



## RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

### ▶ CHEMICALS AND WASTES

#### ROTTERDAM COP AGREES TO LIST TRIBUTYL TIN



Group photo with Ministers attending the PIC COP 4 High-Level Segment

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 4) of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade convened from 27-31 October 2008, in Rome, Italy. COP 4 adopted 13 decisions, including the addition of tributyltin compounds, pesticides used in antifouling paints for ship hulls that are toxic to fish, molluscs and other aquatic organisms, to Annex III of the Convention (Chemicals subject to the PIC procedure). The meeting also adopted the recommendation of the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. Issues unresolved and forwarded to COP 5 included those on: compliance, effective implementation, and listing of chrysotile asbestos, the most commonly used form of asbestos and cause of mesothelioma, and endosulfan, a pesticide widely used in cotton production, in Annex III (<http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pic/cop4/>).

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#### GUEST ARTICLE I

##### May the Second Best Win: Another Look at the Lessons for Climate Change Mitigation from the Montreal Protocol

By Asger Garnak, Senior climate change economist, COWI

#### Abstract

The Montreal Protocol (MP) inspired several aspects of the climate change agreements – the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol.

*Continued on page 2*

#### GUEST ARTICLE II

##### Avoiding Tipping Points for Abrupt Climate Changes with Fast-Track Climate Mitigation Strategies

By Durwood Zaelke, IGSD/INECE, & Peter Grabel & Elise Stull, IGSD

#### Abstract

Paleoclimate records show that past climate changes have included both steady, linear changes as well as abrupt, non-linear changes, where small increases in global warming produced large

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**GUEST ARTICLE I (cont.)**

However, important lessons remain for consideration in the negotiation of a 2009 Copenhagen Agreement.

**A strong foundation of independent professional technical and economic advice**

The MP's Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) has provided Parties and the MP's funding mechanism - the Montreal Fund - with invaluable support. The TEAP has provided timely technology and economic assessment while promoting sector and technology specific best practice policies and measures. Its work has always been based on respected experts operating under stringent rules of conduct and providing independent advice free from distortion and political interference. The climate regime needs an institutional setup that can play a similar role as part of a Copenhagen Agreement.

**A sound approach to reciprocity**

The level of confidence in the climate negotiations is much lower than in the MP process. Under the MP, transfers to support developing country emission reductions have been predictable and based on regular replenishments, and financial support has been provided in exchange for mitigation action by develop-

ing countries based on well-defined, monitorable and verifiable country programs.

To solve the climate crisis, the Copenhagen Agreement must lead to unprecedented levels of funding being transferred to developing country mitigation (and adaptation). It is in the common interest of the parties that this is accompanied by equally unprecedented levels of transparency in mitigation-related actions by all countries to ensure the highest possible level of mitigation. These principles are applied successfully in the MP context, based on a foundation of trust reflecting that the agreement is perceived as fundamentally *fair*.

An important difference not to be overlooked between the MP and the climate agreement is that the MP contains a "stick" to entice the participation and compliance by reluctant countries in the form of trade measures. As long as a climate treaty has to rely on "carrots" - e.g. through funding provisions - all parties have a huge responsibility to get as much mitigation as possible out of these positive incentives.

**Rehabilitating incremental costs**

It is a paradox that the incremental cost concept has fallen into disrepute

in the climate change arena while it is a part of the success story of the MP. This suggests that it is not the concept as such, but rather the way it has been applied in the climate context that is the problem. Enabling environments, market transformation, provision of incentives, and targeted support for technology transfer would all be key elements of carefully crafted country programmes financed on the basis of a pragmatic interpretation of the incremental cost concept.

