

EDITORIAL

The 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development concluded with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda – described as a “common vision for supporting sustainable development”. The Conference thoroughly considered the issue of financing the Post-2015 Development Agenda, taking into consideration the diverse sources of finance and cooperation necessary. However, the agenda is not legally binding and has not answered key questions regarding how existing ODA commitments will increase the level and flow of support needed for the implementation of the pending Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), nor how on-going persistence by developing States concerning recognition of the “common but differentiated responsibilities” of States at various development levels will play out in the negotiation, adoption and implementation of the UN’s Post-2015 Development Agenda.

A final surge of overnight and weekend negotiations of the Post-2015 Development Agenda has resulted in consensus on the document “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Global Action”. The proposed SDGs provide the backbone for the Agenda. In this connection, we are proud to announce that the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the SDGs, Ambassador Macharia Kamau and Csaba Körösi, received ICCEL’s Elizabeth Haub Award for Environmental Diplomacy on 28 July. During a ceremony in New York City, Liliane and Christian Haub conveyed the gold medals to the Laureates in the presence of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. That event will be reported in a forthcoming issue of this journal.

The United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP’s) Committee of Permanent Representatives is preparing for a detailed review of UNEP’s 2014-2017 medium-term strategy (MTS) relative to the SDGs and the expected agenda. It is also preparing its 2018-2021 MTS and “vision to 2030”. These core matters will to be addressed at the next United Nations Environment Assembly in May 2016. Also of note, according to it’s draft programme of work, the 70th UN General Assembly has listed the election of the UNEP Executive Director as a “Plenary item not scheduled for debate”, this fall.

The G7 Summit at Schloss Elmau, Germany, resulted in a declaration that specifically addresses climate change. Affirming the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, participants restated a commitment to raising US \$10 billion in climate financing from public and private sources, and to fully operationalising the Green Climate Fund.

The upcoming Paris negotiations of a possible new protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will have to overcome a number of complex and contentious issues (see p. 108). Some of the legal dimensions of these challenges, and possible solutions for reaching an agreement were explored by a meeting in Stockholm on “Legal Issues Relating to the 2015 Climate Change Agreement”. To provide insight into the minds of legal advisers, governmental negotiators and leading scholars on the topic, we offer the “Chair’s Reflections on Key Points” from that meeting as a Selected Document at p. 172.

On 30 July, the proposal initiated by Germany and Gabon on “Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife” was adopted as UN General Assembly Resolution 69/314. The initiative had gained sponsorship of 59 States, by the time it was put to the Assembly and passed without a vote. Key issues considered included the need to quell concerns of “consumer” States, and a push to extend the resolution’s coverage to other areas of biodiversity, such as the harvesting of tropical timber. The resolution is a strong signal that laws at national and international level must be in place and enforced to conserve the environment for future generations, and provides an opportunity for the international community to take action – to provide coordinated and comprehensive approaches that punish perpetrators while enhancing the benefits of nature to local human communities.

Lastly, we praise Pope Francis for his Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si” on “Care for our Common Home” This is a momentous document that is worthy of attention and follow-through regardless of religious affiliation.

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- Wolfgang Brunny -