



## UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде    برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة  
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### THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE NEWS Wednesday 24 September 2008

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## **UNEP and the Executive Director in the News**

### **News Blaze: Mexico to Host Next Year's World Environment Day Festivities**

Mexico will play host to the 2009 World Environment Day Celebrations, observed every year on 5 June, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the country's President Felipe Calderón announced today.

The theme for next year's festivities is "Your Planet Needs You - UNite to Combat Climate Change," and seeks to propel nations to reach agreement on a successor pact to the Kyoto Protocol, whose first commitment period ends in 2012, in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December next year.

Mexico's selection reflects its increasing role in fighting global warming, including its participation in carbon markets.

The country is also a leading partner in UNEP's Billion Tree Campaign - which has recently dramatically revised its target upward to 7 billion trees - spearheading the pledging and planting of one-quarter of the trees for the initiative.

"Mexico is at the cross-roads of the green economy politically, physically and practically," said ["http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=545&ArticleID=5928&l=en"](http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=545&ArticleID=5928&l=en)>UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

It faces many hurdles ranging from high air pollution in its cities to land degradation and poverty, and accounts for some 1.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

"But Mexico is also emerging as one among a group of developing economies who are bringing much needed leadership to the need for a new, comprehensive and decisive climate treaty," he said.

Mexico, with its emerging market, is set to become an economic powerhouse this century, Mr. Steiner noted. "Thus its ability to encourage the greening of the economy of neighbouring nations - both north and south of its borders - will be significant."

Source: United Nations

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### **Media-Newswire: Mexico to Host World Environment Day Under the Theme 'Your Planet Needs You'**

**Mexico City/Nairobi, 22 september 2008-Mexico, a country at the crossroads of the Green Economy and one increasingly in the centre of regional and global affairs will host the international 2009 World Environment Day celebrations. The theme chosen by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which coordinates the day on 5 June on behalf of the UN system and the peoples of the world, will be 'Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change'.**

(Media-Newswire.com) - Mexico City/Nairobi, 22 september 2008-Mexico, a country at the crossroads of the Green Economy and one increasingly in the centre of regional and global affairs will host the international 2009 World Environment Day celebrations.

The theme chosen by the UN Environment Programme ( UNEP ), which coordinates the day on 5 June on behalf of the UN system and the peoples of the world, will be 'Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change'.

It reflects the urgency for nations to agree on a new agreement at the crucial climate convention meeting in Copenhagen some 180 days later in the year, and the links with overcoming poverty and improved management of forests.

The news that Mexico has been chosen to host World Environment Day ( WED ) 2009 was announced jointly by President Felipe Calderón and Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director at a press conference in Mexico City.

The decision in part reflects the growing practical and political role of the Latin American country in the fight against climate change, including its growing participation in the carbon markets.

Mexico is also a leading partner in UNEP's Billion Tree Campaign. The country, with the support of its President and people, has spearheaded the pledging and planting of some 25 per cent of the trees under the campaign.

UNEP has now launched a new and more ambitious phase-the Seven Billion Tree Campaign.

This aims to see more than one new tree planted for every person alive by the Copenhagen meeting as one empowering symbol of the global publics' desire for action by their political leaders on the greatest challenge for this generation.

Mr Steiner, who is also a UN Under-Secretary General, said: "I am delighted that the President and the people of Mexico will be the hosts of WED only some 180 days before governments meet in Copenhagen before the crucial UN climate convention meeting".

"Mexico is at the cross-roads of the Green Economy politically, physically and practically. Firstly it still has many challenges, from high air pollution in cities and dependence on fossil fuels to land degradation and the need to fight poverty. But Mexico is also emerging as one among a group of developing economies who are bringing much needed leadership to the need for a new, comprehensive and decisive climate treaty," he said.

Mr Steiner (see notes to editors on new data) said that in addition Mexico was seizing the opportunities of the carbon markets and had, in just four short years, become second only to Brazil in terms of wind, solar, biogas and other Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects in the region.

"Thirdly Mexico's ambitions in terms of combating climate change under its new Special programme-ambitions that include renewable energy to using forests and other nature-based assets as carbon sinks-will send a clear message to countries in the region and the world that Mexico means to be part of the solution," he noted.

"Finally, Mexico is set to be one of the big economies of the 21st century along with nations like China and India. Thus its ability to encourage the greening of the economy of neighboring nations-both North and South of its borders-will be significant," he noted.

## Notes to Editors

### Climate Change

Mexico, which accounts for around 1.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, is demonstrating its commitment to climate change on several fronts.

Mexico was praised by Non Governmental Organizations at the recent climate convention talks in Accra, Ghana for being among a group of countries willing to build bridges between the North and the South.

UNEP is looking forward to the shortly-to-be published Special Programme on Climate Change covering 2008-2012.

It is likely to set ambitious goals for the Mexican economy from boosting the climate-friendliness of 'hard' infrastructure via energy efficiency and an increase in renewables to boosting the carbon management of Mexico's 'soft' infrastructure including its forests and soils.

### New Findings on Mexico and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

Today UNEP also launched new data underlining how Mexico is seizing the opportunities presented by the UN-brokered carbon markets.

The Centre's researchers estimate that Mexico's CDM projects in the validation; requesting registration or registered phases have accumulated to 187 projects by September 2008.

This is up from 4 in 2004 and in terms of Latin America Mexico is now second after Brazil with 303 projects.

This is followed by Chile, 56; Colombia, 32 and Argentina, 30. The country in the region with the least projects registered or in the pipe line is Guyana with one.

The lion's share of Mexico's CDM projects are currently agricultural and involve the flaring of methane produced by animal wastes. 55 per cent of CDM projects are in this category.

Close to 30 per cent of the projects are renewables which includes wind, solar, biogas and biomass. Biogas represents 70 per cent of Mexico's CDM renewables-here the methane from wastes is harvested to generate electricity rather than flared.

The Risoe Centre stresses that, given Mexico's relatively high level of industrialization, it has huge opportunities in terms of energy efficiency which remain to be exploited.

If all its CDM projects to date are registered, then Mexico could generate over 14 million Certified Emission Reduction ( CERS ) annually versus a world total of 529 million.

Risoe estimates that, by 2012 there could be a total of 1,600 Latin American and Caribbean CDM projects in the pipeline or registered-a more than doubling.

It is estimated that 260 million CERs could be generated equaling \$3.9 billion with a value per CER of \$15 a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Solar Water Heaters

UNEP announced today that it is also assisting the UN Development Programme and Mexico-with funding from the Global Environment Facility-on a project to boost Mexico's solar water heater sector.

The programme will cooperate with Mexico's National Solar Water Heater Program ( known as PROCALSOL ) to develop a supportive regulatory environment and to assist in building the market demand and the supply chain for solar water heaters ( SWHs ).

The aim is to reach the total capacity of 2,500,000 cubic metres of installed SWH systems in Mexico by the end of 2011.

It also aims to support continuing sustainable growth of the market beyond the project's life in order to reach the target to 23.5 million cubic metres of installed capacity by 2020.

This has been estimated to correspond to an estimated cumulative greenhouse gas reduction potential of over 27 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2020.

China, the world leader in solar water heaters, has an installed solar water heater capacity of around 100 million cubic metres million and has created 600,000 green jobs.

Thus, by 2020, Mexico might have the potential to generate jobs for some 150,000 people in this sector as a result of the new project.

### About World Environment Day

World Environment Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP.

WED is commemorated each year on 5 June in a different city. It is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

The day's agenda is to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. World Environment Day is also a popular event with colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essay and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, as well as recycling and cleaning-up campaigns.

On that particular day, heads of State, Prime Ministers and Ministers of Environment deliver statements and commit themselves to care for the Earth. Pledges are made which lead to the establishment of permanent governmental structures dealing with environmental management. It also provides an opportunity to sign or ratify international environmental conventions.

Last year the main global host was New Zealand and the theme was 'Kick the CO<sub>2</sub> Habit-Towards a Low Carbon Economy'.

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### **UN News Centre: UN partners with YouTube to launch online television channel**

23 September 2008 – The United Nations has launched its television channel on YouTube, a popular video sharing and social networking web site, in an effort to reach a broader and younger audience on a range of issues on the world body's agenda.

The programmes set to air on the channel are produced by UN Television (UNTV) with the Organization's agencies and funds, and cover topics such as climate change, development, human rights and peace and security.

Some of the current stories posted on site address the fight against prejudice of India's so-called untouchables, the threats to the ecological treasures of the Galapagos Islands and several segments from *21st Century*, the UN's monthly news magazine that spotlights the world's most forgotten stories.

The UN is also partnering with YouTube to launch, on 25 September, a joint campaign *In My Name* with global nonprofits Oxfam, GPAC and Save the Children, to draw attention to the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) – the set of eight anti-poverty targets world leaders have pledged to achieve by 2015.

As part of the campaign, Black Eyed Peas singer Will.i.am will ask citizens from every country to upload footage to YouTube supporting the MDGs by stating their name, their country and, if desired, a request to their government to end poverty.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon intends to join the online petition that will feature a song written by the Black Eyed Peas artist especially for the campaign.

The partnership with YouTube is the latest effort by the UN to use new media technologies to get its message out. The world body recently drew on SMS mechanics

for the International Day of Peace "Txt 4 Peace" campaign encouraging people across the world to send messages of peace.

An innovative partnership was also forged between Internet giant Google and the UN Environment Programme (**UNEP**) to map environmental projects across the globe.

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### **Environmental Expert.com: Mexico to host World Environment Day 2009**

Source: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Published Sep. 23, 2008

Mexico, a country at the crossroads of the Green Economy and one increasingly in the centre of regional and global affairs will host the international 2009 World Environment Day celebrations.

The theme chosen by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which coordinates the day on 5 June on behalf of the UN system and the peoples of the world, will be 'Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change'.

It reflects the urgency for nations to agree on a new agreement at the crucial climate convention meeting in Copenhagen some 180 days later in the year, and the links with overcoming poverty and improved management of forests.

The news that Mexico has been chosen to host World Environment Day (WED) 2009 was announced jointly by President Felipe Calderón and Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director at a press conference in Mexico City.

The decision in part reflects the growing practical and political role of the Latin American country in the fight against climate change, including its growing participation in the carbon markets.

Mexico is also a leading partner in UNEP's Billion Tree Campaign. The country, with the support of its President and people, has spearheaded the pledging and planting of some 25 per cent of the trees under the campaign.

UNEP has now launched a new and more ambitious phase-the Seven Billion Tree Campaign.

This aims to see more than one new tree planted for every person alive by the Copenhagen meeting as one empowering symbol of the global publics' desire for action by their political leaders on the greatest challenge for this generation.

President Calderón said:'It is great news that today the un, through achim steiner, has announced that Mexico will be the international seat for World Environment Day next 5 june here in our beloved country'.

He said he hoped WED would not only be a time of reflection on the great challenges facing humanity including climate change, but an event linked with 'a lot of action and committment'.

'Undoubtedly this decision further underlines Mexico's determination to manage natural resources and deal with the most demanding challenge of the 21st century-climate change,' said President Calderón.

Mr Steiner, who is also a UN Under-Secretary General, said: 'I am delighted that the President and the people of Mexico will be the hosts of WED only some 180 days before governments meet in Copenhagen before the crucial UN climate convention meeting'.

