

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

ICJ: Costa Rica and Nicaragua Cases

In a recent announcement, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has merged the Costa Rican case focused on "Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area" (*Costa Rica v. Nicaragua*) with the Nicaraguan case "Construction of a Road in Costa Rica along the San Juan River" (*Nicaragua v. Costa Rica*). The Court cited "judicial economy" as its reason for the joinder, noting in addition to the identical parties that the two cases both focus on the San Juan River and have many facts, laws and allegations in common. The activities under consideration are generally different (*Costa Rica v. Nicaragua* relates to dredging, while *Nicaragua v. Costa Rica* concerns road construction). Press release: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/150/17332.pdf>. (TRY)

UN**– Sustainable Development**

In preparation for the 2013 Substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN Secretariat has released the long-awaited "Report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system". Advance unedited copy: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1799sgreport.pdf>. (ATL)

– Proposal for 10 SDGs

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, in its report to the UN Secretary-General, has identified ten "priority challenges" that warrant listing as sustainable development goals (see page 124): "End Extreme Poverty Including Hunger"; "Achieve Development within Planetary Boundaries"; "Ensure Effective Learning for All Children and Youth for Life and Livelihood"; "Achieve Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, and Human Rights for All"; "Achieve Health and Wellbeing at All Ages"; "Improve Agriculture Systems and Raise Rural Prosperity"; "Empower Inclusive, Productive and Resilient Cities"; "Curb Human-Induced Climate Change and Ensure Sustainable Energy"; "Secure Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity, and Ensure Good Management of Water and Other Natural Resources"; and "Transform Governance for Sustainable Development". *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*; <http://unsdsn.org/files/2013/06/130613-SDSN-An-Action-Agenda-for-Sustainable-Development-FINAL.pdf>. (ATL)

– Human Rights and Post-2015 Goals

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has released a report titled *Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. The report encourages the application of human rights norms and mechanisms to strengthen the accountability of responsible actors to fulfil development commitments, to create conditions for people to participate meaningfully in public decision-making, and to allow cases of failure to fulfil commitments to be brought before national and international human rights mechanisms. Report: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/WhoWillBeAccountable.pdf>. (ATL)

World Bank: Cost of Achieving the MDGs

A new report released by the World Bank summarises its study of "The Costs of Attaining the Millennium Development Goals". It opens by noting that "[u]sing two different approaches, the World Bank estimates that, if countries improve their policies and institutions, the additional foreign aid required to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is between \$40–\$60 billion a year", and that "[b]y itself, this [amount of] additional aid will not be sufficient to attain the goals, as many countries will have to reform their policies and improve service delivery to make the additional spending effective". Report: <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/mdgassessment.pdf>. (TRY)

UNEP**– Green Economy and Trade**

A new report, entitled *Green Economy and Trade: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities*, finds that developing countries are well poised to help catalyse the transition toward more sustainable global trade. The report analyses six economic

factors, and identifying measures, such as policy reforms, to assist in the trade of certified products and environmental goods and services. Report: <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/GETReport/pdf/FullReport.pdf>. (ATL)

– Implementing TEEB

UNEP's programme for The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), has released its *Guidance Manual for TEEB Country Studies. Version 1.0*, providing technical and operational guidance on how to initiate, conduct and implement a TEEB Country Study; communicate findings; and implement the resulting recommendations. Manual: www.teebweb.org/resources/Guidance-Manual-Teeb-country-studies. (ATL)

CITES: Trade with Guinea

In a notification dated 16 May 2013, the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) informs Parties that the Standing Committee has taken a decision recommending suspension of all "commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with Guinea" until further notice. Notification: <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2013/E-Notif-2013-017.pdf>. (ATL)

UNCTAD: IP and the Nagoya Protocol

Following its April *Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on the Development Dimensions of Intellectual Property: Biological Diversity and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)*, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is preparing to publish a new externally authored handbook focused on the intellectual property (IP) perspective on the intersection of ABS and the international IP system. Saez, C. 2013. "UNCTAD Handbook: IP and the CBD Protocol on Genetic Resources". *Intellectual Property Watch*; http://www.ip-watch.org/2013/04/30/unctad-handbook-ip-and-the-cbd-protocol-on-genetic-resources/?utm_source=post&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alerts. (TRY)

