

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

UN**– New High Commissioner for Human Rights Named**

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid al-Husseini of Jordan was unanimously approved in June as the new High Commissioner for Human Rights. Information about Zeid and his appointment is available at <http://www.ohchr.org/en/aboutus/pages/highcommissioner.aspx>.

– Envoys for African Great Lakes Region and Climate Change

Said Djinnit of Algeria was appointed as Special Envoy by the United Nations Secretary-General, succeeding Mary Robinson who was appointed as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Change. Press release: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48295#.VDLrtBYvCuQ>.

– “Rethinking sustainable development”

The United Nations General Assembly has published the summary report of the 2013 parliamentary hearing with the title “Rethinking sustainable development: the quest for a ‘transformational’ agenda in 2015”. UN Document A/68/790: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/790.

– Plastic Waste and Microplastics

Valuing Plastic: The Business Case for Measuring, Managing and Disclosing Plastic Use in the Consumer Goods Industry illustrates the increasingly drastic consequences of plastic waste and the threat microplastics pose to marine ecosystems. According to the report, plastic waste in the oceans costs around US\$ 13 billion per year in environmental damage to marine ecosystems.

– UNEA Progress Report on Chemicals and Waste

The reader is referred to UNEP's progress report on the implementation of Decision 27/12 concerning chemicals and waste as discussed during the first session of UNEA (reported in *EPL* 44(4): 342–347). The report bears the document number UNEP/EA.1/15.

UNEP Year Book

UNEP has published its *UNEP Year Book 2014: Emerging Issues in Our Global Environment* as an e-book. The Year Book illustrates the emergence of current environmental challenges and explores innovative solutions to address them: <http://www.unep.org/yearbook/2014/>.

UNECE**– Russia Urged to Lift Restrictions on the Use of TIR Carnets**

A high-level session of the Administrative Committee of the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (1975) in July adopted a “Statement on the functioning of the TIR Convention in the Russian Federation”, noting that although the Russian Federal Customs Service (FCS) has extended its guarantee agreement with the Association of International Road Carriers, it “continues to implement measures that contradict the provisions of the TIR Convention and that lead to severe restrictions on the use of TIR Carnets in all regions and almost all customs offices of the Russian Federation”, and urged the discontinuance of these practices. Press release: <http://www.unece.org/tir/news/010714.html>. (TRY)

– Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters

UNECE has published on its website new model provisions under the Helsinki Convention, including nine that were developed by the Core Group on Groundwater: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/publications/WAT_model_provisions/ece_mp_wat_40_eng.pdf.

UNEP Opens Pacific Office

UNEP has opened a new sub-regional office for the Pacific in Apia, Samoa early this September. Samoa's Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, joined UNEP's Executive Director Achim Steiner at the official opening of the new office.

Press release: <http://www.unep.org/NEWSCENTRE/default.aspx?DocumentId=2796&ArticleId=10971>.

CMS MOUs and their Viability

UNEP and CMS have published an “Assessment of the CMS MOUs and their Viability”. The document can be accessed at http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/mouviability_assessment_e.pdf.

Global Environment Facility (GEF)**– Largest Funding Ever for SIDS**

GEF CEO, Naoko Ishii, speaking at the Third International Conference on SIDS last month, announced the Fund's commitment of the largest ever sum (US\$ 256 million) towards addressing SIDS challenges in the areas of biodiversity, chemicals and wastes, forests, and capacity building. See press release: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/9977>.

– IUCN Accredited as a GEF Project Agency

Following a two-year process, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has accredited IUCN as one of its “Project Agencies” – organisations with responsibility for creating project proposals and managing GEF projects. Press Release: <http://www.iucn.org/?uNewsID=14865>.

– US\$ 130 million Committed to Address Mercury Issues

The GEF has also confirmed that it will invest US\$ 141 million in projects under the 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury, with the goal of reducing mercury emissions and anthropogenic releases. The Minamata Convention currently has been signed by over 120 countries, and ratified by six. It will enter into force 90 days after the 50th ratification is deposited with the UN. Press release: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/10701>. (TRY)

Convention on Migratory Species**– 32 Listing Proposals**

The Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) had received proposals for the addition of 32 more species to the CMS Appendices. Further information on the proposal can be found on the CMS website: <http://www.cms.int/en/node/5527>.

– Uganda Accedes to the Gorilla Agreement

The CMS Secretariat reports that Uganda deposited its instrument of accession to the Gorilla Agreement and became a party to that Agreement on 1 October 2014: <http://www.cms.int/en/node/5805>.

OECD Calls for a Environmental/Industrial Balance in Iceland

The OECD's *Environmental Performance Review: Iceland 2014* (its third such review of Iceland) states the need for establishing a balance between the country's power and tourism industries with nature conservation. Iceland's electricity output and the number of tourists visiting the country have risen dramatically, both factors making an increase in environmental protection necessary. Reported at <http://www.oecd.org/env/country-reviews/iceland2014.htm>.

Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention

Work continued on an “Arctic Council Action Plan for Oil Pollution Prevention” by the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention in June. Documents and agendas of many task force meetings are available at <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/document-archive/category/520-public-documents#>.

GMS Environment Media Roundup

The Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program publishes a monthly Environment Media Roundup, compiling all environmentally relevant information for the region. The

roundup can be accessed at <http://www.gms-eoc.org/news/gms-environment-media-roundup-august-2014>.

Tehran Convention Adopts Biodiversity Protocol

The five Caspian States, as members of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention) have adopted a Biodiversity Protocol at COP-5 of the Convention in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, last May. This is the third environmental protocol adopted by the Tehran Convention since its 1998 adoption. Documentation of COP-5 is available at <http://www.tehranconvention.org/spip.php?article76>.