'Mexico is at the cross-roads of the Green Economy politically, physically and practically. Firstly it still has many challenges, from high air pollution in cities and dependence on fossil fuels to land degradation and the need to fight poverty. But Mexico is also emerging as one among a group of developing economies who are bringing much needed leadership to the need for a new, comprehensive and decisive climate treaty,' he said.

Mr Steiner said that in addition Mexico was seizing the opportunities of the carbon markets and had, in just four short years, become second only to Brazil in terms of wind, solar, biogas and other Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects in the region.

'Thirdly Mexico's ambitions in terms of combating climate change under its new Special programme-ambitions that include renewable energy to using forests and other nature-based assets as carbon sinks-will send a clear message to countries in the region and the world that Mexico means to be part of the solution,' he noted.

'Finally, Mexico is set to be one of the big economies of the 21st century along with nations like China and India. Thus its ability to encourage the greening of the economy of neighboring nations-both North and South of its borders-will be significant,' he noted.

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### **Fiji Daily Post: ILO says climate change can create jobs**

24-Sep-2008 08:26 AM

GENEVA (ILO News) - Early global efforts to avert dangerous climate change are already generating new jobs, and could produce millions of new employment opportunities, according to a new study to be launched globally by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

The study, entitled Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World, was released yesterday by the ILO.

The report is the first comprehensive study on the emergence of a green economy and its impact on the world of work. It includes new data that shows a changing pattern of employment in which green jobs are being generated in many sectors and economies around the world as a result of measures to tackle climate change and to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. This has also led to changing patterns of investment flows into areas such as renewable energy and energy efficiency at the household and industrial level.

Within current policy frameworks, only a fraction of the potential benefits for jobs and development is forthcoming.

The report makes a series of policy recommendations for the international community in the lead-up to the UN Climate Convention meeting in Copenhagen in late 2009. A main point of interest will be improved access to investment for developing countries, and boosting energy efficiency in buildings and industry worldwide. The report also calls for financial support for countries to develop productive but low-emission agriculture and to manage forests to increase carbon absorption potential and to generate Green Jobs in the forestry sector in the tropics. In addition the report highlights the importance of active labour market policies, social dialogue and broad social protections to ensure a fair and just transition for workers and their communities.

The ILO says the seminal report is seen as an important contribution to creating the necessary awareness about the new green economy and assist in triggering the needed changes.

ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia; UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner; the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) General Secretary Guy Ryder and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) Vice President Ronnie Goldberg presented the report at a UN Press Briefing yesterday.

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**AFP: UNESCO lists Samarra as world heritage site**  
**By Agence France Presse**

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

BAGHDAD: The central Iraqi Sunni city of Samarra, which houses a revered Shiite mosque that was bombed by Al-Qaeda, has been selected as a world heritage site, the government said on Tuesday. "The Universal Heritage Committee of UNESCO has agreed to add the city of Samarra to its list of world heritage sites," a statement said.

North of Baghdad in the Sunni province of Salaheddin, Samarra gained prominence after the Shiite Al-Askari shrine there was bombed on February 22, 2006, by Al-Qaeda fighters.

That attack sparked brutal sectarian violence nationwide that killed tens of thousands of people, mostly in Baghdad.

This is the UN's second heritage initiative in Iraq this month. Achim Steiner, the chief of the UN Environment Program, said on September 5 that, after a four-year restoration project, the agency would work with UNESCO to list Iraq's marshlands a World Heritage site.

Saddam drained the marshlands after the end of the first Gulf War to punish Iraq's Shiite majority for an uprising.

Japan and Italy restored more than half of the marshlands - believed by some to be the biblical Garden of Eden - and Iraqi authorities took over plans for further rehabilitation.

Iraqi Environment Minister Narmin Othman said the government also planned to make the marshlands a national park.

The last available satellite images showed that around 58 percent of the marshlands' had been restored.

Iraq's Tourism and Archaeology Ministry on Tuesday welcomed UNESCO's announcement concerning Samarra.

"Adding Samarra to the UNESCO list means it will get international attention," ministry spokesman Abdel Zahra al-Talqani said. - AFP

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### **UAE Daily News: Princess Haya calls on UAE residents to join Mission Green Earth**

23 September, 2008 05:45:00 priya  
Mission Green Earth

In a significant and historical initiative, one million UAE residents are expected to come together and stand up during the three days of October 17, 18 and 19 2008, to make a nation-wide pledge to pursue policies that encourage sustainable living and help drive sustainable environment in the emirates as part of a unique 'Mission Green Earth - Stand up and Take Action 2008' campaign.

The campaign will be held under the patronage of UN Messenger of Peace HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, Wife of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, with the support of UNDP, UNEP and the International Humanitarian City (IHC).

The campaign is organised by the Art of Living (AOL) and the International Association for Human Values (IAHV), with the support of Barclays Bank PLC and aims to mobilise and inspire people through a variety of activities planned in schools, organisations and institutions across the emirates.

The 'Stand Up' campaign, occurring simultaneously all over the world, stems from the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC), a UN entity advocating at a global scale the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - an eight-point road map with measurable targets including ending poverty and achieving a safer, more prosperous and equitable life for all - to be accomplished by 2015.

Re-affirmed each year, the 'Stand Up' challenge involves millions of people all over the world standing up in solidarity for a cause. Last year in UAE, 98,000 people stood up to end extreme poverty and hunger. This year, the focus is on 'Ensuring environmental sustainability' in the UAE, the seventh goal of the Millennium Development Goals.

In Her capacity as the UN Messenger of Peace and Patron of the campaign, Her Royal

Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein has asked UAE residents from all walks of life to join the campaign and take a stand in support of environmental sustainability.

"Last year, over 43 million people stood up across the world at the same time to remind their leaders of the promise they made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Those 43 million individuals represented a strong united voice against a plague that is threatening the future of our planet; poverty; reminding us of the responsibility we have towards the future of this earth" she said.

Haya added that "This year, our "Stand Up and Take Action" commitment is not only about mankind, it is also about our planet. Why? Because reducing poverty and achieving sustained development must be done in conjunction with a healthy planet, and because climate change must be addressed as a humanitarian emergency, the environmental sustainability' goal is the focus of our campaign this year. Let's give the UAE's voice to this global wake-up call and stand up altogether on October 17, 18 and 19." The Mission Green Earth campaign has its roots in the United Nations Millennium Goals (MDGs). In September 2000, 189 Heads of Nations came together to commit to work together to end poverty and to build a safer, more prosperous and equitable world for all by 2015 at the United Nations Millennium Summit, which gave birth to the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Mission Green Earth aligns with MDG No 7 in support of a sustainable environment.

The Millennium Development Goals are supported and reinforced by the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC).

Launched in 2002, the UNMC is a U.N. initiative to support and encourage people's involvement and actions to realise the eight MDG's and hold their government accountable for the millennium promise. The "Stand up and Speak Out" challenge was launched in 2006. In 2007, 43.7 million people around the world and 98,000 in UAE people stood up to end extreme poverty and hunger

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### **Other Environment News**

#### **BBC: 'Climate-proof' crop hunt begins**

By Mark Kinver  
Science and environment reporter, BBC News

#### **A global search has begun for food crops with traits that are able to withstand changes to the climate.**

The project, co-ordinated by the Global Crop Diversity Trust, is searching national seed banks for "climate proof" varieties, including maize and rice.

The team will screen seeds for natural resistance to extreme events, such as floods, droughts or temperature swings.

They hope the strains will help protect food production from the impacts of climate change.

The trust says a lack of readily available and accurate material severely hinders plant breeders' efforts to identify material that can be used to develop crop varieties that will cope with future conditions.

"Our crops must produce more food, on the same amount of land, with less water, and more expensive energy," explained the trust's executive director, Cary Fowler.

"There is no possible scenario in which we can continue to grow food we require without crop diversity."

The \$1.5m (£750,000) scheme will provide grants for projects that will screen developing nations' seed collections.

### **Open access**

The gene hunt is the latest stage in the organisation's ongoing process of conserving the diversity of the world's food crops.

Over the past few years, it has convened a series of meetings that brought together leading experts for each of the main food crops, such as wheat, rice, lentils and maize.

Each meeting was set the task of identifying the best conservation strategy for each of the crops.

"The experts have, among other things, helped us identify which are the most important seed collections in terms of genetic diversity," Mr Fowler told BBC News.

"This has provided us with the scientific foundation for almost everything else we do."

The information has helped the trust, which is also responsible for the "Doomsday seed vault" in the Arctic, pinpoint the exact characteristics needed to ensure that crops have the best chance of thriving in the future.

Mr Fowler said one example was whether a plant displayed a good degree of heat resistance during its flowering period.

This was a time when a plant would be experiencing increased stress, he said, yet very little data had been gathered on this part of the organisms' lifecycles.

Over the next 12-24 months, the project's researchers hope to build up a comprehensive profile of the various "climate-proof" traits and in which crops they are found.

"Then it is a matter of getting these varieties containing those valuable traits into breeding programmes," Mr Fowler explained.

He added that all the data would be made available to everyone - both public and private organisations - in an online database.

"Plant breeders will be able to go online and type their search criteria, then up pops the details of the samples that match the breeders' requirements, such as drought tolerance or heat resistance."

Developing crops that will be able to produce higher yields and cope with climate change is one avenue that is also being explored by the biotechnology sector.

Campaigners in favour of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) hope that developments in this area will lessen public opposition to GM food.

When asked whether he was concerned that the information gathered by the trust could be used to produce commercial GM crops, Mr Fowler said: "We don't have a horse in that race.

"Agriculture is facing a lot of challenges, and diversity holds a lot of the keys to meeting those challenges.

"I wish I had a crystal ball good enough to see what agriculture is going to need 100 years or 500 years from now, but I don't.

"All I would say is that the people involved in fighting the pro-GMO or anti-GMO battle don't have that crystal ball either - the best we can do is conserve all the options."

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## **AP: Western initiative proposes emissions-trading plan**

By SAMANTHA YOUNG, Associated Press Writer *Tue Sep 23, 5:49 PM ET*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Seven western states and four Canadian provinces on Tuesday proposed a comprehensive program to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, manufacturers and vehicles.

The Western Climate Initiative would establish a regional market to trade carbon emissions credits and is designed to keep down costs for those affected. It covers more polluters than other regional plans adopted in the United States, Canada and Europe.

"We're sending a strong message to our federal governments that states and provinces are moving forward in the absence of federal action, and we're setting the stage for national programs that are just as aggressive," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

The plan is aimed at cutting the region's carbon emissions below 2005 levels by 2020, a roughly 15 percent reduction.

The idea is to allow industries that emit greenhouse gases to buy and sell credits for their emissions. Businesses that cannot cut their emissions enough can buy the right to pollute from cleaner companies.

The plan was drafted by Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, and by the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

Whether lawmakers in each state will now adopt the regulations is unclear. In Utah, for example, legislative leaders fear the state's businesses would be put at a disadvantage in a global economy.

"We want to make certain we do not unnecessarily harm Utah businesses," Senate President Jon Valentine, a Republican, said. "You can end up with such an aggressive approach that it hurts businesses in Utah and makes us not competitive."

Most large industrial polluters, automakers and coal-based utilities are lobbying state legislatures to wait for a uniform federal program. Congress failed this year to enact global warming legislation — adding to the push for a regional program.