Global Agriculture: A New Message

Where formerly agriculture-related news stories and awareness programmes addressed food shortages, GMOs, hunger and/or food security; a new and relatively consistent thread is becoming more prevalent – the elimination of massive waste in the form of food that is thrown away. Keying on this year's World Environment Day theme "Think. Eat. Save", articles and reports posted around the planet have noted recent Food and Agriculture Organization findings that "more than 20,000 children under the age of five die from hunger every day", and strongly suggested that action to reduce the volume of wasted food (1.3 billion tons) will help address this problem. *E.g.*, "World Environment Day – Think Eat Save: Reduce your Foodprint". *UN News Service*; <http://www.un.org/news/>; Tan Cheng Li. 2013. "Love food, hate waste". *The Star Online*; <http://thestar.com.my/lifestyle/story.asp?file=/2013/6/4/lifefocus/13179968&sec=lifefocus>; and Gautama, M. 2013. "Eat for the planet". *The Hindu*; <http://www.thehindu.com/features/kids/eat-for-the-planet/article4777846.ece>. (TRY)

Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting

In May, the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, attended by Ministers of Foreign Affairs (or their equivalents) representing all eight Arctic States and representatives of the Council's six Permanent Participant organisations, adopted the "Kiruna Declaration". The text addresses, *inter alia*, the entry into force of the first legally binding agreement negotiated under the Council – the Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (2011) – and the adoption of a further binding instrument – the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. The Council also adopted its "Vision for the Arctic"; revised its Rules of Procedure; and admitted China, India, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore as new Observer States. Canada assumed the rotating Chair of the Council for 2013–2015 and will host the next Ministerial Meeting in 2015. Main meeting documents: <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/document-archive/category/425-main-documents-from-kiruna-ministerial-meeting>. (ATL)



Lesser Flamingos, *Phoeniconaias minor*, in flight. Courtesy: Wikipedia

World Migratory Bird Day (11–12 May)

An estimated 50 billion birds migrate annually around the globe. Nineteen percent of the world's 10,000 bird species undertake journeys, often spanning continents. They rely on their ability to find proper nourishment in staging areas that form the "stepping stones" on their routes, serving as breeding or wintering grounds and/or enabling them to refuel and reach their destinations.

Arab Region after Rio+20

The Arab Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) on Rio+20 Outcomes recently met, agreeing to the "Dubai Document" to inform on-going UN discussions on the elaboration of global sustainable development goals and the establishment of a high-level political forum (see p. 122). The document will be presented to the Council of Arab Ministers on the Environment in updating them concerning the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region. Background and outcome documents: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=2044E>. (ATL)

EU

– Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law

The European Council has adopted formal conclusions on fundamental rights and the rule of law as well as on the Commission's 2012 report on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. Calling on the Commission to take the debate forward by considering possible "methods or initiatives to better safeguard fundamental values", the Council's action was described as an effort "to counter extreme forms of intolerance, such as racism, anti-semitism, xenophobia and homophobia". Council Doc. 6–7 June 2013: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/137404.pdf. (TRY)

– Solicitation of Input on Recycling

The European Commission has opened a public consultation on the recycling targets currently contained in EU waste legislation, with the ultimate goal of developing "potential new legislation to prevent waste and boost re-use and recycling, as part of a wider review of waste policies in 2014". The solicitation identifies four actions in this context necessary to implement recycling provisions in recently adopted policy documents such as the Resource Efficiency Roadmap and the proposal for a 7th Environmental Action Programme, including a progressive phase-out of landfilling by 2020. Submissions will be accepted until mid-September. Press Release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-509_en.htm. (TRY)

– Greece and Landfill Violations

The European Commission has announced that it will take action against Greece in the European Court of Justice, alleging failure to protect its citizens and the environment from the effects of badly treated waste in the Peloponnese region. The suit is based on the EU's Landfill Directive, which imposes stringent technical requirements for landfills, to prevent adverse effects

on human health, water, soil and air, and the results of a series of on-site inspections at the Kiato landfill, indicating that the Greek government failed either to impose the standards by issuing a permit or to close the facility. Press Release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-483_en.htm. (TRY)

Bhutan: Electricity v. Conservation

It is reported that inhabitants of a village in Phobjikha Valley, Bhutan, have chosen to forego electricity, in order to promote the conservation of the globally endangered Black-necked Cranes that winter in their valley. Noting that overhead wires pose a threat to the cranes, the villagers have decided that rural electrification in their area would be too costly for the environment. Following broader awareness of this choice, the Bhutanese government has announced that it will install a solar electric facility, and lay the cables underground, so that the villagers will not suffer for their principles. Junko Edahiro and Tshering Choki. 2013. "Conserving Black-Necked Cranes in Bhutan". *Japan for Sustainability Newsletter* 128; <http://www.japanfs.org/en/mailmagazine/newsletter/pages/032790.html>. (TRY)

