

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

UN Annual Treaty Event

Forty States took 87 treaty actions during the treaty event on the side-lines of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Participants included four heads of State, one Head of Government, 30 ministers, and four Permanent Representatives to the UN. In all, 87 treaty actions took place: 30 ratifications, 24 accessions, four acceptances and two consents to be bound. Details of these actions are available at www.treaties.un.org. (ATL)

Ocean Fertilisation

Following the deliberate dumping in October of 100 tons of iron sulphate dust off the coast of western Canada, the 34th Consultative Meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention), and to its 1996 Protocol (London Protocol) released a unanimous statement of concern (see: http://www.imo.org/blast/blastData.asp?doc_id=14525&filename=J-14%20Rev.doc). Canada's action is generally agreed to have violated international agreements restricting ocean fertilisation activities. (ATL)

ICJ: Nicaragua v. Colombia

The International Court of Justice has handed down its judgment in the case known as "Territorial and Maritime Dispute (Nicaragua v. Colombia)" in a manner that has left some experts wondering if the basic underlying dispute will ever be completely resolved. On the way to its decision, the Court reaffirmed that key maritime delimitation provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) have achieved the status of "customary international law" and are thus binding on Colombia, despite that country's steadfast refusal to accede to UNCLOS. Full decision: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/124/17164.pdf>. A more detailed report of this decision will be included in the next issue of *EPL* (*EPL* 43(1)). *EPL* also welcomes an analysis of this decision if any lawyers who participated in the case are willing to provide such an article for one of next year's issues.

CMS: Sharks MOU

Signatories to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks held their first meeting where they adopted a Conservation Plan, made a number of operational decisions and welcomed the US and Australian chapters of the Humane Society as new signatories. IISD's report: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol18/enb1851e.html>. *EPL* expects to include an update on other recent CMS activities and their implications in the next issue (*EPL* 43(1)).



Participants of the First Meeting of Signatories to the MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks
Courtesy: IISD

World Bank: Environmental / Social "Safeguard" Policies

The World Bank has commenced the promised review of its policies addressing indigenous peoples, involuntary resettlement, natural habitats and cultural resources where the goal is eventual reform of these safeguards, which have

become standards for environmental and social evaluation of investments by a wide range of development agencies around the world. Information and relevant data: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/EXTPOLICIES/EXTSAF/EPOL/0,,contentMDK:23275156~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:584435,00.html>.

GRASP Council Reconvenes

Over 150 participants attended the 2nd Council Meeting of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) where they discussed, formulated and revised the Global Strategy for Great Apes, the GRASP Priority Plan 2013–2016, and rules for the organisation and management of GRASP. A number of seminars also highlighted the relationship between great apes and illegal trade, the green economy and relevant technology. The meeting followed a seven-year hiatus between the first and second Council meetings, and proposals were accepted to hold the third Council meeting in 2016. Report: <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/crsvol113num2e.pdf>.

CCAMLR: 31st Annual Meeting

The meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, ending 1 November, could not reach agreement on any of the three Marine Protected Area proposals on the table – Ross Sea region, East Antarctic representative system, and Ice-Shelves special areas for scientific research. The participants instead agreed to convene the first-ever special intersessional meeting of the Scientific Committee from 11–13 July 2013 and a special meeting of the Commission from 15–16 July 2013 both in Bremerhaven (Germany). The Chair of the Scientific Committee made a strong statement asking that only scientists participate in the intersessional meeting in order not to politicise the Committee's work. A full report of the meeting is available to subscribers online at <http://www.ccamlr.org/en/system/files/eadvance-report.pdf>. (ATL)

Arctic: Progress on Ocean Review

At a September workshop, the Arctic Council's Working Group on Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) presented draft chapters of the Arctic Ocean Review (AOR) project as well as possible recommendations to Council Ministers. Phase I of the AOR concluded in 2011 with a descriptive report on existing global and regional agreements and arrangements relevant to Arctic marine environmental protection. Phase II is expected to deliver a final report to the Council's 2013 Ministerial meeting with recommendations for enhancing global and regional agreements and measures, including proposals to address living marine resources; offshore oil and gas; pollution; shipping; Arctic science; ecosystem-based management; and society, culture and people. Documentation from the workshop may be accessed on PAME's website at www.pame.is. (ATL)

Wider Caribbean Region

A number of key meetings have been held in recent weeks under the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention). Of particular import were the following: the 7th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA/W); the 1st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS); the 15th Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme; and the 12th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention. See: <http://www.cep.unep.org/cartagena-convention>.

Africa:

– AMCEN-14

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held its 14th session focusing its discussions around "Africa's post Rio+20 Strategy for Sustainable Development". See: http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Amcen_Events/14th_Session/DailyCoverage.asp.

– ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Forum

Under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, a high-level energy forum entitled "Towards Sustainable Energy for All" met in Accra, Ghana, to address the theme "Paving the Way for Sustainable Energy for All in West Africa through Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency". Report: <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/crsvol187num13e.pdf>.