"Doing nothing is going to cost us a whole lot more in the future," Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire told reporters in a conference call.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski called the framework "a solid starting point" that would help the state meet its goals.

While environmental groups generally support the proposal, they said it might allow states to be too easy on industry if they impose only the minimal benchmarks — setting the stage for state-by-state campaigns to strengthen the rules.

"It basically would amount to a giant handout to polluters unless the states take further action," said Bernadette Del Chiaro, director of the clean energy program at Environment California.

California air regulators said the program would combat global warming in the most cost-effective manner, spur green technologies, clean up the region's energy supplies and reduce dependence on foreign oil.

The idea is to allow industries that emit greenhouse gases to buy and sell credits for their emissions. Businesses that cannot cut their emissions enough can buy the right to pollute from cleaner companies.

They could also invest in so-called offset projects — such as planting trees — to achieve up to 49 percent of their emission reductions, a controversial strategy that environmentalists say would let polluters off the hook for cutting their own emissions.

The proposal by the western states is much broader than a new carbon market being launched this week by 10 northeast states. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative caps emissions from power plants.

Under the plan released by the Western Climate Initiative, utilities and industries could begin trading emission credits on Jan. 1, 2012, and transportation and heating fuels would have until 2015.

Each state would decide how to distribute emission credits — selling at least 10 percent to polluters through an auction and possibly giving away the rest for free at the beginning of the program.

If fully implemented by all states and provinces, the market would cover nearly 90 percent of the region's emission reductions, according to the California Environmental Protection Agency.

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#### **Reuters: On Texas prairie, wind power is resurgent**

Tue Sep 23, 2008 5:56pm EDT

By Eileen O'Grady

ROSCOE, Texas (Reuters) - Fewer people curse the ever-present breeze that sweeps the treeless West Texas landscape these days, where the flat horizon has been overtaken by hundreds of wind turbines that produce electricity for distant city dwellers and new income for rural residents.

"Now we love the wind," said Max Watt as she signed her name on the side of a 98-foot-long turbine blade to commemorate the opening of wind farm about 200 miles west of Fort Worth. "We say, 'blow, blow, blow.'"

Wind farms like this one, owned by a subsidiary of German-based E.ON AG, are transforming the rural area's economy as well as its otherwise featureless horizon.

Watt and her husband own land in Nolan County where three E.ON turbines are now spinning, sending electricity to nearby cities and a steady stream of cash into their pockets.

While permits to build new cleaner-burning coal plants languish before state utility commissions due to pollution concerns, demand for wind power is resurgent. Electricity from windmills generates no heat-trapping greenhouse gases and is pumping cash into rural community economies.

Generally landowners get a per-turbine lease payment for land - about \$900 per turbine a month - plus a percentage of royalties from power production once the windmills are hooked into the grid.

The U.S. renewable energy unit of E.ON has completed the first two phases of the Roscoe wind farm that can produce 335.5 megawatts of electricity, or enough to supply 100,000 average Texas homes at full output.

When completed in mid-2009, the Roscoe will farm will include 627 turbines with total capacity of 781.5 megawatts, making it the world's largest wind farm and surpassing the current leader, FPL Energy's Horse Hollow wind farm in nearby Taylor County, Texas.

E.ON Climate and Renewables plans to spend \$10 billion in the next three years, mostly on wind projects. About \$1.5 billion will be invested in the Roscoe project, one of five E.ON operates in Texas, said Declan Flanagan, E.ON Climate's North American chief executive.

Flanagan said the heavily agricultural area in Nolan County near Abilene didn't appear to be an ideal site for development when it was first brought to the company's attention several years ago because it lacked sufficient wind and access to transmission lines to move power to the state's electric grid.

But the company decided to install a tower to test the area's wind potential and now the site will become the world's largest farm.

"An area that conventional wisdom would have said was not a good spot, we quickly found had potential," Flanagan told about 200 landowners gathered at the site on Monday.

And Flanagan said E.ON isn't through developing wind projects in Texas.

"The state needs native, clean energy," Flanagan said.

Texas leads the nation in the amount of installed wind capacity at 5,871 megawatts, according to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or ERCOT, which oversees the state's transportation grid.

By the end of the year, ERCOT expects more than 8,500 MW of wind will be connected to the grid.

As new transmission lines are constructed over the next few

years to move additional power from the windy areas in the western half of the state to the power-hungry cities in the eastern half, the number of wind farms will accelerate.

(Editing by Chris Baltimore)

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**ROA MEDIA UPDATE  
THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE NEWS  
24 September 2008**

**General Environment News**

**Kenya: Mau Team Gets Hostile Reception**

[The Nation](#) (Nairobi): Members of a taskforce mandated to investigate the Mau Forest settlements met a hostile reception in the area. The Prime Minister's taskforce on the Mau complex was on a tour of some of the settlement schemes in the Mau East Forest in Molo District.

Residents told them that they would not move out of the water catchment area until they were compensated by the Government or offered alternative land. Former Kuresoi MP Moses Cheboi told the team led by Prof Fred Owino at Chepkoburot in Ndoinet that instead of evicting the settlers, the Government should educate them on ways of conserving the forest. He insisted that those living in the forest were there legally because they had been settled there by the past regime.

The leader blamed the Government for the settlers' woes, saying even President Kibaki had given out 2,500 title deeds to members of the Ogiek community when he toured the area in 2005.

At some point, Mr. Peter ole Sina, a member of the taskforce, sided with the residents, accusing the Government of illegally allocating the land. "The Government should not harass you. Hold on to your title deeds to prove your ownership of the land," he told them.

Addressing the more than 1,000 residents, Prof Owino explained that the taskforce would establish how people came to settle there and make recommendations on how to handle the matter. He said the destruction of the water catchment was so immense that urgent national and internal interventions were required to stop the destruction.

The decision to get the settlers out of the forest has divided politicians especially in the Orange Democratic Movement. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230066.html>

**Uganda: 'Use Friendly Pest Control Methods'**

[New Vision](#) (Kampala): SCIENTISTS have been urged to adopt environmentally friendly methods to control pests. This would save the environment. While speaking at the session of the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa Council of Ministers meeting, the agriculture minister, Hilary Onek, noted that many pesticides used pollute the environment in Africa. Pesticides that pollute the environment were being used.

The meeting, which attracted agriculture ministers from eight member countries, took place at Imperial Botanic Beach Hotel in Entebbe on Thursday. The countries included Uganda the founder state since 1962, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and Djibouti.

Onek explained that although locusts had not attacked Uganda for some years, there was need for the country to participate in the control methods. "Locusts are very fast and destructive insects which can cover about 50 kilometers a day. We need to be alert," he said. Onek added that last year, locusts invaded Kenya and Ethiopia and the technical units were deployed to control them.

The out-going chairman of the bloc, Gideon Ndambuki, called for the intervention of the governments since the region is vulnerable to the destruction by the migratory pests. Ndambuki is also the Kenyan assistant minister for agriculture.  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230167.html>

### **Uganda: NFA, Bodies to Conserve Katsyoha-Kitomi Forest**

[New Vision](#) (Kampala): The National Forestry Authority (NFA) has entered into an agreement with four community-based organizations in Bushenyi district to conserve and manage Katsyoha-Kitomi forest. The organizations' activities will include tree-planting. They were connected to NFA by Nature Uganda, which is implementing the Participatory Environmental Management (PEMA II) project in Bushenyi, Ibanda and Kamwenge districts.

Paul Musamari, a representative from NFA, said they could not manage the forests without collaboration from the communities living near them. He was speaking at the signing of the agreement at St. Francis Vocational School in Kyamuhunga sub-county, Bushenyi recently.

He noted that the increasing population in the country was hurting natural resources, especially the forests, because communities carry out illegal deforestation to clear land for settlement and agriculture as well as get fuel. He explained that NFA would work with the communities and give them tree seedlings and beehives. "The forests are facing pressure from all corners. That is why we are coming up with programmes to promote their sustainable use," Musamari said. He added that the increasing demand for timber because of the boom in the construction industry had also led to the reduction in forest coverage in the country.

The project targets over 3,000 households living near forests. These households have been encroaching on the forest because of lack of alternative sources of income and fuel.  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230329.html>

### **South Africa: Stiffer Penalties for Green Offences**

[Business Day](#) (Johannesburg): The National Assembly yesterday adopted legislation which will significantly strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws by increasing penalties. The National Environment Laws Amendment Bill increases the maximum fine for contravention of some environmental measures to R10m and also introduces the concept of anticipatory costs, which drew strong criticism during public hearings.

Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said in his speech that it had become evident that while prison sentences in environmental legislation were comparable with what was found internationally, the fines were too low. "The amendment seeks to limit the cost to the state by giving magistrates' courts jurisdiction over environmental offences and the penalties provided for in the acts," the minister said.

Democratic Alliance environmental affairs spokesman Gareth Morgan welcomed the increase in penalties, saying it was "common cause that higher penalties will act as a greater deterrent for individuals or entities that consider perpetrating environmental crimes".

He also welcomed Parliament's amendments to the initially open-ended clause on anticipatory costs which would now be limited to "costs for reasonable remedial measures to be undertaken". The costs would be those borne by the authorities to undertake remedial work when there was a failure to comply with a directive to clean up pollution. The bill once enacted will also see the dissolution of the four-year-old national environmental advisory forum and the committee for environmental co-ordination. The bill also clarified the retrospective application of the National Environment Management Act, after a court found that it did not apply to pollution caused before 1999 when the act took effect.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230092.html>

### **Southern Africa: Fire Conference under Way**

New Era (Windhoek): The seventh Southern Africa Fire Network (SAFNet) conference is underway in Katima Mulilo. Experts from southern African countries are meeting to discuss operational strategies and the definition of management policies to monitor and control wild fires in SADC countries.

Each year, an estimated area of 168 million hectares or 17 percent of the area of Africa south of the Equator burns up, with the 2006/7 fire seasons among the worst in several countries in southern Africa. The fires resulted in widespread destruction.

A statement from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, which is hosting the conference, said the fire experts would visit communities that are participating in the Community Forestry in Namibia (CFN) programme to discuss fire management techniques that have been introduced under this programme. The statement said the Namibian community-based approach in management and fire prevention activities could be a best-practice example to be adopted in other countries.

Presentations about the work of other international organizations will be followed by a Geographic Information System (GIS) training provided for all participants with the aim to pave the way for a SADC wide fire monitoring and warning system.

Although forest fires threaten the conservation of forest resources, they are also natural events that clear areas for fresh biomass to grow, help to recycle nutrients and even stimulate the germination of some tree and shrub species. However, trees need time to grow and when the fire frequency becomes too high; seedlings die before they grow to a more fire resistant age. Consequently, repeated fire damage either kills the tree directly or weakens it so that it becomes vulnerable to secondary attacks by fungi, parasites or insect attacks. The loss of young trees will slowly destroy the forest even if the bigger ones survive the fires.

SAFNet is a regional network that fosters collaborative efforts in fire monitoring and management in southern Africa. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230434.html>

### **Nigeria: Flood Sacks Imo Communities**

[Vanguard](#) (Lagos): More than 12,250 persons have been sacked by a ravaging flood in Awo Idemili, Orsu Local Government area of Imo State, occasioned by several days of downpour that submerged their ancestral homes. Okwuamaraihe autonomous communities is the worst hit, while the flood at present time, has successfully sacked seven out of nine villages.

