



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CHEMICALS AND WASTES

MERCURY INC 1 CONVENES



The dais on the first day of INC 1. L-R: Matthew Gubb, Secretariat; Chair Fernando Lugris (Uruguay); Per Bakken, UNEP Chemicals; and Masa Nagai, Secretariat.

The first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury (INC 1) is convening from 7-11 June in Stockholm, Sweden. This meeting is expected to be the first of five INC meetings to negotiate a legally binding instrument on mercury, which will convene prior to the 27th regular session of the UN Environment Programme Governing Council, in 2013. At INC 1, delegates are expected to: consider the structure of a legally binding instrument; hold an initial discussion of substantive provisions; discuss the standard provisions typically included in multilateral environmental agreements; and agree a timetable for further discussion of provisions (<http://www.iisd.ca/mercury/inc1/>; <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/Negotiations/INC/INC1MeetingDocuments/tabid/3391/language/en-US/Default.aspx>).

GUEST ARTICLE

Global Agreement on Mercury in Sight

By Nordic Environment Ministers*

It is not only Icelandic volcanic ash that blows freely across national borders. The same certainly applies to mercury, one of the world's most dangerous environmental toxins. We in the Nordic countries must therefore work together to secure a legally binding instrument for regulating the use and emission of mercury.

Continued on page 2

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

UNASYLVA 234/235: XIII WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

(FAO, June 2010) This special issue of the journal of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Unasyuva, showcases a variety of papers presented at the XIII World Forestry Congress, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2009. The papers represent the seven thematic areas of the Congress, and include the Congress' recommendations (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1507e/i1507e00.htm>).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

The Nordic countries have played a leading role in initiating this crucial work, and the foundation for such an agreement will be laid at the UN Mercury Conference in Stockholm in June.

In the Swedish encyclopaedia, *Nordisk Familjebok*, from 1909, we read that head lice can be treated by rubbing mercury and fat into the skin. Today we know better – we are aware that mercury is harmful to both health and the environment. On home territory, the Nordic countries have limited or banned the use of mercury, not least in different products. But keeping our own house in order is not enough. Most of the mercury that falls in the Nordic region originates in other countries far from our shores. In order to reduce contamination of the Nordic environment, measures must therefore be taken at a global level, through a mercury agreement that applies to all countries.

Mercury is proven to have many harmful effects on our health. Mercury can be converted to the highly toxic form, methyl mercury, which then accumulates in animals such as fish and marine mammals. The population of the Arctic regions, whose diet is largely based on food from the sea,

is particularly vulnerable. Research has shown that babies of women in the Arctic, who are exposed to food with high mercury content, can be born with damage to the central nervous system. This can lead to, for example, impaired learning ability.

Many Nordic initiatives relating to mercury are carried out under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers, an intergovernmental organisation. The Nordic countries have a common view of the mercury problem. We have taken powerful action in the global arena that, in 2009, helped unite the world's countries to agree on negotiations about a binding global agreement on limiting the use of mercury. This initiative lies within the framework of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP). UNEP has now appointed the Nordic countries hosts of the first negotiation meeting.

Naturally, if the process is to be successful, all countries must make undertakings and accept responsibility. The Nordic countries are therefore contributing fully to promoting commitment – we are doing this by producing documentation and reports that can stimulate the global incentive to achieve fruitful cooperation on reducing mercury emissions at the point of origin.

The Mercury Conference in Stockholm, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, will attract hundreds of decision-makers, experts and officials from governments and international organisations, as well as representatives of environmental movements and not-for-profit organisations from all around the world. The conference will offer the Nordic countries a unique opportunity to be seen on the global stage and to exert practical influence. Cooperation on the mercury issue is an excellent example of how we in the Nordic countries can work together and successfully exert an active influence on global processes. We will continue to drive this issue and pave the way for an ambitious global mercury agreement that can be ratified in 2013.

*** Nordic Environment Ministers**

- Karen Ellemann, Denmark
- Paula Lehtomäki, Finland
- Annika Olsen, Faroe Islands
- Anthon Frederiksen, Greenland
- Svandís Svavarsdóttir, Iceland
- Erik Solheim, Norway
- Andreas Carlgren, Sweden
- Katrin Sjögren, Åland

Editor's note: MEA Bulletin invites articles from practitioners, MEAs and academics on issues that are of interest across the MEA community. Please contact the Editor, lynn@iisd.org, for further information.

