



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the
INTERNATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

Volume 14, Number 10 15 November 2012



International Environment Forum A Baha'i inspired organization addressing
the environment and sustainable development

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From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on climate change action. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to newsletter@ief.org

Please share the *Leaves* newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

ECPD Conference on the New Balkans

The ECPD Eighth International Conference on "**Reconciliation, Tolerance and Human Security in the Balkans - New Balkans in a Changing World with a Changing Europe**" was held at the City Hall in Belgrade, Serbia, on 20 October 2012. It was chaired by Ambassador Takehiro Togo, Chairman of the ECPD Academic Council, and opened with a special message from Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali who is President of the ECPD Honorary Council.

Over 30 presentations were made on the main conference topics of "Globalization and its Impact on the World and the European Union", "New Balkans in a Changing World: Directions, Causes, Consequences" and "Human Security in the Balkans".

Among the principal conclusions was the recognition that the world and European economic crisis has aggravated the poorly planned economic transition in the region after the collapse of communist industries. A sluggish and unskillful process of transition was accompanied by organized crime and corruption, as well as increased unemployment, with consequences that are only being overcome slowly and with difficulty.

While there are still several sensitive areas in the Balkans, there has been progress in political and social transformation, but further advances are needed in the fields of democracy, legal order, human rights and the development of other values of democratic societies.

The conference concluded that a stable and durable peace should be built on mutual understanding and respect among all Balkan peoples and states, and by inclusion of all the Balkan countries into European integration and the Euro-Atlantic alliance. While many obstacles hamper the strengthening of peace and stability in the Balkans, growth opportunities can outweigh them provided there is a speeding up of the development of free democratic societies, improved regional cooperation and full international integration, as well as secure support from the international community in general and the European Union in particular.

The European Center for Peace and Development of the University for Peace established by the United Nations has been working for nearly thirty years to increase understanding and overcome differences in the western Balkans through academic and research programs and high-level conferences of political, religious and academic leaders from across the region.

The International Environment Forum has been collaborating with the ECPD for the last 5 years, and IEF President Prof. Arthur Lyon Dahl has just been named to the Academic Council of ECPD. His paper for the 8th conference on "Right of Each Human Being to Enjoy Peace, Security and Welfare" is on line at <http://iefworld.org/ddahl12l>.



Global Soil Partnership

<http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/home/en/>

Why a Global Soil Partnership?

Soil is under pressure. The renewed recognition of the central role of soil resources as a basis for food security and their provision of key ecosystem services, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, has triggered numerous regional and international projects, initiatives and actions. Despite these numerous emergent activities, soil resources are still seen as a second-tier priority and no international governance body exists that advocates for and coordinates initiatives to ensure that knowledge and recognition of soils are appropriately represented in global change dialogues and decision making processes. At the same time, there is need for coordination and partnership to create a unified and recognized voice for soils and to avoid fragmentation of efforts and wastage of resources.

Maintaining healthy soils required for feeding the growing population of the world and meeting their needs for biomass (energy), fiber, fodder, and other products can only be ensured through a strong partnership. This is one of the key guiding principles for the establishment of the Global Soil Partnership.

The 5 pillars of action

The Global Soil Partnership will support the process leading to the adoption of sustainable development goals for soils.

It will contribute to environmental wellbeing through, for example, preventing soil erosion and degradation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable use of agricultural inputs for soil health and ecosystems management.

It will equally contribute to human wellbeing and social equity through improved use and governance of soil resources, finding alternatives to soil degrading practices through participatory experiential processes, and being sensitive to issues of gender and rights of indigenous peoples.

In order to achieve these objectives, the GSP should address five main pillars of action:

- 1- Promote sustainable management of soil resources for soil protection, conservation and sustainable productivity
- 2- Encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education awareness and extension in soil

- 3- Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps and priorities and synergies with related productive, environmental and social development actions
- 4- Enhance the quantity and quality of soil data and information: data collection (generation), analysis, validation, reporting, monitoring and integration with other disciplines
- 5- Harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources

The vision: Improve global governance of the limited soil resources of the planet in order to guarantee healthy and productive soils for a food secure world, as well as sustain other essential ecosystem services.