Orsu Local Government area remains one of the local council areas in Imo State where flood and soil erosion has wreaked a lot of havoc in the past two decades or more. The present flood attack, which has paralyzed socio-economic activities has not only claimed some lives but also made scores of families refugees in their own town, as most of them now live in sub-human conditions in primary school classrooms, churches and other public places. The problem posed by the ravaging flood is now beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments".

The representative of Orsu local council area in Imo State House of Assembly, Chief Stan Dara, said that the Federal Government, in addition to finding a permanent solution to the problem, should notify the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to rehabilitate the now hopeless victims. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230301.html>

### **Ghana: Ghanaians Urged to Protect Environment**

[Ghanaian Chronicle](#) (Accra): The Akyem Abuakwa Youth Movement (AAYoM), a on-partisan and religious youth-oriented human resource development capacity building organization, has called on Ghanaians across the country, to cultivate the habit of planting, at least, one tree every year.

According to them, in order to preserve the trees, and other natural resources that were preserved by our predecessors, there was the need for Ghanaians to make it a point to replant those trees which were cut, for the sake of the survival of generations to come. Quoting the popular cliché, when the last tree dies the last man will die, the Movement appealed to the good people of Ghana, not to lose sight of the fact that in our quest for survival, we should not endanger the existence and survival of the next generation, by degrading the environment.

They made the call at the Movement's tree planting exercise, which was under the theme, 'Environmental Preservation, the Role of the Youth,' in Kibi last Saturday. The exercise formed part of the Movement's objectives, to help and protect the environment.

Elaborating on the objectives and vision of the Movement, he stated that the mission of the Movement was to establish a coercive group of youth rights activists in the Akyem Abuakwa Kingdom, as well as educate the youth on their human and civic rights and responsibilities, and to safeguard their interests.

In all about 300 seedlings, made up of 100 shades, 100 vertia, 50 royal, and 50 weeping willow trees, were planted along some principal streets, as well as government and individual compounds. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200809230759.html>

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- Mexico to be host of 2009 World Environment Day - [eTaiwan News](#)
- Mexico to host next World Environment Day - [Economic Times](#)
- Mexico to host next World Environment Day – [The Times of India](#)
- Mexico to host World Environment Day in June 2009 – [The News](#)

[General environment news](#)

- Crown Prince to attend UN General Assembly – [Borneo Bulletin](#)
- Carbon plan hurts industry, says NSW – [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

***UNEP or UN in the news***

***UN Launches YouTube Television Channel***

Wednesday, 24 September 2008, 10:27 am  
Press Release: United Nations

UN partners with YouTube to launch online television channel

23 September 2008 – The United Nations has launched its television channel on YouTube, a popular video sharing and social networking web site, in an effort to reach a broader and younger audience on a range of issues on the world body's agenda.

The programmes set to air on the channel are produced by UN Television (UNTV) with the Organization's agencies and funds, and cover topics such as climate change, development, human rights and peace and security.

Some of the current stories posted on site address the fight against prejudice of India's so-called untouchables, the threats to the ecological treasures of the Galapagos Islands and several segments from 21st Century, the UN's monthly news magazine that spotlights the world's most forgotten stories.

The UN is also partnering with YouTube to launch, on 25 September, a joint campaign In My Name with global nonprofits Oxfam, GPAC and Save the Children, to draw attention to the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs)  
– the set of eight anti-poverty targets world leaders have pledged to achieve by 2015.

As part of the campaign, Black Eyed Peas singer Will.i.am will ask citizens from every country to upload footage to YouTube supporting the MDGs by stating their name, their country and, if desired, a request to their government to end poverty.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon intends to join the online petition that will feature a song written by the Black Eyed Peas artist especially for the campaign.

The partnership with YouTube is the latest effort by the UN to use new media technologies to get its message out. The world body recently drew on SMS mechanics for the International Day of Peace "Txt 4 Peace" campaign encouraging people across the world to send messages of peace.

An innovative partnership was also forged between Internet giant Google and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to map environmental projects across the globe.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0809/S00529.htm>

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### ***ILO says climate change can create jobs***

24-Sep-2008 08:26 AM

GENEVA (ILO News) - Early global efforts to avert dangerous climate change are already generating new jobs, and could produce millions of new employment opportunities, according to a new study to be launched globally by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

The study, entitled Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World, was released yesterday by the ILO.

The report is the first comprehensive study on the emergence of a green economy and its impact on the world of work. It includes new data that shows a changing pattern of employment in which green jobs are being generated in many sectors and economies around the world as a result of measures to tackle climate change and to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. This has also led to changing patterns of investment flows into areas such as renewable energy and energy efficiency at the household and industrial level.

Within current policy frameworks, only a fraction of the potential benefits for jobs and development is forthcoming.

The report makes a series of policy recommendations for the international community in the lead-up to the UN Climate Convention meeting in Copenhagen in late 2009. A main point of interest will be improved access to investment for developing countries, and boosting energy efficiency in buildings and industry worldwide. The report also calls for financial support for countries to develop productive but low-emission agriculture and to manage forests to increase carbon absorption potential and to generate Green Jobs in the forestry sector in the tropics. In addition the report highlights the importance of active labour market policies, social dialogue and broad social protections to ensure a fair and just transition for workers and their communities.

The ILO says the seminal report is seen as an important contribution to creating the necessary awareness about the new green economy and assist in triggering the needed changes.

ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia; UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner; the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) General Secretary Guy Ryder and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) Vice President Ronnie Goldberg presented the report at a UN Press Briefing yesterday.

<http://fijidailynews.com/news.php?section=1&fijidailynews=19109>

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### ***Mexico to be host of 2009 World Environment Day***

Agence France-Presse, Page 12  
2008-09-24 01:23 AM

Mexico will host the next World Environment Day in June 2009, the head of the UN Environment Program said here Monday, praising the country's efforts to tackle climate change.

"Mexico is at the crossroads of the green economy politically, physically and practically," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner at a news conference with Mexican President Felipe Calderon.

Steiner underlined the north American country's significant environmental challenges, "from high air pollution in cities and dependence on fossil fuels to land degradation and the need to fight poverty.

"But Mexico is also emerging as one among a group of developing economies who are bringing much needed leadership to the need for a new, comprehensive and decisive climate treaty," he said.

In four years Mexico has become second only to Brazil in terms of wind, solar, and biogas projects in the region, he said, underlining its growing participation in carbon markets.

The UN-sponsored World Environment Day began 36 years ago and takes place annually on June 5.

Next year's event will focus on combating climate change, one of the top priorities of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

[http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news\\_content.php?id=746344](http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=746344)

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### ***Mexico to host next World Environment Day***

23 Sep, 2008, 0630 hrs IST, AFP

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[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/Developmental\\_Issues/Mexico\\_to\\_host\\_next\\_World\\_Environment\\_Day/articleshow/3515985.cms](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/Developmental_Issues/Mexico_to_host_next_World_Environment_Day/articleshow/3515985.cms)

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[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Developmental\\_Issues/Mexico\\_to\\_host\\_next\\_World\\_Environment\\_Day/articleshow/3515985.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Developmental_Issues/Mexico_to_host_next_World_Environment_Day/articleshow/3515985.cms)

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Updated at: 0705 PST, Tuesday, September 23, 2008

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<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=56054>

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<b><i>General environment news</i></b>
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***Crown Prince to attend UN General Assembly***

By Sonia K

His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, and Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah yesterday evening arrived in New York to attend the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Their Royal Highnesses arrived at the John F Kennedy Airport and were greeted by Latif Tuah, the permanent-designate of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations in New York.

Accompanying the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness are His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Muntaqim and Prince Abdul Qawi.

As world leaders are gathering in New York city for the annual debate of the General Assembly, the coming week is expected to attract a great deal of attention as the heads of UN member states take turns addressing the assembly at the UN Headquarters.

Meanwhile, the United States has agreed to join Singapore, New Zealand, Chile and Brunei in a free trade agreement, which could set the pace for a broader Asia-Pacific free trade area, officials said.

US Trade Representative Susan Schwab is expected to announce Washington's decision to participate in the "Comprehensive Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement" at a meeting overnight with ministers from the four countries on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the officials said.

"I can confirm that the US will join," a US administration official told AFP.

The agreement, the first trade pact involving a group of Pacific Rim countries, was signed between Singapore, Chile and New Zealand in 2005 before Brunei joined it a year later.

It was commonly known as the "P4" group with a broad objective to tear down trade barriers among participants within a decade, officials said.

The US decision to join the agreement will give impetus to a long term initiative within the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to forge a Free Trade Agreement of the Asia Pacific, officials said.

Schwab will at the talks Monday announce the "launch of negotiations" for the United States to join the P4 agreement, one Asia-Pacific diplomat involved in the talks said.

Washington in March decided to hold talks with the P4 on freeing up just investment and financial services.

"The terms of the US accession to the broad agreement is to be discussed later among the five parties," the diplomat told AFP. "The investment and financial services talks will be folded into the larger agreement."

The P4 group has a "benchmark matched by few preferential trade agreements", New Zealand's trade minister Phil Goff said during a recent Washington visit.

New Zealand, which has concluded free trade agreements with Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Chile, is the first OECD country to commence free trade negotiations with China.

The United States has numerous bilateral free trade agreements, including with Singapore and Chile but not with New Zealand or Brunei.

At the UN, the addresses will begin today and will include a speech by US President George Bush, which will be his eighth and final UN appearance as the leader of the United States.

According to the United Nations, the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly will focus on key issues such as democratisation of the United Nations; financing for development to end hunger, poverty and lack of access to clean water and basic health services; climate change in a divided but ecologically interdependent world; achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade: "Water for Life" (2005-2015); implementation of

the counter-terrorism strategy, with full respect for human rights and; human security as a part of international peace and security, including disarmament and nuclear control.

Besides that, the assembly will continue to consider issues relating to system-wide coherence, sustainable development and HIV/AIDS.

<http://www.brunei-online.com/bb/tue/sep23h1.htm>

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### ***Carbon plan hurts industry, says NSW***

Marian Wilkinson Environment Editor

September 24, 2008

THE NSW Government is warning that vital state industries, including coalmining, goldmining and electricity generation, could be damaged by the federal plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

In a move that will embarrass the Rudd Government and give political ammunition to the Federal Opposition, the NSW Government has made public its submission to the green paper on the carbon pollution reduction scheme, which contains criticisms of the federal proposal.

The NSW Minister for Climate Change, Carmel Tebbutt, said the State Government wanted Sydney to become the hub for the new carbon trading market of the Asia-Pacific.

But the submission says NSW "has concerns about the eligibility for assistance" and the "adequacy of assistance" for the state's coalmining, pulp and paper industries and goldminers. Echoing complaints by industry and the Federal Opposition, NSW says long-awaited Treasury modelling on the effect of the federal scheme needs to be available before it can finalise its position.

The submission also calls for the state's coal-fired power generators to receive free permits to pollute, arguing cash compensation proposed to help them move to cleaner energy will be inadequate.

The head of the NSW Total Environment Centre, Jeff Angel, last night attacked the NSW submission, saying: "It is essential that if the Rees Government is to gain the confidence of the public, it must withdraw support for Dark Age technology."

