

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

UNGA Special Event: MDGs

On 25 September 2013, the President of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) convened a one-day "Special Event Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals". The event included parallel roundtable sessions where participants were asked to reflect on key questions regarding the achievement of the MDGs by 2015 and shaping the post-2015 development agenda. Reported in detail at <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/crsvol153num10e.pdf>.

UNEP-CPR

The report of the 2013 meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is available at <http://share.pdfonline.com/c6921c93067d4109bbd95272e0f00de5/Draft%20report%20other%20Subcommittee%20meetings%20up%20to%20day%203.pdf>. (WEB)

UN Secretary General

– Statement on the Ozone Layer

The United Nations Secretary General (SG) has published a message on the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, at: <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2726&ArticleID=9612>. (WEB)

– Ocean Munitions Disposal Report

The SG has published a report entitled "Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea". UN Document A/68/258: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/416/94/PDF/N1341694.pdf?OpenElement>. (WEB)

– Poverty Report

The SG has published a report on the "Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017)", referenced in <http://undesadspd.org/Poverty/UNDecadefortheEradicationofPoverty/SecondUNDecadefortheEradicationofPoverty.aspx>. (WEB)

– Speech on the Rule of Law

The SG's speech to the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Cooperation for the Rule of Law at the International Level, entitled "Rule of law should guide relations between global institutions as well as nations", is reproduced online at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sgsm15350.doc.htm>. (WEB)

– Agricultural Technology Report

The SG has published a report entitled "Agricultural technology for development", available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/308&Lang=E. (WEB)

Formal Adoption of the Mercury Convention

At a diplomatic conference (dubbed the "Conference of Plenipotentiaries") held in Minamata and Kumamoto, Japan, from 9–11 October 2013, the final agreed text of the "Minamata Convention on Mercury" was presented for adoption and opened for signature. A total of 91 States and one regional economic integration organisation signed the Convention. The Convention's final text is annexed to the report of that meeting at <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/MinamataConvention/DiplomaticConference/DipConReport/tabid/105834/Default.aspx>.

CITES: Angola Becomes 179th Party

The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has announced that the Republic of Angola has acceded to the Convention. The Convention entered into force for Angola on 31 December 2013. (WEB)

Convention on Migratory Species

The UNEP/CMS Online Reporting Service can now be accessed online at <http://www.cms.int/notifications/2013.htm>. (WEB)

UNCCD Holds CoP-11

At its 11th Conference of Parties (CoP), held in Windhoek, Namibia from 16–27 September 2013, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted 41 decisions, including the agreement to establish its own "science-policy interface" focused on enhancing the UNCCD's global authority in the area of desertification, sustainable land management, land degradation and drought as well as a range of best practices, work plans and financial strategies.



Luc Gnacadja (left) concluded his post as UNCCD Executive Secretary. His successor, Monique Barbut (right), former CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, took up this position on 1 October, 2013. Courtesy: IISD Reporting Services

Chemicals Conventions

– Pollutants Review Committee of POPs Convention

In its ninth meeting (held in Rome from 14–18 October), the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-9) of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) adopted decisions on, *inter alia*, the commercial mixture of decabromodiphenyl ether (c-decaBDE); pentachlorophenol and its salts and esters (PCP); chlorinated naphthalenes (CNs); hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD); the evaluation of chemicals; and the assessment of the possible impact of climate change on the Committee's work. The meeting is reported in detail at <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb15211e.pdf>.

– Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention

From 22–24 October, combining its main work with a joint meeting with POPRC, the Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals considered the several issues relating to the enhancement of cooperation and coordination between the two technical Committees, before taking its own decisions on trichlorfon, cyhexatin, methamidophos, lead arsenate, lead carbonate, fenthion 640 ULV and pentachlorobenzene. The two sessions are reported in detail at <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb15212e.pdf>.

International Tropical Timber Council

The ITTC held its 49th session from 25–30 November in Libreville, Gabon, which had hosted its 1998 meeting. It considered, *inter alia*, the selection of the next Executive Director, revision of the *Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forest*, establishment of a regional office for Africa, and discussions of institutional strategies on resource mobilisation and knowledge management. It also heard reports on issues relating to payment for environmental services, mangroves, plantation timbers and eaglewood (a timber demanded by the perfume and incense industry due to its chemical components). News release: "US\$15.7 Million in New Funds for Tropical Forests", 30 November 2013, http://www.itto.int/news_releases/id=3795.

Organisation Chart of UNEP

UNEP has published an updated chart of its organisational structure at <http://www.unep.org/pdf/UnepOrganigram.pdf>. (WEB)

INTERPOL/UNEP Conference

INTERPOL, in conjunction with UNEP, convened the first International Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Conference on 6 November 2013, in Nairobi, Kenya. Participants discussed recent trends in and the impacts of violations of international environmental law on sustainable development and implementation, and considered possible solutions to combat environmental crime. The meeting is reported in detail at <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/crsvol216num1e.pdf>.