The mission: Develop capacities, build on best available science, and facilitate/contribute to the exchange of knowledge and technologies among stakeholders for sustainable management of soil resources at all levels.



SPC introduces new approaches to climate change



Regional government delegates meeting in Noumea this week at the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community will discuss the new approaches to climate change adaptation that the organisation is using to assist Pacific Island countries and territories tackle the 21st century challenge.

'Climate change is projected to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters, and affect infrastructure, transport, marine ecosystems, agricultural food production and health, as well as access to safe drinking water,' says Dr Jimmie Rodgers, SPC Director-General.

SPC is taking a cross-cutting approach to climate change adaptation, recognising that tackling just one aspect of an issue is unlikely to lead to long-term sustainable solutions.

For example, a 'ridge-to-reef' approach being trialled in Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands, combines work across several sectors, including agriculture, forestry, water, infrastructure, fisheries and health, together with the efforts of landowning communities, the government, other development partners and regional agencies.

Another project the organisation is implementing in Vava'u, Tonga, integrates land-based water management elements with coastal zone management and near-shore fisheries.

To work effectively, this approach needs commitment from national-level stakeholders and willingness on the part of government ministries and communities to work together. The organisation is also working with countries and development partners to design and implement integrated, 'one team' methods.

The 42nd Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA), the annual meeting of SPC's governing body, is being held from 12 to 16 November 2012 at its headquarters in Noumea.

For more information, please contact: Rajan Sami, Press Officer for CRGA (email: rajans@spc.int); or Jean-Noël Royer, Assistant Communication Officer (email: jeannoelr@spc.int)



Empowering Fijian women on proper waste management practices



Project Coordinator Ms. Susana Evening

The Clean Pacific 2012 Campaign has made it possible to educate women in Fiji on simple, proper waste management practices. The campaign provided funding assistance to the Lami branch of the Catholic Women's League (CWL), which was nominated to implement the grassroots project in Fiji.

Clean Pacific 2012 is a regional campaign implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), which promotes better waste management and pollution control in the Pacific region through actions at the grassroots and government levels. The campaign commenced in February 2012 with a workshop in Nadi, Fiji attended by regional participants including the CWL.

The highlight for this workshop was the submission for funding of waste management project proposals by participants. The approved CWL project proposal highlighted that waste and pollution can be better managed if women are effectively empowered on such issues. In a survey conducted by CWL, results showed that 48% of women manage household waste and 58% are dominant in cleaning the house, preparing meals and nurturing children. Because of the considerable role of women in the household, the CWL has focused the campaign in Fiji on the theme "Women Save the Environment for a Healthy Fiji".

"Women play an important role in the management of household waste. We as women can save the environment by educating our children to be good, responsible citizens such as teaching our little ones to not throw their rubbish carelessly or encouraging them to take their rubbish and place it in the bins provided," said Dr. Jiko Luveni, Minister of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation.

The survey results also showed that 68% of those interviewed mentioned that plastic bags were the most common type of solid waste found. In addition, PET bottles, snack packets and food wrappers are amongst the most common rubbish found in the Lami area, which is a small town on the outskirts of Suva.

"Waste is indeed a major problem in the Lami area. With a population of over 15,000 people, the improper management of waste has led to major disease outbreaks over the years. This waste management project will assist local women and women's groups to teach their friends and relatives about the proper management and disposal of household wastes" said Ms Susana Evening, CWL Project Coordinator.

Also part of the overall project activity, a plastic recycling workshop was conducted by CWL. The highlight of this workshop was the making of purses using snack packets, food wrappers and other used milk and soap powder packets with an aim to "turn trash into cash". Thirty-five women were able to increase their knowledge and skills on reusing plastics.

For more information on the Clean Pacific 2012 Campaign, please visit the website: <http://www.sprep.org/clean-pacific-campaign> or contact SPREP's Clean Pacific Campaign Coordinator, Ms Ilisapeci Masivesi at sprep@sprep.org.



LINKAGES
News, information and analysis on international environment and sustainable development negotiations and policy making

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Curtain Raiser		
12 Nov.		
13 Nov.		
14 Nov.		
15 Nov.		