The NSW submission also raises questions about the federal plan to cut the fuel excise tax to compensate for increases in petrol prices under the scheme. The NSW Government warns there is a risk that the cost of operating the state's electrified passenger rail services is likely to increase under the federal scheme compared with road transport, creating an incentive in favour of car use, which is more polluting.

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/environment/carbon-plan-hurts-industry-says-nsw/2008/09/23/1221935641171.html>

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- 2- Jamaica - Alternative sources of energy high on agenda in Jamaica
- 3- Jamaica - Jamaica sends cargo to Cuba for hurricane victims
- 4- Suriname - Suriname offers Cuba hurricane recovery aid

**II Spanish**

- 5- México - Preocupante aumento del nivel del mar: Panel Intergubernamental de Cambio Climático
- 6- Nicaragua - Unas 1.299 familias afectadas en Nicaragua por las fuertes lluvias

**1- Caribbean - IDB offers grants to jump-start water and sanitation projects in the Caribbean**

**09- 23 – 08**

**WASHINGTON, USA:** Caribbean and Latin American governments that want to improve water and sanitation services can now apply for grants from the Aquafund, a new source of financing approved by the board of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on Monday.

The Aquafund is a fast-disbursing vehicle intended to help accelerate the development of projects in the water, sanitation and solid waste disposal sectors. It can be used to finance activities ranging from pre-feasibility studies to technical training and knowledge dissemination, depending on specific local needs.

“There are many innovative proposals for improving water and sanitation services in Latin America today,” said IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno. “Aquafund was created to help make those proposals a reality by financing the early stages of project preparation, and also to help replicate successful experiences on a larger scale.”

During the rest of 2008, the Aquafund could disburse up to \$15 million in grants from the IDB’s ordinary capital. Starting in 2009, Aquafund will also mobilize matching contributions from multiple donor countries, providing up to \$35 million in grants during the calendar year. Aquafund will also be able to receive contributions from private sources.

Aquafund grants can be used to support projects that subsequently receive both loans with either sovereign or non-sovereign guarantees. It is expected to finance activities

such as improvements in the legal and regulatory framework, water resource management, and capacity building at municipal, state and national level. Aquafund grants will also be available directly to water, sanitation and solid waste service operators.

“We expect Aquafund to be a catalyst for innovative approaches to these areas,” said Federico Basañes, chief of the Water and Sanitation Division at the IDB. “We have set ourselves the goal of financing projects with 100 of the region’s cities and 3000 of its rural communities by 2011, and Aquafund is going to be a key resource for municipalities that need help getting projects off the ground.”

Starting in 2009, the Aquafund will use contributions from donors to finance pilot investment projects that use new technologies and have potential for replication.

Donor funds will also be available for investment projects focusing on service expansion low-income urban and rural communities, household connections to water and sanitation networks, wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal.

**Source:** <http://www.caribbeanetnews.com/news-10903--14-14--.html>

## **2- Jamaica - Alternative sources of energy high on agenda in Jamaica**

**09 – 23 – 08**

**KINGSTON, Jamaica:** The spiralling price of oil on the world market has significantly impacted Jamaica, forcing the administration to explore alternative sources of energy.

Spearheading the Government's drive in this endeavour, is Minister of Energy, Clive Mullings.

Several initiatives are being explored to come up with alternative sources, including ethanol, solar energy, wind, bio-fuel, as well as partnerships with local and international agencies.

In October 2007, the Minister informed that the Government had given Petrojam the approval to enter into a co-generation partnership with the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS), during a tour of the refinery.

The project will involve the construction of a 120-megawatt (MW) co-generation facility at the JPS' Hunts Bay plant, which will be run on petroleum coke (petcoke), produced by Petrojam. Petcoke is a blend between petroleum and bio-gas. It costs less than a quarter of the price paid for fuels, such as coal. The project is estimated to cost US\$500 million and will be completed by 2013.

On completion, the upgraded refinery will be able to process 50,000 barrels of oil daily, up from its current capacity of 30,000, and secure more finished products from each barrel. He noted that this venture is expected to position the refinery, and by extension, Jamaica, as a viable option for processing petroleum products in the region.

In January, the Minister pointed out that the divestment of the sugar industry presented an opportunity in which the synergies and investment in alternative energy, could be

explored.

"The fact of the matter is, alternative energy is the way to go. It affects the bottom-line, it makes good economic sense. There are going to be entities that want to invest in the sugar cane industry, not just for ethanol, but for pharmaceuticals. This represents a golden opportunity for the sector. It therefore means that we have to look meaningfully at the synergies," he said.

In February, the Minister disclosed that the ethanol refinery situated at Rockfort in Kingston, which is jointly operated by the Governments of Jamaica and Brazil, will be taken over fully by the administration in May.

This will be implemented as part of the Government's thrust to establish a domestic ethanol and, by extension, a renewable energy industry in the island. Ethanol is derived from sugar cane, which is used to partially or fully power motor vehicles in some parts of the world.

He noted that there is a serious need to consider utilising renewable energy as an option to fossil fuels, in order to curtail the country's spiralling energy bill.

Mullings highlighted that Jamaica's oil bill in 2007 was in excess of US\$2 billion, which was significantly higher than the 1998 figure of US\$300 million.

He pointed out that the bauxite and transportation sectors consumed the highest volume of electricity and energy bill in the country, adding that measures are to be implemented "to wean ourselves from this dependence on fossil fuels."

Mullings said that Jamaica has been exploring for oil, adding that there were possibilities that some would be found.

Throughout the months of February to July, appeals were made to Jamaicans, by various corporate Heads, to conserve on energy, in an effort to reduce the country's energy bill.

In April, the Ministry intensified its energy conservation campaign. Senior Engineer in the Ministry's Energy Division, Fitzroy Vidal, informed that audits have been carried out in a number of Ministries and agencies and the necessary recommendations made with strict monitoring to ensure that they comply. "We have to lead by example," he stressed.

He said that the National Water Commission (NWC) is being encouraged to use more energy efficient pumps and solar where possible, adding that consumers would "likely follow suit in the way they utilise energy."

Additionally a booklet titled, 'Energy Conservation Measures and Tips for Residential and Small Commercial Sectors', was produced by the Energy Division to assist in the campaign.

In July, the Minister urged Caribbean utility companies to collaborate in order to combat the challenges posed by the escalating price of fuel and the energy crisis on the global market. "If we are to move ahead in the Caribbean towards achieving developed status, we must collaborate and continue to search for solutions to the present energy crisis we

are now experiencing," Mullings said.

Addressing the 2008 Caribbean Electric Utility Service Corporation (CARILEC) Engineers and Engineering Managers Conference, he said while the present thrust towards conservation was good, it was inevitable that growth and development would lead to increased consumption, which would demand a renewed approach to energy management.

It was announced in August that work would commence this month on the Wigton Wind Farm in Manchester by the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ), in an effort to expand the farm's generating capacity.

The project is estimated to cost US\$49.9 million and will add a further 18 MW of generating capacity to the existing 20.7 MW.

Wigton Windfarm Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of the PCJ and was incorporated in April 2000, to generate power from wind.

**Source:** <http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/news-10894--9-9--.html>

### **3-Jamaica - Jamaica sends cargo to Cuba for hurricane victims**

**09 – 23 – 08**

**HAVANA, Cuba:** A donation of food, drinking water, mattresses and other articles sent by the Jamaican government arrived to the port of eastern Santiago de Cuba to help the victims of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

The Jamaican coastguard vessel Middlesex carried the load, along with four specialists from the Jamaican Office for Disasters Preparation and Emergencies.

Local authorities received the donation on behalf of the Cuban people. The two sides exchanged information and experiences on the handling regional disasters.

Lieutenant Commander Paul Wright, the ship's commanding officer, spoke about the importance of giving aid to Cuba. "It's a great honour for us to help. Jamaica also suffered the battering of Hurricane Gustav, which left huge material losses, nevertheless we feel it's our duty to help Cuba and Haiti, since they are two sister nations."

The cargo includes contributions made by several companies, organizations, and other Jamaican entities, explained Wright.

The Jamaican sailors will take advantage of their trip to meet with their Cuban counterparts during their 24-hour stay in Santiago

**Source:** <http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/news-10902--5-5--.html>

### **4- Suriname - Suriname offers Cuba hurricane recovery aid**

**09 – 23 – 08**

**HAVANA, Cuba:** The government of Suriname will contribute \$125,000 to Cuban efforts for recovery after the passing of the devastating hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

The announcement was made by Suriname's Foreign Relations Minister Lygia Kraag-Keteldijk at the request of the president of her country, Ronald Venetiaan, in a meeting with the Cuban ambassador to that country Andres Gonzalez Garrido.

On behalf of Suriname's government, the minister expressed her deep sorrow for the damage caused by the two hurricanes and the death of seven people. The minister noted that her country is a poor nation, but is willing to support the Cuban people by making "a modest contribution."

The Cuban ambassador thanked the Surinamese government for the gesture of solidarity, through which the South American country has joined the movement that has emerged to help Cuba at such a critical moment.

Gonzalez Garrido said the action demonstrates the growing friendship and relations of solidarity between the Cuban people and that nation.

**Source:** <http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/news-10895--36-36--.html>

## **II Español**

### **5- México - Preocupante aumento del nivel del mar: Panel Intergubernamental de Cambio Climático**

**23- 09- 08**

Riesgo de “graves problemas” por escasez de agua en México en 2020.

Calderón arremete contra gobiernos anteriores; para éstos, “deforestar era una política sana”

El país albergará las celebraciones del Día Mundial del Medio Ambiente el año próximo.

El presidente del Panel Intergubernamental sobre Cambio Climático (PICC), Rajendra K. Pachauri, alertó ayer a México sobre los “graves problemas” que puede enfrentar en 2020 por la escasez de agua, y pidió que se preocupe por el aumento del nivel del mar y el consecuente impacto de “ciclones y huracanes”.

Durante la presentación en Los Pinos de un libro sobre educación ambiental –que será distribuido a un millón 200 mil maestros de primarias y secundarias de todo el país–, el experto pidió a México que se convierta en guía de las naciones en desarrollo para integrar así una agenda sobre cambio climático.

Consideró que México “es una nación desarrollada, aunque tiene partes” en proceso de serlo.

Al respecto, el presidente Felipe Calderón reconoció que el país ya padece las consecuencias del cambio climático, como en la comarca lagunera, donde se extrae agua a varios cientos de metros profundidad, la cual contiene “cierto cianuro en su composición”, y se refirió a la desaparición de “glaciales” (sic) del Popocatepetl, el Iztaccíhuatl y el Nevado de Toluca.

Acompañado también por el Nobel de Química Mario Molina, el jefe del Ejecutivo culpó de los problemas ambientales a gobiernos anteriores, que consideraron que deforestar selvas y bosques era una “política pública sana”.

Tras sostener una reunión de trabajo con Calderón, Achim Steiner, secretario ejecutivo del Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA), anunció además que aceptó la invitación para que México sea huésped de las celebraciones del Día del Medio Ambiente, el 5 de junio de 2009, organizadas por la ONU.

En su exposición, Pachauri, científico de India, quien actualmente está al frente del Instituto para Energía y Recursos, en Nueva Delhi, llamó a proteger el ambiente, debido a que el cambio climático “afectará nuestras vidas de diversas formas, que harán que todo sea muy difícil y muy caro”.

