITES news, as announced by the World Customs Organization (WCO), the summary of an intensive global one-day operation related to CITES, carried out by 90 customs administrations across the globe on 15 January 2009, revealed seizures totaling 4,630 endangered live species as well as products and derivatives. These seizures involved as many as 80 kinds of species, including ivory tusks, musk, tiger derivatives, caviar, rhinoceros horns, lynx, snow lotus and lion skins, with many of the species



Logo courtesy of the CITES Secretariat

regarded as critically endangered and at the edge of extinction (<http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sundry/2009/WCO-cites-operation.shtml>).

CBD HOLDS PACIFIC REGION WORKSHOP ON PROTECTED AREAS

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has organized a capacity-building workshop for the Pacific region for implementation of the programme of work on protected areas (PAs). The workshop, which convened from 9-12 February 2009, in Nadi, Fiji, offered practical capacity-building tools with the goal of improving on-the-ground implementation of the programme of work on PAs. Issues under consideration included the inclusion of climate change considerations in the ecological gap-analysis of PAs, and coordination of technical and financial support to improve efficiency and effectiveness (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WSPAPAC-01>).

In other CBD-related news, an electronic forum on updating and revising the Convention's Strategic Plan for the period beyond 2010 has been launched and will close on 31 March 2009. On the basis of submitted views, the Secretariat will prepare a first draft of the revised and updated strategic plan for peer-review (<http://www.cbd.int/sp/post2010forum/>). Regarding the preparation of a strategic plan for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the deadline for submission of views has been extended to 31 March 2009 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2009/ntf-2009-013-bs-en.pdf>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

TROPICAL FOREST UPDATE: CLIMATE CHANGING IN TROPICAL FORESTS

(ITTO, February 2008) The latest issue of the International Tropical Timber Organization's (ITTO) newsletter focuses on climate change and tropical forests. It includes articles on emerging markets for land-use carbon credits, the UN Collaborative Programme on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), and carbon trading (http://www.itto.or.jp/live/Live_Server/4476/tfu.18.03.e.pdf).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

BASEL CONVENTION POSTS COMMENTS ON OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC PLAN

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention has posted comments received from parties, signatories, Basel Convention Regional Coordinating Centres (BCRCs) and others on the developments and obstacles in the implementation of the Basel Convention Strategic Plan. Comments from Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Mexico, New Zealand, Iran, Slovakia and the US, as well as the BCRCs in Egypt, Slovakia, China and Argentina, are available for review (<http://www.basel.int/stratplan/dev-obst/index.html>).

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION RELEASES COP DOCUMENTS

The Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention has released meeting documents for the Fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4), scheduled to convene in Geneva, Switzerland, from 4-8 May 2009. The meeting will include a high-level segment, with the theme "Meeting the challenges of a POPs-free future" (<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/COPs/Meetings/COP4/tabid/404/mctl/ViewDetails/EventModID/870/EventID/23/xmid/1673/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).



Photo courtesy of the Stockholm Convention Secretariat

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PROPOSES MODALITIES FOR MEETING ON FINANCIAL CRISIS

Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, UN General Assembly President, as a follow-up to last year's Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, has proposed a draft resolution on the organization of a conference on the financial and economic crisis and its impact on development. The Doha Declaration requires that modalities for such a conference be decided by the end of March 2009. The draft proposes the dates of 26-29 May 2009 (http://www.un-ngls.org/site/IMG/pdf/pgu_letter-ffd28109.pdf).

WORLD BANK CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS SELECT PARTICIPANTS, GAS FLARING REDUCTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS FUNDED

The Trust Fund Committees for the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds met on 27-30 January 2009, and identified which countries will be offered funding under a pilot programme within the US\$6 billion Climate Investment Funds. Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Tajikistan and Zambia are invited to participate in the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), which will provide about US\$500 million for scaled up action and transformational change in integrating climate resilience in national development planning. Two other programs were also discussed: the Forest Investment Program, a program to pilot and demonstrate investments to support the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and For-

est Degradation) efforts of developing countries, with its next design meeting planned for 5-6 March 2009, in Washington, DC, US; and the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program, where a small multi-stakeholder working group will convene from 9-10 March 2009, to prepare a draft design document (<http://www.worldbank.org/cif>).

In other World Bank news, Qatar is the first Gulf State to join the global effort to reduce the flaring of gas associated with oil production through the World Bank's Global Gas Flaring Reduction partnership (GGFR). The GGFR partnership estimates that globally some 150 billion cubic meters of gas are flared or wasted every year, adding about 400 million tons of greenhouse gases in annual emissions (<http://go.worldbank.org/7GR17AL6O1>).

In addition, the World Bank and other development banks are pressing ahead with their efforts to address the energy challenges, and several projects have been approved recently to support energy efficiency and renewables. The World Bank reported the success of a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) wind-power project in Bangui Bay, in the Philippines, where the Bank's carbon finance programme is funding a wind farm with a 33 MW capacity and the possibility to provide half the province's power needs (<http://go.worldbank.org/AZRBKIJU0>). The World Bank approved, on 29 January, an additional US\$10 million credit for Moldova to scale-up heating supply and improve

the efficiency of heating services in the country (<http://go.worldbank.org/TX-LV6NM1B0>).

