

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

World Bank:

– “New Deal” on Food Security

In the recent IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick reiterated his earlier call for a “New Deal” designed to meet the global crisis in food prices and availability. As an urgency measure, this proposal calls on donor governments to make up the US\$ 500 million needed to “close an immediate gap” between urgent food funding needs for hunger prevention and funds available, as identified by the UN’s World Food Programme. To date, he states, about half of this target has been met. On a longer-term basis, the New Deal is embodied in Bank activities such as conditional cash transfers, food-for-work programmes, and assistance with new plantings. The Development Committee of the Bank and the IMF endorsed the New Deal at its Spring Meeting, as well as other longer-term food initiatives, including doubling the Bank’s agricultural lending to sub-Saharan Africa. The move reflects the urgency of the need to address the current crisis, which has been underscored by the World Bank’s estimate that “surging food prices could mean seven lost years in the fight against worldwide poverty”, threatening recent gains in overcoming poverty and malnutrition. The Bank has also predicted that the problems are likely to persist over the medium term. See “Rising Food Prices: Policy Options and World Bank Response” online at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21722688>.

– Warning on MDG Goals

Halfway to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) deadline of 2015, the World Bank’s annual *Global Monitoring Report* said that the world has not made the necessary progress, but success is still possible given certain conditions. While much of the world is on track to halve extreme poverty by the deadline, prospects are much graver for the goals of reducing child and maternal mortality, and serious shortfalls are also expected in education, nutrition and sanitation. The report predicted the possibility that sub-Saharan Africa could miss all the MDGs, despite improvements over recent years, and noted that South Asia is seriously behind on the goals related to health and education.

– Climate Fund Discussions

In conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank recently convened a meeting that brought donor countries together to discuss the design of a new financing tool directed towards the acceleration of climate-sensitive investments in developing countries. In addition to the donor representatives, attendees included observers from developing countries, the UNFCCC, the GEF, as well as members of the UN Chief Executives Board, UNEP, UNDP and the OECD. In an earlier meeting, donor country representatives had sketched out how the new mechanism might function; the current proposal would channel most funds through various multilateral development banks, with the goal of providing short-to-medium-term financing for rapid deployment of low-carbon technologies, starting with pilots and prototypes supported under the GEF and activities under the CDM. Bank officials expect their Executive Directors to give final approval for the establishment of the fund in early July. (See: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21721668~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

UNEP:

– Guide on Marine and Coastal Governance

Among other contributions to the Fourth Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, held this year in Hanoi, Viet Nam, UNEP, in collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), has released a guide for the mainstreaming of marine and coastal issues. The guide was launched at the Conference in conjunction with presentations and discussions centring on UNEP’s work on coastal conservation, critical marine ecosystems and the problems of national funding of its “Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities” (GPA) focusing on the value of marine ecosystems and particular components, as well as the need to mainstream Marine and Coastal Issues into National Planning and Budgetary Processes. See: http://www.gpa.unep.org/documents/analytical_

[framework_for_mainstreaming_feb_08_1_english.pdf](#); <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/sdoh4/>.

– Mercury Partnership

Acting to implement Governing Council decision 24/3 (see *EPL* 37/4 at 268–270 and 37/6 at 432–441), UNEP recently sponsored a meeting to finalise the overarching framework for the Global Mercury Partnership. Attended by representatives of more than 30 countries, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and industry groups, the meeting produced a framework for the Global Mercury Partnership that outlines the goal, organisational arrangements (including a Partnership Advisory Group) and operational guidelines for the individual partnership areas. See <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/UGMP/Meeting.htm>.

Global “Doomsday Vault” Accepting Accessions

The Global Crop Diversity Trust, in conjunction with the Norwegian Government, has officially opened the Global Seed Vault, in Svalbard, Norway this March. Dubbed the “doomsday vault”, the vault is intended to be “the ultimate protection for the world’s agricultural biodiversity... built to stand the test of time”. Put simply, a tunnel will be excavated in the side of a mountain. The vault is already accepting donations from seed collections around the world. It is designed to maintain a collection of all crop species and varieties, not for circulation, but to ensure that all varieties will continue to be available in the event that they become extinct *in situ*, and are lost or disappear from international and national seed collections. The Svalbard location was selected so that the vault could be built underground, taking advantage of the permafrost as a means of maintaining the species in cryo-preservation conditions with minimal energy use.

