UNGA – Environmental Leadership in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Abdurrahman Wab�land, government, the private sector, UN agencies and international organisations participated in the UN’s high-level meeting on the Global Thematic Consultation on Environmental Sustainability in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, with an eye on their role in developing a portion of the UNGA’s Post-2015 Development Agenda. The consultation considered a range of themes, including “capitalizing on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” and “MDG 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability)” achievements and addressing the gaps; and addressing challenges in implementing the Post-2015 agenda. EPL is hoping that a participant from that meeting will provide a report on it for us. In the meantime, ISID has provided an in-depth report online at http://www.isid.campost2015/sustainability/html/cursof2015.htm.

European Union – Environment Council Considers Key Policy Issues

The EU Environment Council reports that key debates have been held considering the possibility of submitting a draft directive on a new “indirect land-use” clause designed to encourage a transition to biofuels, and consequent “greenhouse gas savings”. Other recent policy debates have focused on possible amendments to the environmental impact assessment directive, the draft regulation on access and benefit sharing, the REDAC system for the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, the Ro-20 follow-up processes and the UN’s post-2015 development agenda. Details are available online at http://europa.eu/index_en.htm.

New Venture Capital Framework Linked to Energy Issues

The EU Environment Council has adopted a new venture capital framework and an energy infrastructure regulation aimed at facilitating access to finance for European companies, while modernising and expanding Europe’s energy infrastructure in line with policies in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Japan: Biodegradable Apparel

Japanese apparel maker and retailer Onward Kashiyama Co. has successfully commercialised its new biodegradable blazer, the “Bio Tech Jacket”, which it has been selling in commercial quantities. The jacket (including buttons) is made of biodegradable materials, the jacket (including buttons) will break down completely into water and carbon dioxide if buried or composted in a landfill. A part of the revenues from jacket sales have been donated to the Watan Ji Matsu’s Green Belt Movement. Japan for Biodiversity, online at http://www.japants.org/en/pages/032678.html.

United Kingdom: EDF Drops Suit Against Whale-Extraction

President Obama has nominated Sally Jewell, former CEO of Recreational Equipment Inc (REI), to replace Ken Salazar, who resigned that post, effective 31 March 2013. The nomination is being considered by the Senate Committee, but must still receive the approval of a majority of the Senate. Jewell is renowned for her work in the Administration’s past environmental efforts, and the fact that under her leadership REI was one of the “100 Best Companies to Work For”. Conservatives have criticised her work with organisations that challenge the government for environmentally damaging choices, while liberals have expressed concern about her outspoken support for the expansion of deforestation exploration on public lands. Jewell is currently a member of the prestigious John Harvard Conservation Award from the Audubon Society. See http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2011/politics/obama-cabinet/index.html.

California High-Speed Rail Project's Resolutions

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Rubbed out "Bullet Train") has resolved two of the four environmental lawsuits filed against it following the decision to develop a high-speed rail system in the state. The lawsuits were filed under the state’s environmental impact assessment law, which has long been the preferred legal tool of trade unions and others seeking to alter or delay proposed development. One of the cases has been dismissed by the judge, and the second settled by payment of US $300,000 to the plaintiffs. “Environmental lawsuit against state bullet train settled” Los Angeles Times, January 28, 2013, available online at http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-bullet-train-suit-settlement-20130128-story.html.