



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES CONCLUDE



Chairs Margarita Clemente (Spain) and Thomas Althaus (Switzerland) chaired the Joint Plants and Animals Committees sessions on 7-8 July 2006

The Plants and Animals Committees of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) have concluded after meeting in Lima, Peru during the first part of July. The 16th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee convened from 3-8 July 2006. From 7-8 July, the Plants Committee met in a joint session with the Animals Committee. The Animals

Committee also met separately for its 22nd meeting from 7-13 July. The Plants Committee agreed not to subject bigleaf mahogany to a review of significant trade at this stage, established an intersessional working group on *Prunus africana*, and discussed a proposal on timber export quotas to be presented at CITES COP-14, which will meet in June 2007. The joint session addressed a number of issues relevant to both committees, including: proposed amendments to the rules of procedure; the review of the scientific committees; the review of significant trade in Madagascar; transport of live specimens; and the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Animals Committee addressed a review of significant trade for a number of new species, reached agreement on sea cucumbers, sharks and the historically challenging definition of fossil corals, and established informal intersessional groups to continue work on crocodile ranching and the transport of live specimens (<http://www.iisd.ca/cites/ac22pc16/>).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2006

(ECOSOC Statistics Division, 2006) This report was released during the 2006 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. It offers a progress report on achieving the MDGs and includes contributions from statistical departments of more than 20 UN funds, programmes and agencies and other international organizations. The report finds that developing countries have made progress in providing access to clean water and schooling, but efforts to achieve other internationally agreed targets are falling behind schedule (<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2006/MDGReport2006.pdf>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Averting ossification in MEAs

By Joanna Depledge, Sutasoma Research Fellow, Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge

Abstract

Regimes under MEAs, like all multilateral regimes, are prone to ossification. An ossifying regime is one that is no longer learning and evolving, but has instead become stuck in longstanding debates and suspicious political relationships. Decisions are routinely postponed in favor of empty rhetoric or "agreement to disagree." Old text is repeated because nothing new can be approved. New ideas or information fail to penetrate discussions.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

(Island Press, 2006) This book, written by James Gustave Speth and Peter M. Haas, discusses ten prominent environmental problems and the international institutions and actors that have emerged to deal with them (<http://www.islandpress.org/books/detail.html/SKU/1-59726-081-9>).

AFRICA ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK-2: OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR WEALTH

(AMCEN and UNEP, 2006) The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), with the support of UNEP, produced this AEO-2 report, which identifies opportunities the environment provides to implement the MDGs. It suggests that Africa transition from being a major exporter of primary resources to being one with a vibrant industrial and manufacturing base. It also proposes putting government-held lands into production rather than over-exploiting existing agricultural land and adopting proper pollution controls and greater efficiency in water management (http://www.unep.org/dewa/africa/aeo2_launch/).

WORLD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVEY 2006

(UN, 2006) UN Under-Secretary-General José Antonio Ocampo launched the UN World Economic and Social Survey 2006



UN Under-Secretary-General José Antonio Ocampo

(WESS 2006) in Geneva to coincide with the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2006. This report analyzes long-term social and economic development issues and discusses the positive and negative impacts of corresponding policies. WESS 2006 suggests that developing nations should determine country-specific economic policies and chart their own reform path, because it finds that the conventional strategy since the 1980s of giving more space to the global market has been only partially effective (<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CMS UPDATES SUMMARIES ON CMS AGREEMENTS

The Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species has updated and posted on the CMS website a set of information documents, providing readers with detailed information on the six formal Agreements and the eight Memoranda of Understanding concluded under the auspices of the Convention since October 1990: the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels; the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds; the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area; the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas; the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats; the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea; as well as the Memoranda of Understanding on the Great Bustard, the



Logo courtesy of CMS

Siberian Crane, the Slender-billed Curlew; the Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa, the Marine Turtles and their habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, the Bukhara Deer, and the Aquatic Warbler (http://www.cms.int/publications/agr_sum_sheets.htm).

CBD LAUNCHES CENTRAL REGISTRY OF LMOs

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has launched a central registry of all living modified organisms (LMOs) in the framework of the Biosafety Clearing-House of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The registry includes information on the transformation event, gene insert and characteristics of the modification, and its unique identification code (if available), as well as links to all decisions that refer to one of these organisms (<http://bch.biodiv.org/news/info.shtml?postid=41874>).