Europe

– Draft Resolution to On-going GMO Debate

After a four-year process, the European Council has reached political agreement on a draft directive that would allow each Member State (MS) to restrict or ban GMO cultivation in all or part of its own territory. The process of developing this approach was undertaken in response to a 2009 request submitted to the Council by 13 MSs. The process will allow each MS to specify a GMO ban, whether country-wide or in some particular area, and to revisit the question at any time during such ban's 10-year duration. The process enables MSs to make this decision, without the requirement of scientific or other justification, and will apply to all GMOs, including those that have received primary authorisation by the European Food Safety Authority. Reported at http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/legislation/future_rules_en.htm. (TRY)

– EU Negotiations with Pacific Countries

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU have agreed to take up negotiations for an Economic Participation Agreement (EPA) under the 2000 Cotonou Agreement. Press Release: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/african-caribbean-and-pacific-acp-region/acp-multi-country-cooperation/trade-relationship_en.

– EU Rules for Shipment of Waste

EU Regulation 660/2014, adopted by the Council in May, amends existing regulations on shipment of waste both within and outside the EU in a number of ways, including by calling for the revision of Annexes to take into account the Basel Convention, the OECD Decision on it, and Article 7 of EU Directive 2008/98/EC, as well as “decisions taken under relevant international conventions and agreements”: see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32014R0660&qid=1412627381721&from=EN>.

– Espoo-Convention Open to All UN Member States

Due to the entry into force of its first amendment, the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context is now open to all United Nations Member States.

Japan

– Dolphin Hunting Season Opens

As reported in *Stern*, the dolphin-hunting season in Japan opened once again in September and will continue through next March. According to well-known critic Richard O'Barry, who was present for the early days of the season, bad weather delayed the commencement of hunting, (whether live-capture or slaughter). See <http://www.stern.de/panorama/walfangort-taiji-in-japan-beginnt-die-delfinjagd-saison-2134873.html>.

– Tokyo Announced Reduction of Greenhouse Gases

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government has published a report on CO₂ emissions in the 2012 fiscal year, primarily by small and medium-sized companies as compared to levels recorded in fiscal year 2010. See http://japanfs.org/en/news/archives/news_id034980.html

South Africa: Trade in Rhino Horn

African Indaba has published an article on a model for a smarter way to trade rhino horn, to provide the Chinese market with rhino horn without having to kill the animal, avoiding the

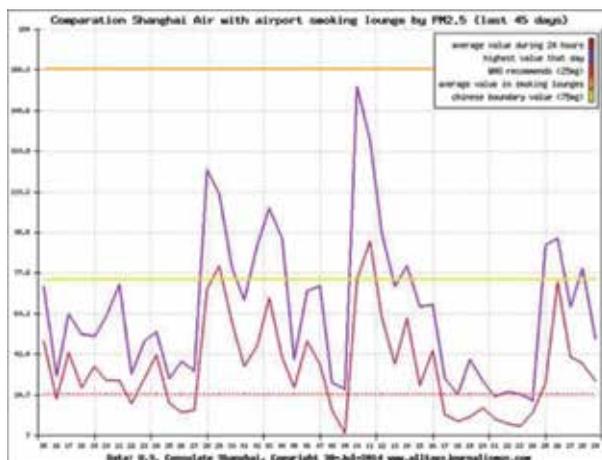
inherent conflict with CITES. See <http://www.africanindaba.com/2014/07/a-model-for-a-smart-trade-in-rhino-horn/>.

Fishing Practices Affect Size of Wild Alaskan Salmon

A 2014 report by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis addresses the size of matured Alaskan wild salmon caught over the past 50 years, with the goal of determining how fishing practices have affected the species. It has found that, in six of the nine populations studied, the use of gill nets, which remove larger adult fish allowing the smaller fish to escape and breed, has resulted in a decline in the average size of adult salmon. The report recommends adjustment of the regulations limiting the mesh size of nets: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/eva.12123>.

Burning Ban in Shanghai

On 1 October 2014, a new law that has been called “China’s strictest air-purification-law” entered into force. That law extends the current ban on the burning of straw near airports and certain listed streets, so that, from now on, any burning of straw, leaves, plastic, rubber and tar, as well as lighting camp fires, will be banned throughout Shanghai, and higher penalties imposed for any illegal burning, reassessed for every day of violation along with higher utility rates for the violator. The legislative example (reportedly only a first step) is particularly relevant, given Shanghai’s importance as an industrial and commercial centre within China. It is estimated that the burning of straw accounted for up to 10 percent of the city’s air pollution. “Neues Gesetz gegen Luftverschmutzung für Shanghai ist Chinas strengstes Umweltschutzgesetz”. *China Nachrichten und News*.



Courtesy: *China Nachrichten und News*

Germany: Hazardous Waste in Biogas Plants

Among the many criticisms being levelled against the biogas industry, *NDR1* reports that the German government in Osnabrück and Oldenburg State is investigating a Dutch-owned biogas company that is alleged to have disposed of hazardous waste through biogas plants in Emsland/Grafschaft Bentheim, Cloppenburg and Osnabrück. The on-going investigations, already in their second year, seek to determine the composition of the product, whether the company had permission to process waste in this way, and whether the customers were aware of and colluded in any illegal or unpermitted action. See http://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/niedersachsen/osnabrueck_emsland/Illegale-Muellentsorgung-in-Biogasanlagen,biogas330.html.

(Except as specifically noted, all references by NE)