Twenty-fourth meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

12-16 November 2012 | Geneva, Switzerland

Daily highlights (click on the following links to see our daily web pages)

11 Nov. - 12 Nov. - 13 Nov. - 14 Nov. - 15 Nov. - 16 Nov.

Highlights for Thursday, 15 November 2012

The high-level segment of MOP-24 opened on Thursday, 15 November 2012, in Geneva, Switzerland. In the morning, delegates met for the opening session of the high-level segment, while others joined contact and discussion groups on: alternatives to ODS; budget; QPS uses of methyl bromide; and evaluation of financial mechanisms.

Contact group discussions resumed in the afternoon on alternatives to ODS, ODS policy information and funding climate benefits. Both the preparatory segment plenary and the high-level segment plenary sessions reconvened in the afternoon.

In the evening, the Swiss Government hosted a reception. The contact group on TEAP procedures met following the reception.



http://www.iisd.ca/ozone/mop24/15nov.html?&utm_source=www.iisd.ca&utm_medium=feed&utm_content=2012-11-15&utm_campaign=RSS2.0



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Small seaweed refineries could meet transport needs

<http://www.scidev.net/en/>

María Elena Hurtado, 15 November 2012

[Link to full study](#) [583kB]

[SANTIAGO] Mid-size towns in developing countries could produce transport fuel from small biorefineries that use land-farmed marine algae, proposes a paper presented today (15 November) at the International Mechanical Engineering Congress in Houston, United States.

The authors illustrate their report with a design of an expandable biorefinery that uses the marine seaweed macroalgae, *Ulva spp.*, for a town of 20,000 people in rural India.

"Today the general approach is that the larger the biorefinery, the better it is. Our work shows this is not always true," lead author Alexander Golberg, of the Center for Engineering in Medicine, Harvard Medical School, United States, told *SciDev.Net*.

The researchers chose marine macroalgae as it is "a promising feedstock (for biofuel) that does not compete with food crops for arable land or potable water". But the paper recognises that the technologies to cultivate and decompose the algae must be improved.

The biorefinery comprises a solar power system that generates the energy needed to cultivate macroalgae in about 30 hectares of ponds. The major growth in demand for liquid fuel in the next 20 years will take place in developing countries, the researchers say, and developing countries can manufacture this relatively low-tech and efficient system.

"The next steps will be to build demonstration and pilot units. We have discussed possible projects in South Africa and India," Gregory Linshiz, co-author of the study and a researcher at the Joint BioEnergy Institute at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, United States, told *SciDev.Net*.

Ricardo Radulovich, coordinator of the Sea Gardens Project at the University of Costa Rica, points to key aspects that must be considered for a pilot.

These are the complicated process of producing fuel from algae, the cost and complexities of cultivating macroalgae in ponds on land — which risk contaminating ground waters with salt — and the need for a financial analysis of the biorefinery model.

Instead, he advocates macroalgae farming at sea. This is, he said, "something that already produces 28 million tonnes of biomass per year in Asia, requires no freshwater at all, allows the use of other highly productive macroalgae species in a variety of marine environments and takes advantage of nutrients that pollute sea water".

Cristián Agurto Muñoz, director of the algae biotechnology laboratory at the University of Concepción, Chile, added that algae biorefineries can only be implemented once there are suitable technologies for decomposing seaweeds into fermentable sugars, and when liquid biofuels are competitive with fossil fuels.



<http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=572>

The Sacred Life of Trees - an article by Martin Palmer

If one day you are planting a tree and someone comes running to tell you the Messiah has come, you should finish planting your tree before going to see if this is true.

So goes this traditional story in Judaism, and both Christianity and Islam have similar stories.

Indeed, every major faith has its stories about the central role of trees, says ARC Secretary General Martin Palmer, from Yggdrasil, the Norse Tree at the Centre of the Universe, through the trees in the Garden of Eden, and the tree of the Cross to the Bodhi tree under which Prince Siddhartha achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha.

He explores the importance of trees to the great faiths in an article for the interfaith magazine Faith Initiative. The article is featured in issue 25 - Faith Initiative: Embracing Diversity. Please see the website www.faithinitiative.co.uk for further information on the magazine or contact the Editor: Heather Wells at: hf_wells@yahoo.co.uk.

Link [here](#) for a PDF of the article.