In conclusion, "the best is the enemy of the good," and no time should be wasted looking for an ideal approach to global climate mitigation. Negotiators should endeavour to achieve a "second best" agreement, carefully designing incentives and institutions to encourage all parties of a Copenhagen Agreement to participate and contribute. Fortunately, the Montreal Protocol can still teach us a few lessons.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle57a.html>

*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](mailto:lynn@iisd.org), for further information.*

**► CHEMICALS AND WASTES**

**ICCM OPEN-ENDED LEGAL AND TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP DISCUSSES RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The Open-ended Legal and Technical Working Group in preparation for the Second International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2) convened in Rome, Italy, from 21-24 October 2008. The OELTWG discussed the rules of procedure for the ICCM, using the rules of procedure for the preparatory committee for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) as a guide. Del-

legates made some progress on the composition of the Bureau, but were unable to reach agreement on the entire text. Negotiations will continue at ICCM2 in May 2009. In the informal discussions,

delegates exchanged views on substantive issues to be considered at ICCM2 and agreed on a way forward for prioritizing emerging policy issues (<http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/iccm2/lgt/>).



The dais during one of the plenary sessions

**► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT**

**WORLD BANK FOREST CARBON PARTNERSHIP FACILITY EXPANDS**

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) announced its expansion from 20 to 30 developing countries to support capacity building efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing deforestation and forest deg-



radation (REDD). Developing countries are working with 11 industrialized countries and one non-governmental organization in a partnership and international

financing mechanism to combat tropical deforestation and climate change. The FCPF involves two components – a Readiness Fund and a Carbon Fund. The World Bank, which acts as the secretariat for the FCPF, announced that it would underwrite the US\$2.3 million start-up expenses for the Facility (<http://go.worldbank.org/6PMCNTHTQ0>).

**GUEST ARTICLE II (cont.)**

and irreversible impacts once tipping points were passed. Climate scientists now warn that anthropogenic emissions are pushing the planet's climate system toward such tipping points sooner than previously expected, and that impacts could be catastrophic.

Among potential impacts of passing climate tipping points are the disappearance of Arctic summer sea ice, disintegration of the Greenland Ice Sheet, collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, shutdown of the Atlantic Thermohaline Circulation, and die-back of Amazonian and boreal forests. Scientists estimate that tipping points for abrupt climate changes could be passed this century, or even this decade. Under a "business-as-usual" scenario, the question is not whether abrupt climate change will occur, but rather how soon.

Despite the certainty that abrupt changes have occurred in the past and could be triggered again in the near future, current climate change policy

does not account for abrupt climate change. In particular, abrupt climate change is not incorporated into the projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). While the focus must continue on mid- and long-term mitigation strategies to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we also must begin fast-track mitigation strategies that can produce immediate climate mitigation and help delay the onset of tipping points.

Black carbon, or soot, may be the second largest contributor to climate warming, and because its atmospheric lifetime is days to weeks, reducing it may offer the fastest mitigation. Other near-term climate mitigation strategies include reducing other short-lived forcers such as methane and tropospheric ozone precursors, as well as accelerating efforts under the Montreal Protocol to reduce ozone-depleting substances, which are powerful climate gases. Additional fast-track efforts include bio-sequestration in forests and soils. Biochar, for example, removes carbon from

the carbon cycle by drawing down atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> in a carbon-negative process, and provides permanent carbon storage while also improving soil productivity and reducing the need for fossil fuel-based fertilizer. Improving energy efficiency and expanding renewables, especially wind, also can produce fast mitigation, as can improving urban albedo. Most of these near-term strategies have strong co-benefits, such as public health benefits from black carbon reductions, soil enhancement from biochar, and increased energy security from efficiency and renewables, providing further incentives to act now to forestall tipping points visible on the horizon.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle57b.html>

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**▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT**

**DOCUMENTS POSTED FOR GEF COUNCIL MEETING**

Documents for the 34th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council Meeting, which will convene from 11-13 November 2008, in Washington DC, US, are posted online. The agenda for the meeting includes an offer by Uruguay to host the Fourth GEF Assembly



during the first half of 2010. Among other issues, Council Members will review a progress report on the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF and the mid-

term review of the resource allocation framework (RAF), as well as a strategic programme to scale up the level of investment in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. The GEF Council Meeting will be preceded by an NGO consultation on 10 November 2008 ([http://gefweb.org/interior\\_right.aspx?id=17146](http://gefweb.org/interior_right.aspx?id=17146)).

**▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**UNEP LAUNCHES INITIATIVE, HOSTS CLIMATE AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY FORUM**

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched the "Green Economy Initiative," which seeks to respond to the global economic downturn by focusing economic growth and job creation in environmental industries. The initiative, which was launched on 22 October 2008, in London, UK, is funded by the European Commission, Germany and Norway. It builds on the G8+5 study on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28668&Cr=Climate&Cr1=>).

In other UNEP news, the first meeting of signatories to "Caring for Climate," a voluntary global action platform jointly launched in 2007 by the UN Global Compact, UNEP and the World Busi-

ness Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 21 October 2008. The meeting aimed to produce business insights and develop a shared path forward in support of an effective post-Kyoto policy framework on climate change (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28642&Cr=climate%20change&Cr1=>).

UNEP kicked off its "UNite to Combat Climate Change" campaign on 23 October 2008, with the "Paint for the Planet" art exhibition, which was followed on 25 October 2008 by an auction that raised US\$21,000. The campaign calls for a definitive agreement at the Co-

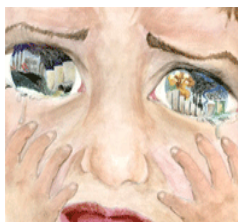


Image courtesy of UNEP

penhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009. The paintings will travel to climate change meetings for the next 14 months, and will finally be displayed in Copenhagen in December 2009 (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5962&l=en>).

UNEP and the International Chamber of Commerce hosted the Global Business & Industry Dialogue on 23-24 October 2008, in Paris, France, focusing on climate change and resource efficiency. Participants assessed approaches in different industry sectors and regions to advance climate mitigation and adaptation, and discussed inputs for the Marrakech Process on sustainable consumption and production (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5964&l=en>).

## RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

### FINANCING FLOWS AND NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT THE NON-LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON ALL TYPES OF FORESTS

(UNFF, October 2008) Written by Markku Simula, this background paper was prepared for the Advisory Group on Finance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in advance of the meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Finance of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) (10-14 November 2008, Vienna, Austria). The paper maps the needs and available sources and mechanisms for funding, taking into account recent developments, including in the climate change regime ([http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/ahgf/finance/AGF\\_Financing\\_Study.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/ahgf/finance/AGF_Financing_Study.pdf)).

### SUSTAINABLE BIOENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN UEMOA MEMBER COUNTRIES

(West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and The Hub for Rural Development in West and Central Africa, October 2008) Produced by the UN Foundation, the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development and the Energy and Security Group, this report concludes that bioenergy can provide significant economic and environmental opportunities for rural areas in West Africa (<http://www.unfoundation.org/press-center/publications/sustainable-bioenergy-report.html>).

### THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGIES FOR PRODUCTION OF BIOENERGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(FAO, 2008) This FAO report is the background document for an upcoming FAO e-mail conference, which will take place from 10 November-7 December 2008. It provides an overview of the current status regarding bioenergy, as well as current concerns about the energy source; and considers some of the potential ways in which biotechnologies could contribute to bioenergy production (<http://www.fao.org/biotech/C15doc.htm>).

## ► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### UNGA SECOND COMMITTEE CONSIDERS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, CLIMATE CHANGE, DESERTIFICATION AND BIODIVERSITY

The Second Committee, on Economic and Financial issues, of the 63rd UN General Assembly (UNGA) considered, on 28 October 2008, the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) (document A/63/291). The report outlines how the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 addresses the adaptation and mitigation challenges of climate change in the context of urban development and planning (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/gaef3224.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/63/291>).

The Second Committee of the UNGA also considered, on 27 October 2008, the Secretary-General's note on Implementation of UN environmental conventions, transmitting the reports submitted by the secretariats of the UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD (Document A/63/294). The document reports on the work of the UN Climate Change Conference, which took place in Bali,

Indonesia, in December 2007, and its follow-up. The Report recommends that the UNGA: take note of the report of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary and the outcomes of COP13 and the third session of the COP to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; pledge its support to the negotiating processes established by the Bali Road Map; and invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference. In his report on implementing the UNCCD, the Secretary-General recommends that UNGA underline the importance of the Convention when addressing climate change issues, and envisages that the post-Kyoto arrangement should account for land's potential as a carbon storage reservoir, as well as in mitigating the effects of climate change and strengthening the resilience of affected developing countries. The report outlines actions aimed at delivery of the joint strategic objectives of the three Rio Conventions, namely: raising public awareness; creating capacities; contributing to the improvement of the global environment; and fostering strong scientific backing for sustainable policies derived from their implementation (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/gaef3223.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/63/294>).

## ► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

### UNFCCC SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR POZNAŃ CONFERENCE

The UNFCCC Secretariat has held a number of meetings and posted more documents online in preparation for the next major round of climate change talks taking place in Poznań, Poland, in December 2008. A pre-session workshop was held in Athens, Greece, from 22-23 October, on the second review of the Kyoto Protocol under Article 9. The second review will take place Poznań ([http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/items/4359.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/4359.php)).

Also, the Executive Board of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) held its 43rd meeting, from 22-24 October 2008, in Santiago, Chile. The Board finalized recommendations on regional distribution of CDM activities. These recommendations will be taken up at the Fourth Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 4), which will constitute a major component of the Poznań negotiations. The Board also considered issues relating to afforestation and reforestation projects, the

programme of activities under the CDM, registration of new projects, issuance of credits and the CDM registry, and the CDM management plan and resources (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/043/eb43rep.pdf>).

In addition, the Secretariat has recently posted online many documents that will be considered in Poznań. These include the annual report of the Compliance Committee to COP/MOP 4, as well as documents on capacity building, the Bali Action Plan, national communications from parties, and the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change ([http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_14/items/4481.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php)).

In other UNFCCC news, on 27 October, Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer briefed members of the UN General Assembly's Second Committee on the upcoming Poznań talks. He indicated that Poznań must deliver "concrete results" in order to maintain progress in the lead up to key negotiations taking place in Copenhagen in December 2009 ([http://unfccc.int/files/press/news\\_room/statements/application/pdf/081028\\_un\\_ga\\_speech.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/statements/application/pdf/081028_un_ga_speech.pdf)).

## RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

**GLOBAL GROUNDWATER MAP** (UNESCO, 2008) This UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) map shows the delineations of aquifers that are shared by at least two countries and provides information about the quality of their water and rate of replenishment. ([http://www.whymap.org/cln\\_101/whymap/EN/Downloads/downloads\\_\\_node\\_\\_en.html?\\_\\_nnn=true](http://www.whymap.org/cln_101/whymap/EN/Downloads/downloads__node__en.html?__nnn=true)).

## CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE



Logos courtesy of the UN

### OZONE SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR QATAR MEETING

Parties to the Montreal Protocol and the Vienna Convention are preparing for the 20th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol and the eighth

meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention, which will convene in Doha, Qatar, from 16-20 November 2008. At this groundbreaking paperless meeting, parties are expected to consider decisions on, *inter alia*, the replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, disposal of ozone-depleting substances, and essential-use and critical-use exemptions ([http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting\\_Documents/mop/20mop/index.shtml](http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/mop/20mop/index.shtml)).

## BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE



Logos courtesy of GBIF and CMS

### CMS SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH GBIF, NEW CMS MoU TO PROTECT BIRDS OF PREY

The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation aimed at facilitating access to the Global Registry on Migratory Species (GROMS database) by the GBIF as well as to GBIF primary data by the CMS constituency. GROMS data and polygons will be integrated with the GBIF data portal, while CMS will connect its data to GBIF-mediated primary biodiversity data and associated web services ([http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/10\\_Oct/GBIF.pdf](http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/10_Oct/GBIF.pdf)).

A meeting held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 20-22 October 2008, resulted in agreement on a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and action plan on migratory birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia, in the framework of the CMS. The MoU was signed by 28 countries. A new CMS coordinating unit will be established in Abu Dhabi to promote and monitor the new agreement as a UNEP initiative ([http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/10\\_Oct/CMS\\_Press\\_Release\\_Raptors\\_MoU.pdf](http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/10_Oct/CMS_Press_Release_Raptors_MoU.pdf)).