At the opening, Norway’s Minister of Agriculture and Food, Terje Riis-Johansen noted that the vault does not eliminate the need to conserve and promote the sustainability of crops *in situ*. To that end, it has committed to contributing an annual amount equal to 0.1% of all seed sales within the country to the “Fund” of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, and challenges all other countries, developed and developing, to make a similar commitment. See: <http://www.croptrust.org/documents/Svalbard%20opening/SGSV%20Press%20Release%20FINAL.pdf> and ftp://ftp.fao.org/ag/agp/planttreaty/news/noti005_en.pdf.

IPCC: Reconsiders its Mandate

In its twenty-eighth session, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) discussed its own future, structure and work programme. The situation of the IPCC has changed radically since its creation, as it has achieved one of its basic mandates, raising international awareness of climate change issues to near fever pitch. In Plenary, the Panel agreed to prepare a Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) and to retain the current structure of its Working Groups for the foreseeable future. It indicated its intent to work from new “scenarios” in the AR5, and requested the Bureau of the Fifth Assessment cycle to ensure delivery of the Working Group I report by early 2013 and complete the other Working Group reports and the Synthesis Report at the earliest feasible date in 2014. The Panel also agreed to the preparation of a Special Report on Renewable Energy to be completed by 2010 and was presented with the Technical Paper on Climate Change and Water. It deferred discussion on the use of its Nobel Peace Prize funds until IPCC 29, next September. A summary of the IPCC’s recent meeting can be found at <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc28/> and also see *IISD MEA Bulletin* Vol. 45, issue 5.

Coordination of the Chemical Conventions

In its third meeting, the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation and Coordination between the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions was very productive and collaborative, ultimately proposing to convene a joint Extraordinary Conference of the Parties (Ex-COP) of the three conventions in conjunction with the next special session of the UNEP Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) in February 2010. The Group discussed and ultimately accepted a mandate and recommendations created unofficially by the co-chair. The next steps will be to obtain approval or confirmation of the Group’s decisions by all three instruments’ COPs, which meet between now and May 2009.

Thereafter (in the Ex-COP) the key action will be to create a programme for applying the regulations and, importantly, to synchronise the three convention budgets. Source: http://ahjwg.chem.unep.ch/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=49.

Rotterdam Convention

In preparation for the upcoming COP-4 (October 2008 in Rome), the Convention's Chemical Review Committee (CRC-4) forwarded proposals for the Appendix III listing of three chemicals – chrysotile asbestos, as well as the pesticides aldicarb and alachlor. Further information will be available later this year, when the Convention posts the final report of that meeting or its recommendations to the COP. (ATL)

MARPOL Developments

The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) has finalised and approved proposed amendments to Annex VI regulations under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). Annex VI focuses on reduction of harmful emissions from ships. Also amended was the Convention's NO_x technical Code. The Committee also recommended that IMO's Secretariat be directed to expedite its on-going work toward the development of a global levy scheme on marine bunker fuel to achieve GHG emission reductions. Adoption of the draft amendments is expected at MEPC 58 (London, 6–10 October 2008). It is expected that MEPC's draft text of the International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships will be finalised and ready for approval by the next meeting, potentially enabling adoption in 2009.

Latin America: Proposal for New Committee Work on Responsibility for Legal Aspects of UN Reform

In 1974, the UN formed a *Special Committee on the Charter of the UN and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization*, with a relatively special mandate – to “examine proposals to strengthen the Organization's role in maintaining peace and security, to develop coordination among nations and to promote the rule of international law”. In 2005, General Assembly Resolution 60/23 also assigned the Committee with the duty, *inter alia*, to examine the implementation of Charter provisions on assistance to third States affected by the application focused on oversight of UN actions. Recently, a Latin American high-level forum known as the “Rio Group” has reportedly asked that the Special Committee should be called upon to “...perform the task of considering the legal aspects of the reforms already decided upon by the General Assembly, when specifically requested to do so, with a view to recommending adjustments to bring the Charter into line with these decisions”. It suggested that the Committee address the following issues: a) amendments or additions to the Charter to implement reform decisions adopted by the GA; and b) amendments and additions of other Charter provisions as necessary to such reforms. These recommendations can only become specific tasks of the Special Committee if specifically instructed by the GA. The proposal has been filed as A/AC.182/L.126 in the UN system. (ATL)