Señaló que según sus proyecciones, en 2020 habrá regiones de África donde entre 20 y 75 millones de personas vivirán sin agua; además, habrá “problemas graves” en partes de América del Norte, incluyendo México.

Consideró que el país se debe preocupar por el aumento del nivel del mar, no sólo porque se inundarán algunas partes del litoral, sino también por el impacto de ciclones, huracanes y otros fenómenos, que serán peores con un nivel de mar más alto.

Indicó que hay gran evidencia de que en el mundo varias cosechas, incluyendo maíz y trigo, se verán gravemente afectadas por el cambio climático, por lo que recomendó trabajar en cooperación con los agricultores, con el fin de que se adapten a nuevos modelos de cultivo y al uso de especies resistentes a la sequía.

Indicó que es necesario construir infraestructura desde ahora –como presas– para enfrentar eventos extremos, entre ellos olas de calor, inundaciones y sequías.

Recomendó “salirnos del pensamiento clásico para no hacer lo que vimos en el pasado” y sugirió a México que aproveche su potencial para aplicar nuevas ideas hasta para cocinar, por ejemplo, usando un gas biológico desarrollado por el instituto que encabeza.

#### Áreas naturales protegidas

En tanto, con el propósito de preservar especies de flora y fauna consideradas en riesgo, la Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Semarnat) declaró área natural protegida la zona de Boquerón de Tonalá, municipio de Santo Domingo, Oaxaca, y la del cañón del Usumacinta, en Tenosique, Tabasco; esta última constituye un importante reservorio de agua, indispensable para el mantenimiento del hábitat regional.

Mediante los decretos respectivos, que entran en vigor hoy, se prohíbe la fundación de nuevos centros de población. El objetivo es conservar, preservar y aprovechar los recursos naturales y las especies endémicas, amenazadas, en peligro de extinción o sujetas a protección especial.

En el caso de Oaxaca, se declaran protegidos el puma, el tigrillo, el escorpión, la iguana negra, el perico mexicano, el mapache y especies de importancia económica local, como el venado de cola blanca, entre otras, según se informa en los decretos, dados a conocer también por Calderón en la reunión en Los Pinos.

En relación con Tabasco, en el Diario Oficial de la Federación

[Fuente: www.jornada.unam.mx](http://www.jornada.unam.mx)

## **6- Nicaragua - Unas 1.299 familias afectadas en Nicaragua por las fuertes lluvias**

**22- 09 - 08**

Managua, Nicaragua.- Un total de 1.299 familias afectadas, dos viviendas destruidas y un puente totalmente dañado es el resultado de las fuertes lluvias caídas en Nicaragua, producto de una onda tropical, informó hoy la Defensa Civil.

El jefe de la Defensa Civil de Nicaragua, el coronel Mario Perezcassar, dijo en una rueda de prensa que las fuertes lluvias, caídas desde hace tres días y que no han dejado víctimas fatales, ni desaparecidos, han afectado principalmente el Pacífico nicaragüense.

Los lugares más aquejados por las lluvias, según el jefe de la Defensa Civil, han sido los departamentos (provincias) de Carazo, Chinandega, Granada, León y Managua, todos ubicados en el Pacífico.

En Granada, dijo, las lluvias desbordaron el río Malacatoya y El Tepalón que afectaron a 822 personas, y en Managua resultaron 477 familias "afectadas directamente".

Entre ellos, agregó, tres personas que fueron arrastradas por las corrientes en los cauces de Managua y que fueron rescatadas con vida.

La Dirección de Meteorología del Instituto Nicaragüense de Estudios Territoriales (INETER) informó de que las lluvias continuarán por las próximas 24 horas, aunque hasta hoy las autoridades no han decretado ningún tipo de alerta.

[Fuente: http://es.noticias.yahoo.com/efe/20080922/tsc-unas-1-299-familias-afectadas-en-nic-23e7ce8.html](http://es.noticias.yahoo.com/efe/20080922/tsc-unas-1-299-familias-afectadas-en-nic-23e7ce8.html)

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**RONA MEDIA UPDATE  
ENVIRONMENT IN THE NEWS  
23 September 2008**

General environment in the news:

- Reuters: US Companies See Climate Risk, But Lack Plan
- New York Times: Investment in Ocean Energy is Increasing
- Environmental Leader: Increased Disclosure of Emissions Shows that US Companies are Starting to Take Climate Change More Seriously
- Business Green: Chicago is the latest US City to “Go Green”
- Chicago Sun Times: Urban Farmer Awarded ‘Genius’ Grant
- New York Times: House Debates Ban on Diverting Water from Great Lakes

**Reuters**

*US Companies See Climate Risk, But Lack Plan*

Timothy Gardner

NEW YORK, 22 September (Reuters) - US companies judge climate change a risk to their business, but lag global companies in setting targets to cut emissions, according to a global survey.

"We're seeing the US play catch up here, but they've got a way to go," Paul Dickinson, chief executive of the Carbon Disclosure Project, which administers the annual survey, said in an interview ahead of the formal release of the 2008 CDP survey in New York on Monday.

Dickinson said the gap demonstrates the difference between the climate culture of companies in Europe and the United States.

The European Union has had mandatory greenhouse emissions caps since 2005, while the United States, historically the world's top greenhouse gas polluter, has no federal limits on the gases blamed for warming the planet.

About 81 percent of US companies responding to this year's survey, or about 255 companies, perceived climate change as a risk. Yet only 33 percent of US respondents had greenhouse gas reduction targets in place.

"They are not listening to themselves," Dickinson said.

In contrast, 74 percent of global companies that responded to the survey have set emissions reduction targets.

Only 14 percent of US oil and gas companies that responded disclosed greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

One US oil company, Occidental Petroleum responded that it "does not have sufficient information to establish a cost basis for future financial risks since no regulations requiring greenhouse gas emissions controls have been implemented by governments in the areas where Occidental operates."

Dickinson said companies should be spurred by the debt-related financial crisis to determine undiscovered risk and act on it.

"If everybody is reporting a risk, but not everybody is starting to act on it, that would seem to imply things are going to change," he said.

US presidential candidates Senators John McCain and Barack Obama have both said they favor regulating greenhouse gases.

Some 81 percent of European companies answered the survey's questions, while 64 percent of US companies responded.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSN2152741320080922?feedType=RSS&feedName=environmentNews>

## **New York Times**

### *Power From the Restless Sea Stirs the Imagination*

By Kate Galbraith

For years, technological visionaries have painted a seductive vision of using ocean tides and waves to produce power. They foresee large installations off the coast and in tidal estuaries that could provide as much as 10 percent of the nation's electricity.

But the technical difficulties of making such systems work are proving formidable. Last year, a wave-power machine sank off the Oregon coast. Blades have broken off experimental tidal turbines in New York's turbulent East River. Problems with offshore moorings have slowed the deployment of snakelike generating machines in the ocean off Portugal.

Years of such problems have discouraged ocean-power visionaries, but have not stopped them. Lately, spurred by rising costs for electricity and for the coal and other fossil fuels used to produce it, they are making a new push to overcome the barriers blocking this type of renewable energy.

The Scottish company Pelamis Wave Power plans to turn on a small wave-energy farm — the world's first — off the coast of Portugal by year's end, after fixing the broken moorings. Finavera Renewables, a Canadian company that recently salvaged its sunken, \$2.5 million Oregon wave-power machine, has signed an agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric to produce power off the California coast by 2012. And in the East River, just off Manhattan, two newly placed turbines with tougher blades and rotors are feeding electricity into a grocery store and parking garage on Roosevelt Island.

"It's frustrating sometimes as an ocean energy company to say, yeah, your device sank," said Jason Bak, chief executive of Finavera. "But that is technology development."

Roughly 100 small companies around the world are working on converting the sea's power to electricity. Many operate in Europe, where governments have pumped money into the industry. Companies and governments alike are betting that over time, costs will come down. Right now, however, little electricity is being generated from the ocean except at scattered test sites around the world.

The East River — despite its name, it is really a tidal strait with powerful currents — is the site of the most advanced test project in the United States.

Verdant Power, the company that operates it, was forced to spend several years and millions of dollars mired in a slow permit process, even before its turbine blades broke off in the currents. The company believes it is getting a handle on the problems. Verdant is trying to perfect its turbines and then install 30 of them in the East River, starting no later than spring 2010, and to develop other sites in Canada and on the West Coast.

Plenty of other start-ups also plan commercial ocean-power plants, at offshore sites such as Portugal, Oregon and Wales, but none have been built.

Ocean-power technology splits into two broad categories, tidal and wave power. Wave power, of the sort Finavera is pursuing, entails using the up and down motions of the waves to generate electricity. Tidal power — Verdant's province — involves harnessing the action of the tides with underwater turbines, which twirl like wind machines.

(Decades-old tidal technologies in France and Canada use barrage systems that trap water at high tide; they are far larger and more obtrusive than the new, below-waterline technologies.)

A third type of power, called ocean thermal, aims to exploit temperature differences between the surface and deep ocean, mainly applicable in the tropics.

Ocean power has more potential than wind power because water is about 850 times denser than air, and therefore packs far more energy. The ocean's waves, tides and currents are also more predictable than the wind.

The drawback is that seawater can batter and corrode machinery, and costly undersea cables may be needed to bring the power to shore. And the machines are expensive to build: Pelamis has had to raise the equivalent of \$77 million.

Many solar start-ups, by contrast, need as little as \$5 million to build a prototype, said Martin Lagod, co-founder of Firelake Capital Management, a Silicon Valley investment firm. Mr. Lagod looked at investing in ocean power a few years ago and decided against it because of the long time horizons and large capital requirements.

[General Electric](#), which builds wind turbines, solar panels and other equipment for virtually every other type of energy, has stayed clear of ocean energy. "At this time, these sources do not appear to be competitive with more scalable alternatives like wind and solar," said Daniel Nelson, a G.E. spokesman, in an e-mail message. (An arm of G.E. has made a small investment in Pelamis.)

Worldwide, venture capital going to ocean-power companies has risen from \$8 million in 2005 to \$82 million last year, according to the Cleantech Group, a research firm. However, that is a tiny fraction of the money pouring into [solar energy](#) and [biofuels](#).

This month the Energy Department doled out its first major Congressionally-funded grants since 1992 to ocean-power companies, including Verdant and Lockheed Martin, which is studying ocean thermal approaches.

Assuming that commercial ocean-power farms are eventually built, the power is likely to be costly, especially in the near term. A recent study commissioned by the San Francisco Public Utility Commission put the cost of harnessing the Golden Gate's tides at 85 cents to \$1.40 a kilowatt-hour, or roughly 10 times the cost of wind power. San Francisco plans to forge ahead regardless.

Other hurdles abound, including sticky environmental and aesthetic questions. In Oregon, crabbers worry that the wave farm proposed by [Ocean Power Technologies](#), a New Jersey company, would interfere with their prime crabbing grounds.

"It's right where every year we deploy 115,000 to 120,000 crab pots off the coast for an eight-month period to harvest crab," said Nick Furman, executive director of the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission. The commission wants to support renewable energy, but "we're kind of struggling with that," Mr. Furman said

George Taylor, chief executive of Ocean Power Technologies, said he did not expect "there will be a problem with the crabs."