CBD

Logo courtesy of CBD

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

WORLD BANK CARBON FUNDS INVEST IN CLEAN ENERGY, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REFORESTATION

The World Bank Community Development Carbon Fund, a private-public partnership of nine governments and 16 companies and organizations managed by the World Bank, will buy 1.2 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) emission reductions from Nigeria's first Clean Development Mechanism project. The 120 megawatt, Aba Clean Energy Carbon Project will construct an efficient, gas-fired power plant, which will improve access to energy while reducing power outages and releases of carbon dioxide and other gases into the atmosphere (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20994407~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

The World Bank Biocarbon Fund and the Community Development Carbon Fund will purchase emission reduction credits from the Laguna de Bay Region arising from the implementation of waste management (composting) and reforestation projects in the Philippines. Participants will be given financial incentives to implement environmental protection measures in the Laguna de Bay region. The agreement contemplates the purchase of 90,341 tCO2e of greenhouse gas emission reductions between 2007 and 2017 from 15 projects, with additional projects expected to be added to the purchase over time (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20992679~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

[worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20992679~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20992679~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html)

MONTREAL PROTOCOL MULTILATERAL FUND INVESTS US\$21 MILLION

The Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund, tasked with assisting developing countries in complying with the timetable for the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances (ODS), has awarded US\$21 million to 36 developing countries to phase-out over 1,143 tonnes of ODS such as CFCs, carbon tetrachloride, halons, and methyl bromide. At its most recent meeting, the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol decided to provide financing for projects that, among others, will gradually phase-out of production and consumption of carbon tetrachloride, a common ozone-depleting solvent that was formerly used in large quantities in many cleaning applications, in India; and support five Pacific Island Countries that are facing challenges to phase-out CFCs used in critical refrigeration servicing sector applications such as food preservation. In addition, the Executive Committee earmarked a further US\$2.7 million for a number of performance-based national phase-out plans that, when implemented, will phase-out ODS in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria and Tunisia (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/news/1153248185575.htm>).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Moreover, periods of ossification in regimes are often accompanied by the flourishing of pioneering initiatives in the "outside world" – by NGOs, businesses, academics, municipalities, IGOs – who may take over as the main sources of learning and dynamism on the issue at hand. Ossification in the formal regime may even be necessary to allow the "outside world" to catch up, that is, to understand and implement (or perhaps to reject) the developments in the regime.

In summary, it cannot be assumed that regimes under MEAs will inexorably progress over time. They can experience periods of ossification, where they seem to stand still, if not regress. Even if periodic ossification is part of the natural evolution of regimes, much can still be done to avoid it persisting. All that is needed, as ever, is political will.

For examples taken from different regimes, see the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle10.htm>

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 Research Editor, lynn@iisd.org, for further information.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Continued from page 3
of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development (UNDESA/DSD). Representatives of 14 international agencies also participated. The workshop focused on five interlinked themes: issues and challenges in urban water supply; strengthening partnerships between regulators and operators; making water utilities financially sustainable; improving the performance of public water utilities; and launching the water operators' partnership. Participants recognized that public water utilities will remain leading players in the provision of water and sanitation services, and therefore need to improve their performance efficiency. Discussion topics covered capacity building needs of water utilities, the scope of governance reforms, separating regulatory and operational functions, as well as strategies to make these utilities financially sustainable. Managers of water utilities showed great interest in being connected to each other across national boundaries. In this regard, the idea of creating a Water Operators Partnerships (WOPs) was discussed to bring together operators from around the world, so that less efficient utilities can learn from the more competent on a not-for-profit basis. Towards this aim, many wa-

ter utilities and utility networks shared their experiences in turning around the performance of water utilities. Next steps include further advancing the concept of WOPs, as well as organizing a similar workshop for the managers of water utilities in the Africa region in December 2006 (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/water/workshop_asia/workshop_asia.htm).

The CSD Secretariat has issued a call for input from major groups' organizations to the reports for the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15). Information submitted by major groups will be collected, analyzed and considered in the preparation of the Secretary-General's reports for that session, which will discuss policy options related to energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change goals and targets. Inputs from major groups must be received by 18 August 2006 to be considered and should identify concise, specific policy options or possible actions, brief rationales and references to the necessary conditions for effective implementation (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/mg/input_sg_reports.htm).

CHEMICALS AND WASTES

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ISSUES COP-2 FOLLOW-UP DOCUMENTS

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has posted an initial Information Request document dated 22 June 2006 and supplementary follow-up documents to the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting (COP-2). One of these documents is related to the establishment of a Provisional Ad Hoc Technical Working Group on Article 16 implementation (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_2/followup/eff_eval/Letter%20to%20Govt%20on%20decision%2013FKO11.pdf). Another is an Information Note from the President of the Stockholm Convention regarding the preparation of a supplementary report in coordination and cooperation with the Basel Convention, Rotterdam Convention and Stockholm Convention Secretariats (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_2/followup/SC%20Pres%20note%20synergies%20June%2006.pdf; http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_2/followup/Default.htm).