– UNECA: Natural Resource Governance

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) focused its most recent "coalition dialogue" around the theme "Leveraging State-Society Dialogue for Improving Natural Resource Governance in Africa". Participants examined a variety of significant barriers to progress in the area of natural resource management, including weak negotiation skills, weak administrative capabilities to organise and monitor relevant sectors, lack of transparency and accountability in resource use, revenue management, revenue distribution and the need for greater civil society involvement. Report: <http://new.uneca.org/ArticleDetail/tabid/3018/ArticleId/2193/Dialogue-seeks-solutions-to-natural-resources-governance.aspx>.

Aarhus Convention: Compliance Committee Meetings

The most active of all the Compliance Committees of the MEAs, the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee has made arrangements with *EPL* for regular coverage of the legal and political aspects of its work. The first such report will include a detailed analysis of its 38th and 39th meetings. In the meantime, a report of the 38th meeting is at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/compliance/CC-38/ece.mp.pp.c.1.2012.8_as_submitted.pdf.

Himalayan Glaciers

In a recent issue, UNEP's Global Environmental Alert Service called for more and better monitoring of glaciers, leading to a subsequent state-of-the-science assessment on glacier change that produces robust findings, to better understand the complexity of changes, thereby reducing scientific uncertainty. It notes that transboundary scientific cooperation is necessary to assess regional climate change impacts and to fill knowledge gaps to deliver the best scientific information to policy makers. See www.unep.org/geas. (ATL)



Thothormi Glacier, Bhutan

Courtesy: UNEP (GEAS)

Permafrost Problems

A new report titled "Policy Implications of Warming Permafrost" highlights potential hazards of carbon dioxide and methane emissions from warming permafrost. The report recommends that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change commission an assessment of permafrost issues and calls for the creation of national monitoring networks and national plans for adaptation in countries with permafrost. Online at www.unep.org/pdf/permafrost.pdf. (ATL)

Australia: Marine Protected Areas

The Australian government has created a network of marine reserves totalling more than 2.3 million km² (890,000 square miles). One analyst claimed that the designation of these reserves will affect 60 regional communities, causing the loss of 36,000 jobs and displacing 70–80 trawler operators, as well as increasing the cost of seafood imports. The government's assessment is much lower, but an assistance fund of Aus\$100 million has been set aside to compensate businesses hurt by the changes. See "Australia

Declares Massive Marine Reserve Area". *International Business Times*, 16 November 2012, accessed at <http://www.ibtimes.com/australia-declares-massive-marine-reserve-area-886232>.

Mexico: Major GMO Controversy Building

Citizens' groups and NGOs both within Mexico and outside are attempting to hinder the recently rumoured efforts of agribusiness giants Monsanto, DuPont and Dow to apply for permission to plant transgenic maize on approximately 2,500,000 hectares of



Courtesy: Wikipedia

Mexican farmland. The move is believed to threaten Mexico's famous "corn culture" (Vavilov recognised meso-America as a key centre of origin of maize and corn, with thousands of varieties (native and traditionally derived) existing within the country, where domestication efforts are believed to have begun 7,500–12,000 years ago). Groups opposed to GMO maize introduction are seeking action at the level of the Mexican government, as well as in international forums including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Convention on Biological Diversity. See "Pending Decision On GM Maize In Mexico Under Fire". *Intellectual Property Watch*, 15 November 2012, online at http://www.ip-watch.org/2012/11/15/pending-decision-on-gm-maize-in-mexico-under-fire/?utm_source=post&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alerts.

USA:

– Federal Elections Imply Climate Change Action

In his victory speech, re-elected US President Obama specifically mentioned only one significant environmental issue – climate change – among his list of second-term priorities. The mention received a strong ovation from attendees of the victory celebration. Since his appearance at the Copenhagen negotiations in 2008, President Obama's administration has been criticised for its lack of attention to environmental issues, although it has been lauded as "one of the most scientifically accomplished administrations in U.S. history" (Helmuth, L. "How Did Science, Medicine, and the Environment Do in the Elections?" *Slate* (online publication of the *Washington Post*). At http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2012/11/science_environment_medical_election_2012_what_the_votes_mean_for_the_future.html). The speech may be viewed at http://www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_rr_7#/video/politics/2012/11/07/election-obama-victory-speech-full.cnn.

– California Voters Reject GMO Labelling

In conjunction with the recent general election in the United States, voters in California turned down a state-wide initiative calling for labelling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food. Proponents of the initiative are not despondent, claiming that their grass-roots efforts increased awareness of the issue, and that the election was finally turned only by the opposition's strong and costly public relations campaign with a budget of more than US\$40 million. Petitions are circulating to place the issue on other states' ballots in future elections. See <http://justlabelit.org/take-action/>.

Navigating the Nagoya Protocol

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has published the *Explanatory Guide to the Nagoya Protocol* providing neutral expert analysis of the text while facilitating understanding of the legal obligations of the Parties. This, the latest in a series of guides to international environmental instruments, is available for download at www.iucn.org/law. (ATL)

Unless otherwise marked, all references by TRY