Ethiopia: Bamboo Industry

The Inter-press Service reports that Ethiopia is developing and extending its industrial commitment to products made from bamboo – a fast-growing species, already present in the country in profusion. Products include bamboo bicycles and charcoal, as well as more traditional furniture and other items. McKenna, E. 2013. "Ethiopia Leads the Bamboo Revolution". *Inter Press Service Blog*; <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/04/expanding-ethiopia-bamboo-sector/>. (TRY)

USA

– Arctic Strategies

The White House has released its "National Strategy for the Arctic Region", including accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in one of its four international-cooperation objectives. President Obama's cover letter states, "We in the lower 48 [states] and Hawaii join Alaska's residents in recognizing one simple truth: that the Arctic is an amazing place". Strategy and cover letter: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/05/10/strategy-arctic-informed-sound-science>. Following close on the White House's release, the US Coast Guard produced its *Arctic Strategy*, organised under three themes: improving awareness; modernising governance and broadening partnerships; and making another call for US accession to the UNCLOS. Strategy: http://www.uscg.mil/seniorleadership/DOCS/CG_Arctic_Strategy.pdf. (ATL)

– Change in Climate-Change-Denier Status?

"Organizing for Action" (OFA), the White House's initiative-driven outreach programme has recently added to its description of its missions, stating that it is seeking "to change the conversation on climate". This mission underlies its grassroots effort in at least 20 states to lay a foundation for enhanced environmental legislation in the future. OFA's first order of business is to discredit the primarily Republican climate change deniers in Congress, so that that body's members can act. If successful, this action may remove the US from the very small list of countries that still deny that climate change is a reality. OFA website: <http://www.barackobama.com/environment?source=footer-nav>. (TRY)

– GMO Labelling

US Senators Barbara Boxer and Peter DeFazio have introduced a bill to impose mandatory labelling of all genetically engineered foods. Although similar bills have been proposed and voted down in the past, Boxer has noted that more than 90 percent of Americans favour labelling and that the support for GMO labelling "has reached critical mass". Opponents may be hoist on their own petard by this bill, which responds to criticisms used to defeat a recent California initiative – that the initiative contained too many exceptions. The new proposal contains none. Finz, S. 2013. "GMO foods subject of bill in U.S. Senate". *San Francisco Chronicle*; <http://www.sfgate.com/business/article/GMO-foods-subject-of-bill-in-U-S-Senate-4460967.php>. (TRY)

Australia: Cattle Grazing in National Parks

The parliament of the Australian state of Queensland has enacted laws that relax restrictions on land clearing and open


up national parks to cattle grazing. The move, which is also being considered by the state of Victoria, is controversial, raising opposition on economic and agricultural, as well as environmental, grounds. Grigg, K. and Halford, J. 2013. "Clearing more land: we all lose". *The Conversation – Australia*; <http://theconversation.com/clearing-more-land-we-all-lose-14601>. (TRY)

UK: Wales and Pesticide Control

The Welsh government has adopted a draft pollinator action plan, to address the decline in bee populations, and head off potential dire consequences for agriculture and the environment. Although lauded by environmentalists, the plan is only a tentative first step. In the words of Gareth Clubb, director of Friends of the Earth Cymru, "The power to ban pesticides lies in Westminster, not Cardiff Bay, and the Welsh government must discuss devolution of these controls immediately if we are to have decent protection for Welsh bees". "Pesticide powers 'must be devolved': Welsh government publishes draft plan for turning around dwindling bee populations". 9 April 2013. *The Guardian Online*; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/apr/09/pesticide-powers-devolved>. (TRY)

[guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/apr/09/pesticide-powers-devolved](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/apr/09/pesticide-powers-devolved). (TRY)

Rogue GMO Wheat Strain

A government investigation has been launched in the US state of Oregon into the source of seed-producing plant samples from an Oregon farm, which indicate that the fields involved were growing at least some wheat that contains genetically engineered resistance to a strong pesticide (glyphosate). Up to now, official and unofficial sources have quelled fears regarding international trade in wheat (and grain supplied as aid) with the statement that no genetically modified wheat varieties have been approved for sale or in commercial production in the United States or elsewhere. It is known, however, that Monsanto tested a glyphosate-resistant wheat variety between 1998 and 2005. Curlett, E. 2013. "USDA Investigating Detection of Genetically Engineered (GE) Glyphosate-Resistant Wheat in Oregon". *USDA-APHIS Newsroom*; http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2013/05/ge_wheat_detection.shtml. (TRY) 

SELECTED DOCUMENTS

The UNEP Executive Director's remarks to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) New York, 22 May 2013

The last time we met in November of 2012, the landmark "Rio +20" UN Conference on Sustainable Development had recently provided for the strengthening and upgrading of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including by establishing universal membership in its Governing Council. It also provided for UNEP to have "secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations and voluntary contributions to fulfill its mandate."