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION PREPARES FOR COP-3

The Rotterdam Convention Secretariat, in preparation for COP-3 in October 2006, has published working documents and informa-



Logo courtesy of the Rotterdam Convention

tion notes for the session. Documents published in July include the programme of work and proposed budget for the 2007-2008 biennium, decisions originating from COP-2 of the Stockholm Convention regarding synergies, a report on improving cooperation and synergies provided by the Basel Open-Ended Working Group, and cooperation with the World Trade Organization (<http://www.pic.int/en/ViewPage.asp?id=420>). The Secretariat also published the June issue of the "PIC CIRCULAR," which seeks to provide all Parties, through their designated national authorities (DNA), information required to be circulated by the Secretariat every six months (<http://www.pic.int/en/Circular/CIRC-23-EN.pdf>). An updated list of DNA's to the Rotterdam Convention has also been published recently (<http://www.pic.int/en/Circular/DNA-Register-Circ-XXIII.pdf>).

SAICM SECRETARIAT FOCUSES ON REGIONAL MEETINGS

The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is organizing a number of regional meetings, which were called for in the Overarching Policy Strategy of the SAICM as a

key element to commence its implementation. The Secretariat has recently posted documents in preparation for the African Regional Meeting, which will convene in Cairo, Egypt, from 11-14 September 2006 (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/africaregionalmeeting.htm>). Other regional meetings are being planned for Central and Eastern Europe in Riga, Latvia; Asia-Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand; and the EU-JUSSCANNZ in Barcelona, Spain. The Secretariat has also invited applications for the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with a deadline of 18 August 2006 (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsptf.htm>).



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BASEL CONVENTION LAUNCHES COP-8 WEBSITE

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention and the Government of Kenya have prepared the website for the 8th Session of the Conference of the Parties, including information for participants regarding pre-registration and hotel accommodations (<http://cop8.basel.int/index.html>).



UN Office at Nairobi (UNON). Photo courtesy Basel Convention.

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

ITTO WORKSHOP DISCUSSES GLOBAL RATTAN SECTOR

A workshop on the sustainable development of the global rattan sector, based on an ongoing activity of the ITTO-funded project "Capacity building for the development of a sustainable rattan sector in China based on plantation sources," convened in Beijing, China, from 24-26 July 2006. Workshop participants exchanged and updated scientific and technological findings and information, and discussed research and development strategies and business and investment opportunities in the global rattan sector (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageid=223&id=1144>). The three-year project, implemented by the International Center for Bamboo and Rattan (ICBR) of China, with technical support from the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR), aims to increase the social and economic contributions of the rattan sector by demonstrating different rattan plantation management schemes and disseminating technologies for their sustainable management (<http://www.chinarattan.net/>).

UNCCD IIWG BEGINS WORK ON STRATEGIC PLAN, REGIONS PREPARE FOR CRIC-5

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) organized one intersessional and two regional meet-

ings in July 2006. The intersessional inter-governmental working group (IIWG) convened for its second meeting from 12-14 July 2006 in Bonn, Germany, to review the synthesis assessment of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report, the table of contents for the ten-year strategic plan and framework, and the format of the strategic plan. Participants agreed to deliver a status report of the IIWG on the sidelines of the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-5) in October 2006 and to convene for a third meeting in February 2007, to allow time to draft the strategic plan and framework (<http://www.unccd.int/convention/jiu/menu.php>).

The XI Regional Meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries in the framework of the UNCCD met from 17-21 July 2006 in Panama City, Panama. Participants engaged in a peer review of their third national reports for the UNCCD, discussed progress in the strategic areas defined by the Bonn Declaration, and considered issues of a regional nature, including implementation constraints and regional mechanisms, particularly the Regional Coordinating Unit. Participants noted that, over the last four years, the LAC countries have made substantive progress in UNCCD implementation, particularly in strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for sustainable use of natural resources, the elaboration and validation

of National Action Programmes (NAPs) in more than 80% of the countries, and implementation of measures for the rehabilitation of degraded lands and identification/use of benchmarks and indicators on deserts and desertification. The regional meeting called on developed country parties and international agencies to help the region address its financial constraints and weak technical capacities in implementing the Convention (<http://www.unccd-deselac.org/XI.htm>).