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

BASEL CONVENTION INVITES COMMENTS, NOMINATIONS

The Basel Convention Secretariat is inviting comments on the draft Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Waste consisting of Metallic Elemental Mercury Waste and Wastes Consisting of, Containing or Contaminated with Mercury or Mercury Compounds. A further version will be published late in 2010. The Secretariat has also invited nominations

from parties to attend a small inter-
sessional working group on mercury. Nominations are required by 30 June 2010 (<http://www.basel.int/techmatters/index.html>).

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION NATIONAL PLANNING MEETING CONVENES

The Rotterdam Convention Secretariat convened a national planning meeting in Tripoli, Libya, from 25-28 April

2010. The meeting brought together major stakeholders involved in chemicals management to review the status and identify elements of a national plan to implement the Rotterdam Convention. Recommendations from the meeting included to: establish a National Unit on implementation of the Rotterdam Convention; activate a poison control centre; and organize an awareness campaign on the hazards of chemicals (<http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=s&id=77>).



Participants of the national planning meeting on the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention (photo courtesy of the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat)

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



A bird's eye view of one the WGRI 3 plenary sessions

CBD WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION ADDRESSES POST-2010 STRATEGIC PLAN

Immediately following the 14th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the third meeting of the CBD Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI) was held in Nairobi from 24-28 May 2010. WGRI 3 adopted 12 recommendations that will be submitted to the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the CBD, including an updated and revised strategic plan for the post-2010 period, which remains bracketed pending resolution of financial issues and negotiations on access and benefit-sharing (ABS). Other recommendations address: a proposed UN decade on biodiversity 2011-2020; business engagement; a proposed biodiversity technology initiative; national reporting; implementation of the Con-

vention and the Strategic Plan; the multi-year programme of work of the Convention for the period 2011-2020; integration of biodiversity into poverty eradication and development; a science-policy interface on biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well being; activities and initiatives including targets and indicators to achieve the goals of the Strategy for Resource Mobilization; review of guidance to the financial mechanism; and policy options concerning innovative financial mechanisms (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wgri3/>).

IAN REDMOND APPOINTED CMS AMBASSADOR

Ian Redmond has accepted the invitation of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) to become a CMS Ambassador. Ian Redmond, associated with mountain gorillas through research, filming, tourism and conservation work for more than 30 years, will advocate the

cause of all species covered by CMS. Redmond's book "Survival – Saving Endangered Migratory Animals," co-authored with CMS' editor Robert Vagg, and published by Stacey International, will be officially launched on 24 June 2010 at a seminar hosted by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). The speakers at the event will be the authors together with CMS Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema and ZSL Senior Curator Paul Pearce-Kelly (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2010/05_may/ian_redmond_ambassador.pdf; http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2010/06_jun/survival_flyer.pdf).

GENEVA ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSES CHALLENGES AND AMBITIONS OF BIODIVERSITY CONVENTIONS

A special roundtable was organized on 4 June 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland, by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Europe, to celebrate World Environment Day under the theme "Many species – one planet – one future." More than 100 people attended the roundtable, which was led by Gaetano Leone, UNEP Regional Office for Europe Deputy Director. Participants included Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) John Scanlon, Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention Anada Tiéga and CMS Information and Capacity Building Officer Francisco Rilla (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2010/06_jun/wed2010_roundtable.pdf).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UN-REDD HOSTS EVENTS ON GOVERNANCE, MONITORING, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION FOR REDD+ ACTIVITIES

The UN-REDD Programme, Chatham House and other forest governance experts met in London, UK, from 24-25 May 2010, to discuss how to monitor governance safeguards in the implementation of a mechanism to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks (REDD+). The two-day workshop focused on monitoring governance aspects of REDD+, such as creating coherent and enabling policy environments, stakeholder accountability, and enforcing the rule of law. The workshop produced a draft framework of governance parameters for REDD+ and draft guidance on tools and institutional

arrangements for REDD+. The framework is meant to help negotiators at the upcoming UN climate talks in Bonn, Germany, and to coordinate ongoing activities (<http://www.un-redd.org/Events/tabid/590/language/en-US/Default.aspx>). The UN-REDD Programme also hosted a side event on 3 June 2010, during the Bonn Climate Change talks on monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of activities and safeguards related to REDD+ (http://www.un-redd.org/Events/Bonn_side_event/tabid/4576/language/en-US/Default.aspx).