African Experts Work on Small-farm sustainability

In April, experts met in Arusha (Tanzania) to analyse the impact of sustainability standards on small-scale farmers and to define strategies to help them maximise benefits while minimising costs. This meeting was designed for the preparation of a report and recommendation for the forthcoming twelfth Ministerial Conference of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Accra, Ghana. Considering that agriculture remains the economic mainstay for most developing countries, there is a growing range of quality, environmental and social requirements that farmers must meet to gain access to foreign markets. Consequently, related work addressing on-farm conservation of agricultural resources has been ongoing through FAO's International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Additional work on behalf of small farmers is on-going through a variety of other international forums. Issues include certification matters (organic products), social issues (child labour bans and reasonable payment for agricultural workers), which are seen as a genuine opportunity for small-scale farmers in the South. For further information see: http://www.unctad.org/trade_env/meeting.asp?MeetingID=249 and http://www.planttreaty.org/farmers_en.htm. (ATL)

OECD: Environmental Outlook

The OECD's analysis of economic and environmental trends up to 2030 has been published. Affirming that the costs of inac-

tion are high, the *Environmental Outlook* is designed to show that today's key environmental problems – including climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and the health impacts of pollution – can be addressed in a manner that is both achievable and affordable. Working through “scenario development”, simulations of policy actions and other predictive instruments designed to stimulate new ideas and approaches, the *Outlook* projects that world GDP will almost double by 2030, and in one policy simulation states that “it would cost just over 1% of that growth to implement policies that can cut key air pollutants by about a third, and contain greenhouse gas emissions to about 12% instead of 37% growth under the scenario without new policies”. See <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/33/40200582.pdf>. (ATL)

CMS: Gorilla Agreement Set to Enter into Force

The CMS Secretariat reports that the new Gorilla Agreement, negotiated in October 2007, has received the requisite three ratifications (from the Central African Republic, Nigeria and the Republic of Congo) and will enter into force on 1 June 2008. The first Meeting of the Parties will take place on 29 November 2008, in Rome, Italy, immediately prior to the ninth CMS-COP (<http://www.cms.int/>).

AEWA: Outreach and Awareness

The African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) is focusing significant effort on maximising awareness of migratory birds and their habitats, launching two major websites directed at this effort. First, in conjunction with CMS, and in preparation for World Migratory Bird Day (11 May 2008), it has launched a website to promote the event and provide information on migratory birds. That site can be found online at www.worldmigratorybirdday.org.

A second website has been prepared as part of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) project – a collaboration between Wetlands International and BirdLife International, with support from the UN Office for Project Services, the UNEP/Global Environment Facility, AEWA and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. That recently launched website seeks to foster international collaboration along the African-Eurasian flyways, build capacity for monitoring and conservation, and demonstrate best practices in conservation and wise use of wetlands in selected countries. See <http://www.wingsoverwetlands.org/>.

Guide for Implementation of the Alpine Convention

The German Federal Ministry for the Environment recently released a Guide intended to assist responsible authorities throughout the country in implementation of Germany's obligations under the Alpine Convention. Based on a similar publication prepared by the Austrian Environmental Ministry in 2007, the new German Guide is supplemented by a legal analysis of the manner in which the Convention's mechanisms are to be realised under German law. The text of the Guide (in German only) is available online at: http://www.bmu.de/int_umweltpolitik/weitere_multilaterale_zusammenarbeit/doc/38478.php. (ATL)

Diplomacy in Northern Waters

Recently, University of British Columbia political scientist Michael Byers spearheaded a two-day “model negotiation” in which teams representing the USA (including Paul Cellucci, the former US Ambassador to Canada) and Canada (including Pierre Leblanc, the former commander of the Canadian military's northern forces) sought to develop a mutually acceptable concord to address issues relating to the disputed Northwest Passage. Although unable to reach a final agreement, the two sides both concluded that “time is of the essence” for the two nations to work out a new collaborative regime addressing increased shipping, security concerns and environmental threats in Arctic waters. Michael Byers' editorial on turning this experience into a basis for actual negotiation processes can be found online at: <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/opinion/story.html?id=78e22617-0c40-4515-aeae-2c0e9d843efc&p=1>. (ATL)

Brazilian President Speaks out on Bioenergy

Speaking at the Latin American Regional Conference of the FAO, Brazilian President Luis Ignacio (“Lula”) da Silva issued a strong statement in favour of bioenergy and especially biodiesel, strongly denying that the current food crisis has any basis in the increase in global production of oilseeds, sugar cane and maize intended for use in the generation of bioenergy. He reaffirmed Brazil's long-term commitment to bioenergy and indicated that

opposition to and reconsideration of bioenergy programmes are wasteful of both funding for international development and especially of time to develop urgent solutions to the world's twin problems of rising energy costs and climate change. The statement indirectly responds to a well publicised statement made last year by Jean Ziegler, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, that

"biofuels are a crime against humanity" because they transform "hundreds and hundreds of thousands of tons" of cereal production into production of biofuel, leading to this year's unprecedented increases in the costs of cereals worldwide. President Lula's remarks will be summarised in FAO's report of the Latin American meeting. (TRY, unless stated otherwise.)