A regional meeting for Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Other Affected Country Parties convened from 24-27 July 2006 in Bonn, Germany, to review the national reports of affected countries from these areas, in preparation for CRIC-5. Many affected CEE countries noted that their implementation activities have focused on addressing problems of land degradation and drought rather than desertification itself. Participants also highlighted the need to: develop a common system of benchmarks and indicators for the UNCCD process; engage civil society in implementation; and interact more with the scientific community. Participants welcomed the International Year of Deserts and Desertification as an opportunity to raise public awareness and noted the benefits of inter-regional cooperation, particularly through activities to establish a drought management centre for South-eastern Europe.

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP WORKS ON SUDAN RECONSTRUCTION AND AIR POLLUTION IN AFRICAN CITIES, RECRUITS ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

Following up a needs assessment undertaken with the World Bank in 2004, UNEP is finalizing a post-conflict assessment of Sudan to identify environmental impacts, pressures, risks and priorities during the reconstruction process. The in-depth assessment began in December 2005 and the final report, "Sudan – Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment," is scheduled for release in October 2006. From 18-20 July 2006, UNEP sponsored and co-hosted the Sudan National Planning Environmental Management Workshop, in Khartoum, to exchange ideas and raise awareness of current environmental issues throughout Sudan. UNEP is further preparing the 2007-2009 programme "Capacity Building for Environmental Governance in Sudan" (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=483&ArticleID=5313&I=en>).

To address the growing urban air pollution in Africa, UNEP, together with the World Bank's Clean Air Initiative for Africa and other partners, jointly organized a regional conference, "Better Air Quality for African Cities," on 25 July 2006 at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference included a training session on air quality management

(AQM), a policy session to develop a strategic AQM approach in the region, and a ministerial session to increase African decision-makers' awareness regarding urban air pollution and the need to urgently address deteriorating air quality in African cities (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=483&ArticleID=5317&I=en>).

UNEP has also undertaken a major recruitment campaign in search of "environmental leaders." Advertisements will be placed in *The Economist* and other international and regional magazines and newspapers in the coming weeks for many senior management and professional-level vacancies. The application deadline for many of the positions is late August 2006 (<http://www.unep.org/Vacancies/>).

UN COHERENCE PANEL CLOSE TO FINALIZING REPORT

The High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian affairs and the environment con-



Photo courtesy of UNEP

tinued its activities in late June and July. In late June, discussions focused on: the UN relationship with international financial institutions, in particular how to improve policy coherence, planning and monitoring towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, global issues management, and cooperation on post-conflict and reconstruction; developing a strategic vision towards the harmonization of UN business practices; and funding the UN System, in particular the unpredictability of funding, burden sharing among member states, and funding at the headquarters and country levels. In July, the Panel met with: civil society organizations to discuss crosscutting issues such as sustainable development, gender and human rights; delegations during the ECOSOC High-level Segment; and the heads of the Regional Economic Commissions in Geneva. The Panel will reconvene in August to finalize its report, which is scheduled to be presented to UN Secretary-General Annan during the 61st session of the UN General Assembly (<http://www.un.org/events/panel/html/page3.html>; <http://www.stakeholderforum.org/policy/ieg/HLPanelonSystemWideCoherence.htm>). According to IISD sources, the Panel's draft recommendations were circulated during the July meetings in Geneva, with some observers lamenting what they thought was a limited focus on environmental issues.

CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES REPORTS FROM IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE AND OEWG MEETINGS

The Ozone Secretariat has released the report of the 36th meeting of the Implementation Committee under the Non-Compliance Procedure for the Montreal Protocol, held 30 June - 1 July 2006 in Montreal, Canada. The meeting offered comments on an Implementation Committee draft primer that the Secretariat hopes to finalize for endorsement at the Committee's 37th meeting, taking into account comments made at the 36th meeting, and considered the first request from a Party to apply decision XVII/13, on the use of carbon tetrachloride for laboratory and analytical uses, to a possible case of non-compliance, among other agenda items (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/impcom/ImpCom-36-7E.pdf).