Since our last meeting the General Assembly adopted, on 21 December 2012, resolution 67/213 which provided for effective follow-up and set the stage for the first universal membership session of UNEP at its 27th Governing Council in February 2013. The universal membership of UNEP reaffirmed the Rio +20 outcome, as had GA resolution 66/288 in July 2012, and requested the GA to change the name of the Governing Council to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP. The GA endorsed the name change through resolution 67/251 of 13 March 2013.

In addition to governance decisions, the UNEP universal membership session also approved the medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2017 and a revised programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015. It also approved extra budgetary appropriations, including \$245 million from the UNEP Environment Fund. The session noted that the proposed budget for the biennium 2014–2015 under the United Nations regular budget to UNEP would be approved by the GA at its 68th session. Recalling the Rio +20 outcome, the UNEP universal membership session called for "an allocation from the United Nations regular budget to the United Nations Environment Programme that takes into account the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the implementation of paragraph 88, subparagraphs (a)–(h) of the outcome document of the United Nations

Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as opportunities for increasing the efficient use of resources."

Before you is the environment section of the Secretary-General's proposed budget and programme of work 2014–2015. This is the same Programme of Work that the UNEP universal membership session considered and adopted in the context of the Environment Fund. The Secretary-General is proposing an amount of \$43.9 million under Section 14, Environment, for the biennium 2014–2015. This represents an increase of \$29.7 million over the \$14.18 million 2012–2013 resources at revised rates in line with resolution 67/213 on the upgrading and strengthening of the UNEP Programme of Work and Budget for 2014–2015.

The proposed budget presented by the Secretary-General is consistent with the Rio +20 outcome and relevant GA resolutions, in particular resolution 67/213, requesting him "to reflect in the 2014–2015 biennium budget proposal resources that take into account the proposed revised Programme of Work of UNEP and the implementation of paragraph 88, subparagraphs a to h of the [Rio] Outcome document." It also acknowledges the decisions of the first universal membership session and its recommendations as regards the regular budget. The UNEP Programme of Work, including the proposed regular budget you are considering today, therefore takes into full account the guidance and approval provided by both the GA and the UNEP universal membership governing body in their respective areas of authority. It provides the foundation for UNEP's effectiveness in meeting the enhanced mandate to meet the environmental sustainability challenges of the 21st century articulated by the General Assembly and its subsidiary body for the environment.

This is the first time since 1978 that the UN Secretary-General proposes a substantial increase in UNEP's regular budget, both in absolute and relative terms,

despite mounting evidence of deteriorating environmental conditions over the last few decades.

In the quest to implement UNEP's enhanced mandate, we will continue to emphasize cost-efficiency. We have taken measures to do more with limited resources, ensuring that mandates adopted by member states are fully implemented. At its February 2013 session, UNEP's first universal session acknowledged the Secretariat's efforts to increase effectiveness and efficiency through the implementation of best practices.

The budget before you incorporates an increased efficiency in UNEP's use of regular budget resources. UNEP's efforts and progress in becoming a more effective and results-oriented organization has been recognized by various independent evaluations recently. In particular, while the regular budget increases in absolute terms, programme support costs as a percentage of the proposed regular budget is trimmed from 8.4% in 2012–2013 to 4.7% in 2014–2015. We are also fully committed to, and have demonstrated, full cost recovery on all extra budgetary resources managed by UNEP, ensuring the UNEP regular budget will not run the risk of subsidizing administrative support to extra-budgetary programmes.

With the proposed budget of the Secretary General, UNEP can respond more effectively to country needs and more consistently contribute to the environmental dimension of the sustainable development agenda as mandated by GA resolutions 66/288 and 67/213.

In the past, the UNEP secretariat has tried to realize the Member States' more limited expectations, with the regular budget funding as foreseen in UNEP's constitutive GA Resolution 2997 of 1972. The current RB resources, at approximately \$7 million a year are indeed insufficient to cover basic secretariat functions, let alone commensurate with the environmental dimensions of Rio outcomes, for which member States have uniquely mandated