

EDITORIAL

These last months of 2010 are seeing many new developments in international law. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has entered into force and is beginning its operations with a Secretariat in Abu Dhabi to champion sustainable energy development and implementation.

In relation to biodiversity, discussions include the negotiation of a new Protocol to the CBD on Access to Genetic Resources and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits from their Utilisation, as well as, potentially, a supplementary protocol on liability and redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to address situations in which transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms has allegedly resulted in damage. We are awaiting the final decisions from Nagoya.

Additionally, proposals are circulating suggesting that the G-20 be transformed into a "United Nations forum responsible for economic, social and environmental affairs", at the same time that UNEP is engaging in a process to reform, enhance and coordinate global environmental governance.

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UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has recognised the valuable experience States have obtained under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Noting that the Protocol had achieved universal ratification in 2009, he commended the on-going development of the Protocol as an example of effective environmental governance. The Protocol did not start out with any idea of phasing out ozone-depleting substances, but has functioned to cut their production by more than 98 percent.

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Although interest and concern regarding the USA's actions to address climate change are growing, the attempt by Congress to adopt comprehensive legislation on carbon emissions control has been abandoned. Its supporters have been called on to choose between this bill and a bill to restore unemployment benefits for millions of Americans out of work. The primary environmental legislation expected this year will be a more limited and recently revised measure focused on responding to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The bipartisan commission investigating the oil spill, which is headed by Bob Graham and William Reilly, is expected to deliver its report to the President in January. We are curious to see the final findings on the causes of the well explosion, the efforts to contain the oil, and the future of offshore drilling in the USA.

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- Wolfgang R. S. -