A regional workshop on the Grasslands Birds MoU was held from 6-10 October 2008, in Foz do Iguazú, Brazil. The objectives were the promotion of the implementation of the MoU for the Conservation of Grassland Birds of South America, signed by the four



Photo courtesy of CMS



Participants at the regional workshop on the Grasslands Birds MoU (photo courtesy of CMS)

Range States: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. A draft action plan was produced and is currently being circulated. A final version will be prepared and discussed during CMS COP9, to be held from 1-5 December 2008, in Rome, Italy ([http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/10\\_Oct/Grasslands\\_birds\\_workshop.pdf](http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2008/10_Oct/Grasslands_birds_workshop.pdf)).

### CBD PUBLISHES QUARTERLY REPORT

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has published its joint quarterly report, covering the period from 1 July to 30 September 2008. The report contains a summary of key activities undertaken in relation to the implementation of decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/quarterly/qr-42-en.pdf>).

In accordance with COP Decision IX/9, the CBD Secretariat is request-

ing parties and observers to submit their views on the revision and updating of the Strategic Plan, no later than 31 December 2008. The adoption of an updated Strategic Plan, including a revised biodiversity target, will be a key outcome of COP10 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-144-sp-en.pdf>).

Parties are also invited to submit proposals on new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, by 31 December 2008 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-142-ntf-emergingissues-en.pdf>).

Finally, the CBD Secretariat has circulated the list of participants to the group of legal and technical experts on concepts, terms, working definitions and sectoral approaches in the context of access and benefit-sharing (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-141-abs-en.pdf>).

### CITES SECRETARY-GENERAL TO OVERSEE IVORY SALES

The Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Willem Wijnstekers, will visit Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe during the next two weeks to supervise the ivory sales agreed to by the 14th Conference of the Parties to CITES (June 2007, The Hague, the Netherlands). On the margins of the four ivory auctions, Wijnstekers will also hold talks with Chinese and Japanese authorities, as well as traders, about the details of further supervisory activities after the ivory arrives in those countries. Japan and China have been approved as trading partners. The proceeds of the sales must be used exclusively for elephant conservation and community development programmes within or adjacent to the elephant range ([http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press\\_release.shtml](http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press_release.shtml)).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS



Participants during one of the plenary sessions of Ramsar COP10

**RAMSAR COP10 CONCLUDES, CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP SIGNED**

The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands convened from 28 October-4 November 2008 at the Changwon Exhibition Convention Center in Changwon, Republic of Korea, under the theme “Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People.” The meeting considered over 20 agenda items, including the Convention’s Strategic Plan 2009-2014 and its budget for the triennium 2009-2011, as well as reports and recommendations submitted by parties and by the Convention’s Standing Committee. Participants also adopted a “Changwon Declaration,” and addressed substantive issues relating to the Convention’s implementation, including: communication, education, participation and awareness; future implementation of scientific and technical aspects; partnerships and synergies with multilateral environmental agreements and the business sector; and the status of sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Regarding monitoring, assessment and data needs, the meeting considered, among other items: a framework for data and information needs; harmonized guidance for describing the ecological character of wetlands and data needs and formats for core inventory; a framework for detecting, reporting and responding to change in wetland ecological character; and updated guidance on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment. The COP

also addressed the relationship between wetlands conservation and other international issues, such as human health and well being, climate change, biofuels, extractive industries, urbanization and poverty reduction (<http://www.iisd.ca/ramsar/cop10/>).

On the sidelines of COP10, the Ramsar Secretariat, the Danone Group and IUCN entered into a partnership targeting climate change. Danone has committed to minimize its emissions, and, in partnership with Ramsar and IUCN, to offset its remaining emissions through wetlands restoration. The Danone Fund for Nature, administered by all three partners, will support projects combining water resources management, biodiversity conservation, improving wetland food quality, and strengthening the capacity for carbon capture (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5965&l=en>).