UNCCD SIGNS MOU WITH UNISDR

On 30 May 2010, the Secretariats of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes

a framework for collaborating on reducing the vulnerability of communities to drought-related risk and to expand networks that will advance the prevention of drought-associated disasters. The agreement advances the objectives of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, a UNISDR-supported global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts, and the UNCCD's 2008-2018 strategic plan. As part of the MOU, the UNCCD will work with UNISDR and other relevant international bodies to deliver an early warning system for drought and to develop action plans to enhance resilience to climate change (http://www.unccd.int/media/pressrel/showpressrel.php?pr=press30_05_10). The Secretariat also organized Land Day 2, which took place on 5 June 2010, in parallel with the Bonn Climate Change Talks (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/land-day/2010/event.php>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

UNDOALOS ORGANIZES FISH STOCKS REVIEW CONFERENCE

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) hosted the resumed Review Conference of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UN Fish Stocks Agreement or UNFSA), which took place from 24-28 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. An outcome document recommends further actions related to: the conservation and management of fish stocks, including outcomes on sharks, the ecosystem approach, excess fishing capacity and developing States' abilities to develop their fisheries; mechanisms for international cooperation; monitoring, control and surveillance, compliance and enforcement; and developing countries and non-parties to the UNFSA. The document also establishes that the Informal Consultations of States Parties would continue and that the formal Review Conference could resume, although not until at least 2015. The final report will be transmitted to the regional fisheries management organizations secretariats and the UN General Assembly (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm; <http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/rfsaic/>).

UNDOALOS has also released the Report of the Secretary-General on "Oceans and the law of the sea" (Document A/65/69), which was prepared pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 64/71 in preparation for the upcoming 11th meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/65/69>); and the statement by the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission at its 25th session (Document CLCS/66), which took place at UN Headquarters, in New York, US, from 15 March-23

April 2010 (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=CLCS/66>).

RAMSAR SIGNS MoC WITH UNEP-WCMC

Anada Tiéga, Ramsar Secretary General, and Jon Hutton, Director, UN Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) in Gland, Switzerland, on 4 June 2010. The MoC aims to establish a framework for collaboration to further common goals, including: the mobilization of UNEP-WCMC's technical and capacity building expertise to improve the implementation of the Ramsar Convention; and the operationalization and further development of the Ramsar Indicators of Effectiveness and options for their integration with the 2010 and post-2010 biodiversity indicators of the Convention on Biological Diversity (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-archives-2010-mocunep-wcmc/main/ramsar/1-26-45-437%5E24648_4000_2__).

In other Ramsar news, the Secretariat has reported that, on 14 May 2010, in Athens, Greece, the Governments of Greece and Turkey signed a Joint Declaration on collaboration concerning the Evros Ramsar site (the Evros/Maritsa-Meriç River). In the Declaration, the two countries commit to collaborate to, *inter alia*: improve living standards in the riverine areas; prudently use environmental resources; conserve natural



L-R: Jon Hutton, Director, UNEP-WCMC; and Anada Tiéga, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention (photo courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

and cultural heritage; and take necessary measures to manage the flood problem in the Evros/Meric basin, including the establishment of flood early warning system; (http://ramsar.rgis.ch/pdf/moc/Evros_JointDeclaration.pdf).

The Ramsar Secretariat has also informed that its headquarters have moved to a new IUCN sustainable office building – IUCN's new Conservation Centre, which was inaugurated on 4 June 2010. The Centre's innovative features include: use of rainwater for toilets and irrigation; heat recuperation from refrigerators to produce hot water; a CHF one million solar parc from Romande Energie Renouvelable that also provides energy back to the Swiss electricity grid; energy efficient lighting; local and recycled building materials; geothermal heating; and a decentralized carbon dioxide controlled air supply system (<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/centre/>).



IUCN's new Conservation Centre inauguration. L-R: Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General, IUCN; Ashok Khosla, President of IUCN; H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco; and Micheline Calmy-Rey, Swiss Foreign Minister (photo courtesy of IUCN/Rafal Obrzud).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES DOCUMENTS, CHINA REGULATES ODS

The Ozone Secretariat has released additional documents in advance of the upcoming 30th Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), including issues for discussion by and informa-

tion for the attention of the OEWG (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/30oewg/OEWG-30-2-Add-1.E.pdf; http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/30oewg/OEWG-30-2-Add-2E.pdf). In other Ozone news, China, the world's largest producer of Ozone Deplet-

ing Substances (ODS), has enacted regulations on their administration, including controls over consumption, trade, import, export and production of remaining ODS (http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/information/mmfiles/6355-e-ChinaRegulations_PR2010.pdf).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

BONN CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS NEAR CONCLUSION

The May/June 2010 Bonn Climate Change Talks are scheduled to end on Friday, 11 June 2010. The meeting includes the 32nd session of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 10th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC (AWG-LCA 10) and the 12th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 12).