In Washington State, where a utility is studying the possibility of installing tidal power at the Admiralty Inlet entrance to Puget Sound, scuba divers are worried, even as they recognize the need for clean power.

Said Mike Racine, president of the Washington Scuba Alliance: "We don't want to be dodging turbine blades, right?"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/business/23tidal.html?th&emc=th>

Environmental Leader

*CDP: PPG, Exelon, Cisco Among U.S. Leaders On Carbon Disclosure*

Seventy-four percent of Global 500 companies reporting to the Carbon Disclosure Project are now reporting emissions reduction targets, showing companies are increasingly taking climate change mitigation seriously, according to [the latest report from the Carbon Disclosure Project](#).

Within Retail, more than 90% of companies report such targets, with 76% in Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals and 70% in Oil and Gas. Within the Technology, Media and Telecoms industry, 68% have reduction targets.

Out of the 500 U.S. listed S&P constituent companies invited to complete CDP's Sixth Questionnaire, responses were received from 321 (64%) companies. This represents a year on year increase from 47% in 2006, through 56% in 2007. Increases in the number of responses and in the amount of detail contained in the responses from constituents of the S&P 500 is a signal that many US corporations are preparing for the possible introduction of new regulation under the next administration.

The overall response rate to the CDP among Global 500 (FTSE Global Equity Index Series) companies was maintained at 77% in 2008. European and North American companies set the pace among constituents of the 'Global 500' with response rates to CDP's annual Questionnaire of 83% and 82% respectively. This compares to a response rate of just 50% in respect of Asian companies in the Global 500. Out of the 383 companies that completed the Questionnaire, 58 companies (15%) were responding to CDP for the first time.

The majority of the 77% of Global 500 companies that reported to CDP cited regulation as a key risk factor. A background of regulatory uncertainty has, for many companies, translated into a 'wait and see' policy which, in turn, has served to delay strategic investment decisions.

The construction industry cites energy efficient buildings and energy upgrades as representing opportunities. The Technology, Media and Telecoms industry sees climate change bringing opportunities for travel substitution through teleconferencing and mobile devices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Manufacturing sector cites temperature changes, flooding, increased storm intensity, water shortages, spread of disease and change in local weather patterns as significant physical risks. Water supply was cited as a critical risk by the raw material, mining, paper and packaging sector, as well as the utilities sector, which also saw consumers becoming more aware of greenhouse gases due to rising fuel prices, which could lead to a decrease in demand.

### **Carbon Disclosure Leadership Index**

Global 500 companies with 'leading' disclosure practice are highlighted in the Carbon Disclosure Leadership Index (CDLI). The highest scoring companies in the CDLI include:

- BASF; Bayer (Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals);
- Exelon; Iberdrola; Scottish & Southern (Utilities);
- Nissan Motor (Manufacturing);
- Barclays; Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc; Munich Re; National Australia Bank (Financial Services) and
- EMC (Technology).

US companies were also graded and the top scorers within the US Carbon Disclosure leadership Index were:

- PPG Industries (Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals);
- Exelon (Utilities);
- Citigroup; Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. (Financial Services);

- Cisco; EMC (Technology, Media and Telecoms); and
- Prologis (Hospitality, Leisure and Business Services).

Under the Carbon Disclosure Project, [some 30 U.S. cities have also agreed to measure their carbon footprints](#).

<http://www.environmentalleader.com/2008/09/22/cdp-ppg-exelon-cisco-among-us-leaders-on-carbon-disclosure/>

## **Business Green**

*Chicago latest US city to unveil comprehensive climate plan*

Danny Bradbury

Chicago has announced a [climate change action plan](#) designed to reduce the city's carbon emissions to three quarters of 1990 levels by 2020.

The goal, which goes well beyond the requirements of the Kyoto protocol, has been praised as aggressive by environmental commentators.

The plan, which is part of a longer-term goal to cut carbon emissions to 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050, consists of 35 separate actions spanning five broad categories: building efficiency, clean and renewable energy, transportation, pollution and adaptation.

Goals set by the city for building efficiency include retrofitting industrial, commercial and residential buildings for energy efficiency, and the creation of 6,000 rooftop gardens – up from just 400 today.

The city energy code will also be updated, and the plan aims to reduce enough appliance and lightbulb energy consumption through equipment trade-ins to eliminate 28 million metric tonnes (MMT) of CO<sub>2</sub>.

In addition, the strategy calls for upgrades of Illinois' 21 coal-burning power plants – including two in Chicago that would save 2.5MMT through efficiency improvements – and will encourage small-scale, distributed power systems based on renewable energy, including household-based microgeneration technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines.

It will also seek to cut down transport-related emissions by increasing investment in the transit system, and encouraging greater residential developments around transit stops. Moreover, cycling, car sharing and a shift to fuel-efficient and hybrid buses will be promoted alongside plans for a high-speed intercity rail link and more energy-efficient freight movement via barge and rail.

The pollution reduction element of the plan calls for a 90 per cent reduction in waste shipped to landfill, and will phase out hydrofluorocarbons found in refrigerators, while also capturing storm water onsite.

Finally, the adaptation section of the plan will prepare the city for the effects of global warming through improved heat management and the extension of an existing "green urban design" initiative between city departments that aims to implement water management and heat dissipation technologies.

Chicago officials failed to give a clear price for the initiative, but observers said the proposals would raise the bar for other urban centres.

"It is one of the most aggressive moves that I have seen from a city," said Annie Strickler, spokeswoman for the US arm of [ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability](http://www.iclei.org), an international association of local governments pursuing sustainable development.

Strickler highlighted San Francisco and New York City as the two other leaders in environmentally friendly local government, but added that they had now been joined by Chicago.

In related news, New York has just installed the first of up to 300 aluminium alloy-based turbines in its East River, which officials claim could generate power for up to 10,000 homes.

<http://www.businessgreen.com/2226692>

### **Chicago Sun-Times**

*Urban farmer awarded 'genius' grant*

Kara Spak

Will Allen started a farm in a city, hired teenagers to tend the crops and now distributes the produce to some of the poorest people and priciest restaurants in Chicago and Milwaukee.

For his inventive work in local, urban agriculture, the Chicago-based MacArthur Foundation dubbed Allen a genius, awarding him \$500,000 to use however he wishes through its prestigious fellowship program.

Will Allen of Growing Power is among 25 recipients of this year's MacArthur Foundation "genius grants."

"We look for creative and talented people from all walks of life," said Jonathan Fanton, MacArthur Foundation president. "Part of the fun of this is we're not only dealing with scientists or artists but people who do farming or fishing."

One of Wisconsin's few African-American farmers, Allen, a former professional basketball player in the ABA, founded Growing Power in 1993 in Milwaukee to help teach inner-city kids about the origins of their food. It has expanded to include satellite-training sites in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts and Mississippi.

The group's high-quality produce and grass-fed meats are sold through farmer's markets that target inner city neighborhoods in Chicago and Milwaukee, where access to fresh food is often difficult and expensive.

Allen's daughter, Erika Allen, manages the Chicago program, which includes a community garden in Cabrini-Green and an organic farm in Grant Park.

Locally raised Growing Power produce can be purchased at farmer's markets in Woodlawn, Bronzeville, Englewood and the twice-weekly Green City Market in Lincoln Park.

Allen's baby swiss chard and beet greens form the base of a popular salad currently offered at high-end Chicago restaurant Blackbird, where Growing Power has a long-standing relationship with the chef.

"All of their herbs and lettuces are wonderful, their green tomatoes are wonderful," said Michael Sheerin, Blackbird chef de cuisine. "The beet greens are tender and delicious."

Blackbird and sister restaurant Avec return their vegetable scraps to Growing Power to compost, reducing the restaurant's waste and helping to naturally fertilize future crops.

John Norquist, Milwaukee mayor from 1988 to 2004 and now president of the Chicago-based Congress for the New Urbanism, said Allen. He is well-known in Milwaukee for his focus on efficiency and productivity.

Allen was emphasizing the importance of local food years before the latest locavore foodie trend, Norquist said.

"He does well and he does good," Norquist said. "He certainly is a genius."

[http://www.suntimes.com/business/1179365\\_genius092308web.article](http://www.suntimes.com/business/1179365_genius092308web.article)

## **New York Times**

### *Ban Near on Diverting Water From Great Lakes*

Susan Saulny

The House began debate Monday on a sweeping bill that would ban almost any diversion of water from the Great Lakes' natural basin to places outside the region.

The measure is intended to put to rest longstanding fears that parched states or even foreign countries could do long-term damage to the basin by tapping into its tremendous body of fresh water.

The bill, which would also put in place strict conservation rules for the eight states that border the lakes, is expected to win House approval, perhaps as soon as Tuesday. It has already been passed by the Senate, and the Bush administration has signaled its support.

So House backing for the measure, known as the Great Lakes Compact, is regarded by its many advocates across the Midwest and in New York and Pennsylvania as a long-sought final piece to a complicated puzzle whose solution started taking shape a decade ago in an effort to give the region control over its water. The fear was that without strict, consistent rules on who is entitled to that water, it might start disappearing.

“People realized that Great Lakes water is a finite resource and that death by a thousand straws is a real threat,” said Jordan Lubetkin, a spokesman for the National Wildlife Federation. “There is a perception that because the Great Lakes are so vast, they are immune from harm. That is not the case.”

Before the legislation even reached Congress, the states bordering the lakes had to approve the compact individually, agreeing — in a contentious process that itself took years — to certain common goals. The last state to approve, Michigan, did so only in July, following Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

(The Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec have adopted a nearly identical document.)

Though passage in the House is foreseen, support there is not unanimous. Some members say the pact is not strong enough to protect the lakes, which together account for 20 percent of the world’s fresh surface water.

Among the dissenters is Representative Bart Stupak, Democrat of Michigan, who complained Monday about an exception that would allow bottled water to be shipped outside the basin, among other management issues.

“Because these concerns remain unaddressed,” Mr. Stupak said in a statement, “I regret that I have to urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the compact until proper protections are put in place.”

“I see no reason why we must rush this process when our nation’s most precious natural resource is at stake,” said Mr. Stupak, whose district borders three of the lakes, calling the bottled-water exemption a loophole that could be used for large-scale diversion, exactly what the compact seeks to prevent.

But one of the compact’s drafters, Samuel W. Speck, former chairman of the water management working group of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, said the exemption was “not an issue.”

“By and large, bottled water isn’t shipped that far,” Mr. Speck said. “We found there is more bottled water sent into the Great Lakes Basin than sent out. It wasn’t a matter of us losing water. We actually gain water from the shipping.”

“There are those things that would irritate perfectionists,” he continued, “but it was the only way to get something so comprehensive and with enforcement enacted in all of the states and provinces. That’s an amazing accomplishment, and a very important one as we’re looking at greater demands for water and threats that [climate change](#) will bring.”

Under the measure, water generally would not be allowed to be diverted from the basin except under rare circumstances that would require the approval of all eight bordering states. In addition to the bottled-water exemption, an exception has been made for so-called straddling communities that lie on the basin's borders, among other negotiated concessions based largely on whether diverted water could be restored to the lakes.

As for outlying states, Mr. Speck, among others, said he hoped they realized that guarding the freshwater supply with more vigor was in the long-term interest of the entire country.