The Ozone Secretariat also released the report of the 26th meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (OEWG-26), which met 3-6 July, 2006 in Montreal, Canada. This meeting forwarded seven draft decisions to the eighteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (MOP-18), which will convene in New Delhi, India, from 30 October 2006 to 3 November 2006. These draft decisions address: essential-use nominations for 2007 and 2008; an essential-use nomination for CFC-113 for aerospace applications in the Russian Federation for 2007-2010; terms of reference for the conduct of case studies on the environmentally sound recovery, transport and disposal of refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment containing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs); sources of and opportunities for reducing carbon tetrachloride; facilitating the transition to non-CFC-based metered-dose inhalers in Article 5 parties



OEWG-26 Co-Chairs Tom Land (US) and Nadzri Yahaya (Malaysia) prepare for the closing plenary

(developing countries); and an adjustment to the Montreal Protocol to advance the phase-out of the production of CFCs by non-Article 5 parties (industrialized countries) to meet the basic domestic needs of Article 5 parties (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/26oewg/OEWG-26-7E.pdf; <http://www.iisd.ca/ozone/oewg26/>).

CDM BOARD CONSIDERS METHODOLOGIES, SEEKS INPUT

The Executive Board of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) discussed project methodologies and various other issues during its 25th meeting, from 19-21 July. The Board considered a progress report on the work of the CDM Accreditation Panel and of the Methodologies Panel, approving several proposed methodologies for projects while agreeing not to approve three others. The work of the Afforestation and Reforestation Working Group was also discussed, with Board members agreeing not to approve three relevant methodologies.

In addition, the Board addressed the issue of small-scale CDM activities. Noting that the "share of registered small-scale type II energy efficiency project activities in the CDM project pipeline is small," the Board agreed to call for public input. In particular, the Board sought feedback on whether the eligibility limits on such projects present a barrier and whether there are other barriers relating to methodological issues. The period for input runs from 24 July to 14 August 2006 (http://cdm.unfccc.int/public_inputs/meth_ssc_typell/index.html).

Other issues taken up by the Board included registration of projects, issuance of certified emission reductions (CERs), the CDM registry, and the CDM management plan and resources (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/>).

UNFCCC CONTINUES POST-SB 24 FOLLOW UP

The Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has released a number of documents as part of the follow-up to the twenty-fourth sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB 24) and other meetings held in Bonn in May 2006. In late July, the official reports of two of these meetings were released: the report of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and

Technological Advice and the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbsta/eng/05.pdf>; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbsta/eng/05a01.pdf>; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/awg1/eng/02.pdf>). The views of industrialized countries at SB-24 on initial national communications from non-Annex I (developing country) Parties also were published in a document released by the Secretariat on 27 July. In this document, the European Union, Umbrella Group and other countries expressed "strong concern that the specific title of this [SBI 24] agenda item has prevented the SBI from properly considering the full range of important issues related to national communications from parties not included in Annex I to the Convention." The statement anticipated "wider discussion at the 26th session of the SBI on how to further develop the consideration process for initial, second and, where appropriate, third national Communications" (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbi/eng/misc12.pdf>).

In addition, the annual status reports of the greenhouse gas inventories for several countries were released in July. Countries covered by these reports include Liechtenstein, Japan, Ukraine, Australia, Monaco and Norway (http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/3594.php?such=j&last_days=60&dat_no=j#beg).

IPCC ISSUES INFORMATION IN PREPARATION FOR AR4

The IPCC Secretariat has issued a number of reminders and guidance as work continues on finalizing the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) by 2007. In a letter dated 24 July 2006, IPCC Secretary Renate Christ wrote to IPCC national focal points regarding the contribution of Working Group III to AR4, noting that the second order draft is now available for government and expert review from 24 July to 15 September 2006 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/WG3letter.pdf>). The IPCC has also recently issued guidance for lead authors on addressing uncertainties and a reminder for focal points on input to the process (<http://www.ipcc.ch/activity/uncertaintyguidance-note.pdf>; <http://www.ipcc.ch/impgovt.pdf>; <http://www.ipcc.ch/calendar.htm>).

KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **UNCCD SEVENTH FOCAL POINT MEETING OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.** 7-11 August 2006. Bangkok, Thailand. <http://www.unccd.int/>
- **THIRD GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY ASSEMBLY.** 29-30 August 2006. Cape Town, South Africa. http://www.gefweb.org/participants/Assembly/3rd_Assembly/3rd_assembly.html
- **OECD/UNSD EXPERT MEETING ON INSTITUTIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.** 31 August – 1 September 2006. Stockholm, Sweden. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/workshopSweden/index.htm>
- **FIFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO EUROBATS.** 4-6 September 2006. Ljubljana, Slovenia. http://www.eurobats.org/news_events/bat_events.htm
- **BAMAKO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUTH AND DESERTIFICATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUTH IN THE DRYLANDS.** 4-6 September 2006. Bamako, Mali. <http://www.iydd.org/pages/bamako.htm>