Under the AWG-LCA, parties have been meeting as a single contact group to exchange views based on the Chair's new text by responding to indicative questions from the AWG-LCA chair on: capacity building; REDD+; mitigation actions by developing parties and monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV); technol-

ogy development and transfer; sectoral approaches in agriculture; adaptation; opportunities for using markets; mitigation actions by developed country parties and MRV; MRV of support provided by developed countries; a shared vision for long-term cooperative action; and enhanced provision of financial resources.

Under the AWG-KP parties continued focusing on Annex I emission reductions and have considered other issues, especially LULUCF. The AWG-KP has reestablished the legal issues group.

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technology Advice (SBSTA) also convened a Dialogue between governments and research organizations on developments in research activities relevant to the needs of the Convention. A focal point forum under the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change was also held. The Sub-

sidary Body for Implementation (SBI) is considering, amongst other items, the modalities for the review of the Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund in Cancún, Mexico, at the end of the year (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/sb32/>).



UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer discusses the status of negotiations and expected outcomes of the Bonn climate change talks

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

FOURTH GEF ASSEMBLY REVIEWS GEF POLICY AND OPERATIONS

The fourth Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on 25-26 May 2010. The GEF Assembly gathered GEF stakeholders to review the policies and operations of the Facility. Assembly participants took note of the report on the results of the Fifth GEF Replenishment, where over 30 countries pledged to contribute US\$4.25 billion to the GEF Trust Fund, and approved amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF (GEF/A.4/9) on: eliminating the role of implementing agencies in appointing the GEF CEO; making the GEF available to serve as a financial mechanism of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); and the GEF CEO appointment and term limits. The event also featured discussions on two broad

areas of reform, namely: enhancing country ownership; and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the GEF. Participants also took part in numerous side events and in an exhibition area featuring the work of donors, recipients, civil society, international organizations and implementing agencies. In addition, the host country also organized several visits to GEF project sites, and a special event to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity took place on 27 May in the Uruguayan Parliament (<http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/gef/gefassembly4/>).

WORLD BANK FINANCES GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN GROWTH

The World Bank recently approved two loans adding to US\$0.5 billion to expand geothermal power in Kenya and green growth in Indonesia. On 25 May 2010, the Bank approved its first development policy loan dedicated to

climate change mitigation and adaptation, in Indonesia. The US\$200 million loan is designed to support the Indonesian Government in its efforts to adopt a lower carbon, more climate-resilient growth path, and focuses on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; enhancing adaptation and resiliency efforts in key sectors; and strengthening the institutions and policies needed for a successful climate change response (<http://go.worldbank.org/Z00AFEG700>).

On 27 May 2010, the Bank approved a US\$330 million loan for Kenya to expand electricity access and geothermal power generation as part of its green energy development strategy. The geothermal generation component will finance the construction of 280 MW of geothermal generation capacity and connect steam wells with associated facilities for transmitting the power to the national grid (<http://go.worldbank.org/FVRCFFUQY0>).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **62nd Session of the WMO Executive Council:** 8-18 June 2010. Geneva, Switzerland. http://www.wmo.int/pages/meetings/cbodies_en.html
- **Seventh Meeting of Signatories to the Siberian Crane MOU:** 10-11 June 2010. Bonn, Germany. <http://www.cms.int/news/events.htm>
- **OEWG 30:** 15-18 June 2010. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.iisd.ca/ozone/oewg30/>
- **Third Meeting of the Group of the Friends of the Co-Chairs on Liability and Redress under the Biosafety Protocol:** 15-19 June 2010. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BSGFLR-03>
- **Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee of AEWa:** 16-17 June 2010. The Hague, the Netherlands. http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc6docs/stc6.htm
- **World Day to Combat Desertification:** 17 June 2010. Worldwide. <http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/june17/2010/menu.php>
- **11th Meeting of the Informal Consultative Process of the Law of the Sea:** 21-25 June 2010. UN Headquarters, New York, US. <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/>
- **CIF Sub-Committee Meetings:** 22-24 June 2010. Washington, DC, US. http://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/june_meeting_sched