The Asian Development Bank approved, on 2 February 2009, a US\$31.1 million loan for an energy-efficiency project in the Philippines that will provide 13 million energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps to homeowners and businesses as part of a government push to save about US\$100 million every year in fuel costs, and a deferral of an investment of US\$450 million in power generation and associated network capacity (<http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2009/12782-philippines-energies-efficiencies/default.asp>).

The Inter-American Development Bank recently approved several projects to support energy efficiency in the Caribbean. The Bahamas will receive US\$1.45 million to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of the Environment, which oversees the energy sector, and support ongoing efforts to reform the country's regulatory, financial and fiscal frameworks in order to achieve a sustainable energy matrix, and to encourage energy efficiency in public, commercial and residential buildings.

Barbados will receive US\$1 million for the development of a Sustainable Energy Framework. Finally, a US\$1 million grant will launch the Caribbean Hotel Energy Efficiency Action Program (CHENACT), which will finance the adoption of energy saving technologies and partner with the UN Environmental Programme to help hotels phase-out the use of ozone-depleting substances in chillers, air conditioners and refrigerators (http://www.iadb.org/news/detail.cfm?language=English&id=5108&wt.mc_id=5108&ealetFrq=HA).



Photo courtesy of The World Bank

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD ANNOUNCES PREPARATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has released information concerning the scientific conference to be held in conjunction with the next meeting of its Committee on Science and Technology. The conference will consider “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management.” The meeting is being organized by the Dryland Science for Development Consortium, with the assistance of the UNCCD Secretariat.



Logos courtesy of the UNCCD Secretariat

In the coming months, three Working Groups will develop analyses that reflect prevailing scientific consensus on three facets of the conference’s topic: integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of land degradation processes and drivers (land quality assessment); monitoring and assessment of land rehabilitation and sustainable land management (sustainable land management assessment); and impacts of economic and social drivers and knowledge management on monitoring and evaluation of land degradation (socioeconomic and knowledge assessment). In addition to the Working Groups, preparations for the meeting will be conducted through an e-dialogue that is open to all interested scientists (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/cstsciconf/menu.php>).

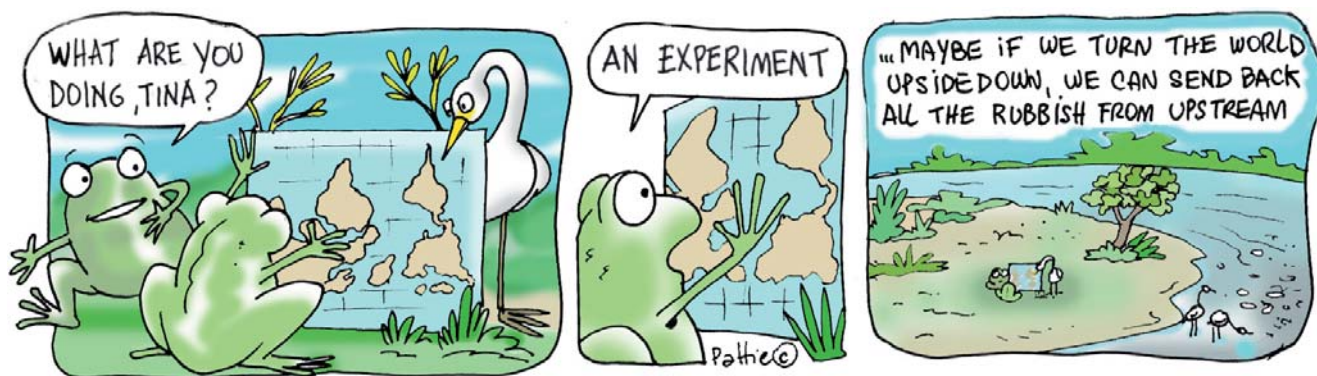
The UNCCD Secretariat has also announced that the CD ROM “2008 Virtual Disaster Risk Reduction Library,” which contains publications and technical documents, public information,

fact sheets, films, interviews, audio and video materials related to natural, environmental, technological disasters and related issues, is available from the UNCCD library (<http://www.unccd.int/library/story.php?newch=0>).

UNFF8 SESSION DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat has made available session documents in preparation for the Forum’s eighth session (UNFF8), to be held from 20 April-1 May 2009, in New York, US. The Secretariat has posted the provisional agenda, a Secretariat note on forests in a changing environment, and reports from countries, regions and multi-stakeholder dialogues. Included also are responses from member States and major groups on proposals for financing sustainable forest management, a major theme to be addressed at UNFF8 (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session-documents.html>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS



World Wetlands Day 2009 comic strip (image courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

RAMSAR CELEBRATES WORLD WETLANDS DAY, ISSUES CALL FOR SMALL GRANTS FUND 2009

The Ramsar Secretariat celebrated World Wetlands Day (WWD) on 2 February 2009 under the theme “Upstream – Downstream: Wetlands connect us all,” with a focus on river basin management. The Day marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar. WWD was celebrated for the first time in 1997 and each year, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels have taken advantage of the opportunity to highlight the importance of the world’s wetlands to the planet’s health (http://www.ramsar.org/wwd/9/wwd2009_index.htm). In related news, the Secretariat has reported that the Government of Gabon has designated

three new sites for WWD (http://www.ramsar.org/wwd/9/wwd2009_rpts_gabon.htm).