Prior to the COP, the Ramsar Secretariat announced the designation of new wetlands of international importance by the Governments of Japan, Korea, France Chad, Gambia, Uzbekistan and Australia ([http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.japan\\_four.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.japan_four.htm); [http://www.ramsar.org/index\\_bulletin.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm); [http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.france\\_eleven.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.france_eleven.htm); [http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives\\_trans\\_chad\\_massenya.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_chad_massenya.htm)).

**THE NETHERLANDS SIGNS NAIROBI WRECK REMOVAL CONVENTION**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has reported that the Neth-

erlands has signed, subject to approval, the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007, joining Estonia, France and Italy. The Convention was adopted in May 2007 and deals with the removal of shipwrecks that can adversely affect the safety of lives, goods and property at sea, as well as the marine environment. The Convention is open for signature until 18 November 2008 and, thereafter, will be open for ratification, accession or acceptance. It will enter into force 12 months following the date on which 10 States have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval or have deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with IMO ([http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic\\_id=1709&doc\\_id=10326](http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=10326)).

**DOALOS RELEASES STATEMENT BY CONTINENTAL SHELF COMMISSION CHAIR**

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has released the Statement by the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission during its 22nd session, which took place in New York, US, from 11 August-12 September 2008 (Document CLCS/60). The meeting included a plenary as well as the technical examination of submissions at the Geographic Information System laboratories and other technical facilities of DOALOS ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs\\_new/commission\\_documents.htm#CLCS/60](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/commission_documents.htm#CLCS/60)).



Photos of Ramsar COP 10 opening ceremony

## ► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND



Dais at the Forty-fourth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) and Associated Sessions of the Committees

**ITTC44 DISCUSSES THEMATIC PROGRAMMES, ACTION PLANS**

The 44th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC44), the governing body of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and the Associated Sessions of its Committees convened in Yokohama, Japan, from 3-8 November 2008. Major items discussed at this session include: consideration of proposals to capture funds from carbon markets to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) and to establish an ITTO Children's Environmental Education Programme; the status of the deposit of instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to ITTA, 2006; and the final draft of the ITTO Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Pro-

ducing Forests (<http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/itc44/>; <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=217&id=4318>).

In related news, the ITTO has put out calls for proposals for: civil society-private sector partnerships for SFM, certification and legality verification; innovative timber tracking systems; and environmental services projects (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/index.jsp>). In addition, ITTO has posted on its website statements from The Forest Dialogue, which took place in Washington, DC, US, on 16-17 September 2008. The Dialogue, of which ITTO is a founding member, aimed to agree on a new set of principles for sustainable forest management and on its central role in combating climate change (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=4280>).

**UNCCD CRIC AND CST CONVENE**

The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC7) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is convening in Istanbul, Turkey, back-to-back with the first Special Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S1), from 3-14 November 2008. Both groups will consider multi-year work programmes for various Convention entities. The CST will also consider ways to measure progress in the implementation of the objectives of the ten-year strategic plan and to present methodological suggestions for how to assess the plan's overall implementation. The CRIC will also consider national reporting issues related to the drafting of new guidelines and the future format of CRIC sessions (<http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cric7/>).

## ► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **Second Meeting of Signatory States to the Great Bustard MOU:** 9-12 November 2008. Feodosia, Ukraine. <http://www.cms.int/news/events.htm>
- **Ad hoc Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** 10-12 November 2008. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/ip-bes/>
- **GEF Council Meeting and NGO Consultation:** 10-14 November 2008. Washington DC, US. [http://www.thegef.org/interior\\_right.aspx?id=17146](http://www.thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=17146)
- **Ad Hoc Expert Group to Develop Proposals for the Development of a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework:** 10-14 November 2008. Vienna, Austria. <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-SFMfinance.html>
- **Global Indigenous Peoples Consultation on REDD:** 12-14 November 2008. Baguio, Philippines. <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>
- **20th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol:** 16-20 November 2008. Doha, Qatar. <http://www.iisd.ca/ozone/mop20/>
- **First Meeting of the CBD AHTEG on Biodiversity and Climate Change:** 17-21 November 2008. London, England. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=AHTEG-BDCC-01>
- **Fifth Meeting of the Biosafety Protocol Compliance Committee:** 19-21 November 2008. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BSCC-05>