"Some people will say, 'Gosh, that's discrimination against other states,' " Mr. Speck said. "The reality is that in the eight Great Lakes states, the largest parts of those states are outside of the basin. They're not treating other states different from how they're treating large areas of their own states."

Another advocate of the compact, Steve Wieckert, a Republican member of the Wisconsin Assembly, said it had caused a tough fight in his state, because about half of Wisconsin falls outside the Great Lakes Basin. Some residents accused him of creating second-class citizens, but Mr. Wieckert, whose own district falls within the basin, said the compact was fair.

"No one else could come up with a better answer," he said. "We needed a compact, and this was the best compact we could come up with."

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/us/23lakes.html?\\_r=1&ref=science&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/us/23lakes.html?_r=1&ref=science&oref=slogin)

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## ENVIRONMENT NEWS FROM THE UN DAILY NEWS

23 September 2008

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### **UN partners with YouTube to launch online television channel**

23 September - The United Nations has launched its television channel on YouTube, a popular video sharing and social networking web site, in an effort to reach a broader and younger audience on a range of issues on the world body's agenda.

The programmes set to air on the channel are produced by UN Television (UNTV) with the Organization's agencies and funds, and cover topics such as climate change, development, human rights and peace and security.

Some of the current stories posted on site address the fight against prejudice of India's so-called untouchables, the threats to the ecological treasures of the Galapagos Islands and several segments from 21st Century, the UN's monthly news magazine that spotlights the world's most forgotten stories.

The UN is also partnering with YouTube to launch, on 25 September, a joint campaign In My Name with global nonprofits Oxfam, GPAC and Save the Children, to draw attention to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the set of eight anti-poverty targets world leaders have pledged to achieve by 2015.

As part of the campaign, Black Eyed Peas singer Will.i.am will ask citizens from every country to upload footage to YouTube supporting the MDGs by stating their name, their country and, if desired, a request to their government to end poverty.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon intends to join the online petition that will feature a song written by the Black Eyed Peas artist especially for the campaign.

The partnership with YouTube is the latest effort by the UN to use new media technologies to get its message out. The world body recently drew on SMS mechanics for the International Day of Peace "Txt 4 Peace" campaign encouraging people across the world to send messages of peace.

An innovative partnership was also forged between Internet giant Google and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to map environmental projects across the globe.

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### **Global leadership more vital than ever to solve today's crises – Ban**

23 September - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today opened the General Assembly's annual high-level debate by urging world leaders to rise to the "challenge of global leadership" and work together to solve the most pressing and intractable problems, from climate change and the energy crisis to entrenched poverty and the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region.

In these two weeks when world leaders flock to the UN, Mr. Ban meets presidents and prime ministers, kings and king-makers – he cajoles, exhorts and advocates tirelessly. He is armed with the power of persuasion, moral authority and a document that is his Magna Carta, the UN Charter.

“Our challenges are increasingly those of collaboration rather than confrontation,” Mr. Ban declared in a wide-ranging speech before dozens of heads of State and government gathered at UN Headquarters in New York. “Nations can no longer protect their interests, or advance the well-being of their people, without the partnership of the rest.”

But he warned there were signs that many leaders and countries were unwilling to take up the mantle of doing more, not less, to help those around the world who need support, despite the scale of some of the crises.

“I see a danger of nations looking more inward, rather than towards a shared future. I see a danger of retreating from the progress we have made, particularly in the realm of development and more equitably sharing the fruits of global growth.”

As new centres of power and leadership are emerging in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere in the newly developed world, “we are on the eve of a great transition,” he said. Wise leadership, Mr. Ban said, is vital if the world is to regain the momentum on climate change produced by negotiations in Bali last year, combat malaria and HIV/AIDS or ensure that human rights are upheld and the principle of “responsibility to protect” is extended to all vulnerable populations.

“It takes leadership to honour our pledges and our promises in the face of fiscal constraints and political opposition. It takes leadership to commit our soldiers to a cause of peace in faraway places.

“It takes leadership to speak out for justice; to act on climate change despite powerful voices against you; to stand against protectionism and make trade concessions, even in our enlightened self-interest. Yet... that is why we are here.”

On Thursday, world leaders will discuss how to accelerate progress towards the eight globally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which aim to slash a host of social and economic ills – by their target date of 2015.

Mr. Ban said leaders should be “bold and specific” in spelling out what they will do to achieve the MDGs, given that his most recent report on the issue shows that sub-Saharan Africa is especially lagging in the race to meet the Goals.

“We must galvanize global awareness and global action, with a special focus on Africa. As you know, progress has been uneven. Pledges have not been fully honoured. Yet we have achieved enough to know the Goals are within reach.”

Mr. Ban stressed that the UN was at the forefront of international efforts to resolve or reduce all of the world’s biggest problems.

“The United Nations is the champion of the most vulnerable. When disaster strikes, we act,” he said, citing the recent series of deadly hurricanes in Haiti and the wider Caribbean,

relief efforts in Myanmar in the wake of Cyclone Nargis and ongoing aid operations in the Horn of Africa, where millions of people have been hit by drought.

The Organization led the way this year on responding to the global food crisis, he added, establishing a task force to devise long-term solutions and at the same time ensuring that seeds and fertilizers reach the hands of small farmers in struggling countries.

In addition, the power of the UN's good offices has been put to diplomatic use, bearing fruit already in Nepal and Kenya and helping to defuse other conflicts and crises, such as in Cyprus, Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe.

The Secretary-General's appeal for global leadership echoed one of the key themes of the recent meeting of top UN aides in Turin, Italy, where he noted that the UN is being sought out more than ever before to deal with the world's biggest problems. "We can no longer do business as usual," in his words.

He has reiterated that if the UN is to carry out its mandated tasks, it needs to be given the necessary resources – especially in peacekeeping operations. And, above all, he has made internal reform of the Organization a personal priority.

The Secretary-General, who is holding bilateral discussions with numerous world leaders on the sidelines of the Assembly general debate this week, flagged that in the weeks ahead he will seek their support for a new human resources framework at the UN.

"We need to replace our current system of contracts and conditions of service. It is dysfunctional. It is demoralizing. It discourages mobility between UN departments and the field. It promotes stagnation, rather than creativity. It undercuts our most precious resource – the global, dedicated corps of international civil servants that is the backbone of the UN."

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### **Brazilian President calls on UN to take role in responding to financial crisis**

23 September - Governments must demonstrate decisive leadership if they are to overcome the crisis in global financial markets, the President of Brazil told the General Assembly today, calling for the United Nations to take the lead in responding to the threats raised by the current economic strife.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva told dozens of world leaders gathered for the Assembly's annual high-level debate, held at UN Headquarters in New York, that they were meeting at a time when long-predicted economic crises have become "today's harsh reality."

His remarks echoed the comments of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who earlier today at the Assembly urged world leaders to rise to the "challenge of global leadership" to defeat the most pressing problems, including the current financial crisis.

"Only decisive action by governments, especially in countries at the heart of the crisis, will be able to control the disorder that has spread through the world's financial sector, with perverse impacts on the daily lives of millions of people," Mr. da Silva said.

He warned that “a crisis of such magnitude will not be overcome with palliative measures. Mechanisms for both prevention and control are needed to provide total transparency to international finance.

“International economic institutions today have neither the authority nor the workable instruments they need to inhibit the anarchy of speculation. We must rebuild them on entirely new foundations.”

The Brazilian President cautioned that the crisis was too serious “to be left in the hands of speculators,” adding that all too often their profits were privatized while their losses were socialized.

“The global nature of this crisis means that the solutions we adopt must also be global, and decided upon within legitimate, trusted multilateral fora, with no impositions. The United Nations, as the world’s largest multilateral arena, must issue a call for a vigorous response to the weighty threats we all face.”

He stressed that the world was facing many other “equally serious matters,” including the food crisis, the spike in energy prices, the deadlock on talks to reform international trade, and the continuing degradation of the environment.

The President said Brazil’s own experience illustrated that sugar cane ethanol and biodiesel production can reduce global dependency on fossil fuels and at the same time create jobs, regenerate degraded land and expand food production.

“Attempts to tie high food prices to the dissemination of biofuels do not stand up to an objective analysis of reality,” he added, calling for a multilateral approach to solve the food and energy crises.

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### **Current crises must not detract from anti-poverty goals, Madagascar tells UN**

23 September - The current global food, economic and security crises should not be used by affluent countries as a rationale for cutting back on pledges of increased aid to needy States, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Madagascar’s President told the General Assembly’s annual high-level debate today.

Speaking to dozens of world leaders gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York, Marc Ravalomanana warned that efforts to overcome the crises were threatening to push the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the globally agreed set of eight targets for slashing a host of social and economic ills – to the margins.

“If we allowed this to happen, this would be a major mistake,” he said. “We have to remain focused on the achievement of the MDGs.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s most recent report on the MDGs, released ahead of a high-level event on the issue slated for this Thursday, showed that many countries, particularly in Africa, are lagging in the race to reach the Goals by the target date of 2015.

The report noted that wealthy nations have failed to deliver on their promise to provide \$50 billion to poorer countries by 2010, and called for a sharp, immediate increase in aid and development assistance to meet the timetable.

Mr. Ravalomanana said it was African nations such as his own that bore the consequences for the shortfall in financial support.

“Poor countries cannot break the cycle of poverty, families have difficulties feeding themselves, people still have very limited access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation.

“I call upon all donor countries to honour your promises and to demonstrate leadership by explaining to your people why supporting the MDGs and the fight against poverty is a moral obligation and is so essential for creating a more stable and peaceful world.” He said it was clear that tackling the emerging crises of soaring food prices, troubled financial markets and recent wars and political hostilities merited the use of resources to stabilize food markets, meet energy demands and meet other aims.

“What I do not understand, however, is that these challenges sometimes offer reasons for countries to abdicate on their promises of doubled aid for education, health and infrastructure.”

Gabonese Vice-President Didjob Divungi di Ndinge, who also addressed the high-level debate today, called for collective global action to ensure there is a lasting solution to the food crisis, where soaring prices have placed many staples – such as rice – out of reach of the ordinary citizens of poor countries.

He said the use of crops for fuel production, subsidies and export restrictions had all contributed to the spike in prices.

The Vice-President also noted the links between the food crisis, climate change and environmental degradation and stressed the need for international aid to help developing nations face the challenges these threats posed.

“It is thus urgent that all partners honour their promise to double official development aid,” he said.

Namibia’s President Hifikepunye Pohamba told the Assembly debate that there was “a need for genuine political will, especially among donor countries,” if the world is to achieve all eight MDGs.

“Open, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial systems must be developed,” Mr. Pohamba said. “We call for the intensification of the implementation of the global partnership for development, as agreed upon at Monterrey in 2002.”

He also backed a proposal for the 192-member General Assembly to hold regular thematic debates until 2015 to chart the progress made – and also the setbacks – towards attaining the MDGs.

Boni Yayi, President of Benin, said the international community had a responsibility to mobilize the necessary resources to “correct the grave distortions” which he said had caused the food crisis.

He also called on the UN to exert its influence to ensure that enough aid reaches those countries whose populations are suffering the most as a result of the food crisis.

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**ENVIRONMENT NEWS FROM THE  
S.G’s SPOKESMAN DAILY PRESS BRIEFING**

23 September 2008 (none)

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