In other Ramsar news, the Secretariat has released a call for the 2009 nominations of the Small Grants Fund, which provides support of up to 40,000 Swiss francs (US\$ 35,000) each year for small projects for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and circulates a fundraising portfolio of evaluated proposals for which Ramsar has insufficient funding to support. Parties from eligible developing countries and NGOs with endorsement of the Ramsar Administrative Authorities are to submit proposals by 30 June 2009, while the deadline for sending draft proposals to receive advice from the Convention’s Senior Regional Advisors is 30 April 2009 (http://www.ramsar.org/sgf/key_sgf_index.htm).

UNEP/GPA HOLDS WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT COURSE

The UN Environment Programme/Global Programme for Action (UNEP/GPA), the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, and the UNDOALOS Train-Sea-Coast Programme organized, together with local partners, a wastewater management course in Lagos, Nigeria, in December 2008. With this course, the capacity building programme trained its 1000th participant since its inception in 2003. In 42 course deliveries, a total of 1030 municipal managers and decision-makers from 58 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific have accomplished the training objectives. Over 50 regional trainers have also been trained (<http://www.training.gpa.unep.org/content.html?id=14&ln=6>; <http://www.gpa.unep.org/news.html#57>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

UNDOALOS ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF ITLOS MEMBER AND ACCESSION TO FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) has reported that a Special Meeting of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) will

be held at UN Headquarters in New York, US, on 6 March 2009, to elect one member of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). The election procedures and list of candidates is available on the ITLOS website (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/specialmeetingsstatesparties.htm).

In addition, UNDOALOS has announced that, on 2 February 2009, Tuvalu acceded to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_agreements.htm).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC PREPARES FOR MEETINGS OF AWG-KP AND AWG-LCA

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat has notified parties and observer States to the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, UN specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the forthcoming seventh session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 7) and fifth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 5), which are taking place in Bonn, Germany, from 29 March-8 April 2009. The notifications contain the provisional agendas for the two sessions, as well as information for participants (http://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/notifications/application/pdf/090129_notification_awgkpa7_awgkp5.pdf).

The UNFCCC Secretariat has also announced the dates and venue for the ninth session of the AWG-KP and the seventh session of the AWG-LCA as 28 September-9 October 2009, at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok,

Thailand (<http://unfccc.int/meetings/items/2654.php>).

In addition, the UNFCCC Secretariat has posted reports by a number of parties on fulfillment of the Bali Action Plan and the components of the agreed outcome to be adopted by the Conference of Parties at its 15th session (http://unfccc.int/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/items/4578.php).

IPCC BEGINS FIFTH ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has announced that it is in the process of outlining its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), which will be finalized in 2014. The outline of the AR5 will be developed through a scoping process that involves climate change experts from all relevant disciplines and users of IPCC reports, in particular representatives from governments. As an initial step, experts, governments and organizations involved in the Fourth Assessment Report have been asked to submit comments and observations in writing. These submissions are being analyzed by members of the Bureau, and further input from governments and organizations is expected at the 30th Session of the IPCC, which will take place from 21-23 April 2009, in Antalya, Turkey. The scoping meet-

ing of experts to define the outline of the AR5 is scheduled for mid-July 2009 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>).

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES REPORT

The Ozone Secretariat has released the report of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the Twentieth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which convened in Doha, Qatar, from 16-20 November 2008 (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/mop/20mop/MOP-20-9E.pdf).

In other ozone news, International Customs Day was observed on 26 January 2009, with the theme "Customs and the Environment: Protecting our Natural Heritage." Celebrations at the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels, Belgium, highlighted the growing problem of illegal trade in environmentally sensitive items, including ozone depleting substances, as well as measures developed by the WCO to put in place the relevant international agreements' provisions related to the trade of ozone depleting substances and other environmentally-sensitive items (<http://www.greencustoms.org/news/ICD.htm>).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- The recent restructuring of the **Division for Sustainable Development** has brought with it a reorganization and refocusing of branches and branch chiefs. New branch chiefs include Nikhil Chandavarkar to lead the communication and outreach branch, and Andrew Yager as officer-in-charge of the water, energy and strategies branch. Kathleen Abdalla will head the emerging issues branch, Aslam Chaudhry will head the global policy branch, and David O'Connor will head the policy analysis and networks branch. Diane Quarless will continue to head the SIDS Unit (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd/dsd_orgchart.shtml).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **25th UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum:** 16-20 February 2009. Nairobi, Kenya. <http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/25unepgc/>
- **First Meeting of the Friends of the Co-Chairs on Liability and Redress under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety:** 23-27 February 2009. Mexico City, Mexico. <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/bs-gflr/>
- **Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD17:** 23-27 February 2009. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/ipm17/>