Late Report:

The 2nd Pew Symposium on Whales, Tokyo, January 2008

In an effort to prevent unfettered commercial whaling and to ensure the enforceability of international measures aimed at protecting whales, the Pew Environment Group (conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts) launched a major initiative – a public symposium series designed to stimulate wide dialogue and aimed at finding possible ways forward for resolving the global conflict over whales.

The most recent symposium was held at the UNU centre in Tokyo in January 2008, and preceded the IWC Intersessional meeting (see page 129). It took place at a time of heightened tension about Japan's so-called "scientific whaling" programme, amid growing international concern over the future of the IWC. Holding the symposium in the heart of the main pro-whaling country gave it particular significance: not only in opening the dialogue to those with concerns on both sides of the debate and having real interest in effective and pragmatic solutions; but also enabling the reflection of a wide range of views from within Japan.

Summarising the proceedings, the symposium chairman (Judge Tuiloma Neroni Slade) stressed that his viewpoint was not endorsed by the symposium. He noted several important areas of agreement:

- the urgent need to resolve the current impasse on whaling, so that significant international resources and energy currently devoted to the whaling issue can be directed to other serious and potentially devastating threats to the planet;
- the rich diversity of views among the Japanese participants;
- the significant benefits of the IWC for whale conservation, as well as the escalating conflict within the IWC's ranks;
- the importance of protection of endangered whale species, and the fact that recovery is progressing for some, but not for others;
- the preference for an internationally-accepted solution, coupled with doubts about whether the political will exists to support such an outcome;
- the perception that, relative to other conventions, the IWC is outdated, less transparent, less flexible and less responsive; and the lack, in the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, of basic elements of modern conservation agreements, such as the precautionary approach, the ecosystem approach, conflict resolution, and clear criteria or definitions;
- the range of important legal, scientific, ethical, social and cultural issues that must be considered in defining a way forward (ultimately, their resolution is a political, not scientific, matter); and
- the fact that, with neither side prepared to make the necessary concessions, maintenance of the *status quo* seems the best one can hope for. The most promising compromise could involve both (i) recognising the potential claims of established small coastal whaling communities; and (ii) suspending "scientific" whaling in the Southern Ocean and IWC sanctuaries.

SELECTED DOCUMENTS

UNEP GCSS-10

Decisions

1. Chemicals management, including mercury and waste management

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 24/3 on chemicals management, in particular section IV on mercury, and its decision 24/5 on waste management,

Further recalling General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999 on the establishment of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which provides the Global Ministerial Forum as a high-level environment policy forum in the United Nations system,

Noting that as started in paragraph 6 of resolution 53/242 the primary purpose of special sessions of the Council/Forum is the review of important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment,

Emphasizing that wherever possible significant programme-related decisions of the Council/Forum are dealt with at its regular sessions,

* See also page 114.

1. *Acknowledges with appreciation* the reports of the Executive Director on chemicals management (UNEP/GCSS.X/4), on progress of the *ad hoc* open-ended working group on mercury (UNEP/GCSS.X/5), and on waste management (UNEP/GCSS.X/7), as requested by the Governing Council in its decisions 24/3 II, 23/3 IV and 24/5, respectively;

2. *Takes note* of the particular significance of the tangible recommendations for developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition referred to in section I of chapter II of the report of the Executive Director on waste management (UNEP/GCSS.X/7);

3. *Decides* in view of the significant programme-related matters raised in the above-referenced reports to consider them at the Council/Forum's twenty-fifth regular session;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to implement decisions 24/3 and 24/5 and to present a full report on such implementation at the Council/Forum's twenty-fifth regular session.

2. Sustainable development of the Arctic Region

The Governing Council,

Recalling UNEP Governing Council decision 22/11 (Sustainable development of the Arctic) of 7 February 2003 and in particular in paragraph 2 requesting the Executive Director to provide continuous assessments and early warning on emerging issues related to the Arctic environment, in particular its impact on the global environment,

Recognizing that despite the many successful and continuing efforts of the international community since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, and some progress having been achieved, continuing efforts by Governments to protect the environment are needed as shown in the United Nations Environment Programme's fourth Global Environment Outlook report, with specific concerns in relation to melting Arctic sea ice,¹

Recalling that "Melting Ice – A Hot Topic?" was the theme for the 2007 World Environment Day and focused on the effects