Violence Against Protesters in Sudan

Mashood Adecayo Baderin, advisor to the UN, stated his concerns about violence being used against people protesting against a cut in fuel subsidies in Sudan: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/10/03/UN-leans-on-Sudan-after-bloody-crackdown/UPI-48551380817430/. (WEB)

UNECE Protocol on Water and Health

The Protocol on Water and Health to the UN Economic Commission of Europe Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes held its third Meeting of the Parties from 25–27 November in Oslo, Norway. See IISD's summary at http://www.iisd.ca/water/unece/whp/mop3/brief/whpmop3_brief.html.

Arctic Waters: Oil Tanker Traffic

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reports that the increase in oil tankers travelling through the Arctic, due to the disappearance of arctic ice, makes pollution by oil more and more likely: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/arktis-oelpest-volle-kraft-voraus-1.1741661>. (WEB)

European Union (EU)

– Greenhouse Emission Allowances

The EU Council has reached an informal agreement with the European Parliament on adaptation of the auction timetable of greenhouse gas emission allowances: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/139650.pdf. (WEB)

– 7th Environment Action Programme

The EU Council and Parliament signed into law the Decision on a 7th EU Environment Action Programme, which will guide EU policy action on environment and climate policy for the next seven years. Proposed by the Commission in November 2012 (IP/12/1271), the 7th Environment Action Programme identifies nine priority objectives for the period up to 2020, including the protection of nature and strengthening ecological resilience; boosting sustainable, resource-efficient, low-carbon growth; and effectively addressing environment-related threats to health. See Commission webpage on the Programme at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm>.

– GMO Controversy

In the next step in the long EU controversy over genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the Commission has referred a 12-year-old request for authorisation to market genetically modified maize 1507 (Bt maize) to the Council of Ministers. The 2001 application has been the subject of long litigation over the Commission's failure to act (General Court case T-164/10), and there have been many efforts to address the controversy legislatively (see, e.g., the July 2010 proposal for a Regulation revising Directive 2001/18/EC). Applying the pre-Lisbon comitology procedure, the Ministers must now take a position on this request. If the Council is not able to muster a qualified majority for or against the authorisation, then the Commission will be obliged by law to grant it.

– Greece

The EU Commission has announced that it is again referring Greece to the European Court of Justice for poor treatment of urban waste water. The Court previously ruled in October 2007 that Greece was failing in its obligation to treat and dispose of urban waste water in an adequate manner, with 23 agglomerations

across the country lacking the necessary collection and treatment systems. Six years after the Court's ruling, the Commission believes that six agglomerations are still failing to comply with EU standards, and is asking the Court to impose a fine of €11,514,081 plus a daily penalty payment of €47,462 until the obligations are fulfilled. Press release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1102_en.htm?locale=en.

– Kyoto Second Commitment

A proposal has been tabled for the European Commission to formally ratify the second commitment period (2013–2020) of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. The EU, its Member States and Iceland have already committed to jointly achieve a 20 percent reduction in their combined greenhouse gas emissions over the second period compared to the level in 1990 or their other chosen base years. Press release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1035_en.htm?locale=en.

– Plastic Bag Reduction

On 4 November, the EU Commission amended the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (Directive 94/62/EC), requiring Member States to further reduce their use of lightweight plastic carrier bags, choosing the measures they find most appropriate, including charges, national reduction targets or a ban. Press release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1035_en.htm?locale=en.

Panama Court Applies Non-regression Principle

On 23 December 2013, the Judicial Branch of Panama's Supreme Court of Justice issued a final judgement regarding Panama Bay, once a protected area, whose status has been controversial in recent years. The decision applies the so-called "non-regression principle", which environmental organisations and others have promulgated as a principle of international law. The text of the decision (in Spanish) has already been made available online at <http://es.scribd.com/doc/193671950/Sentencia-Bahia-Panama-Principio-No-Regresion>.

Germany

– Call to Continue Climate Efforts

Peter Altmaier, German Federal Minister for the Environment, demands continuing efforts with regard to the outcomes of the UN Climate Conference in Warsaw: <http://www.europaticker.de/news/111/news3.php3?nummer=13017392>. (WEB)

– Confiscation of Whale Meat

In response to an inquiry, the German Federal Government has stated that whale meat can be confiscated if it violates EU Regulation 338/97: http://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/2013_08/2013_434/04.html. (WEB)

Indonesia: Status of Community Forests

The Indonesian Constitutional Court has reportedly nullified the government's ownership of "customary forest areas" (a term that is legally defined as "state forests located in the areas of custom-based communities") by eliminating the word "state" from Article 1(f) of its Law of Forestry. The move advances the rights of indigenous communities holding traditional forests that are protected under Article 18(b) of the Constitution. See article at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/constitutional-court-annuls-government-ownership-of-customary-forests/>.

France: Challenge to Fracking Ban

The French Constitutional Court has found against the plaintiff in a lawsuit filed by Schuepbach Energy, a multinational oil company headquartered in the US, which had claimed that the 2011 French law prohibiting the exploration and exploitation of shale gas and shale oil by fracking was anti-constitutional. See <http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/france-ban-fracking-constitutional-courts-ruling>.

Media Freedom Watch Digest

The Media Freedom Watch website now provides the Media Freedom Watch Digest on the processes in the six Eastern Partnership countries on its website and can be followed via Media Freedom Watch at Facebook (EaP Media Freedom Watch) and Twitter (mediafreewatch). (WEB)

