

## Year-end Thoughts from David Runnalls, IISD's President and CEO



"THIS HAS BEEN AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT," WRITES RUNNALLS.

### PUBLIC INTEREST IS AT AN "ALL-TIME" HIGH

This has been an extraordinary year for sustainable development. Public interest in the environment is at an all-time high in virtually all countries. And the debate has been dominated by the increasingly dire warnings from hard-headed, practical climate scientists. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC) was justifiably awarded the Nobel Prize, along with former U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, who has done more to raise the political profile of the climate change issue than anyone. Several IISD Board and staff members were closely involved with the IPCC's 4th Assessment report.

IISD's Climate Change and Energy Program has been front and centre, with its work on adaptation to climate change, and its pioneering studies on the possible post-2012 regimes and their relevance to Canadian policy. It has published one of the first studies on the importance of climate change to foreign policy. And we are endeavouring to help move this issue into the mainstream of economic policy. To that end, we worked with the Indonesian Government on a meeting of Trade Ministers held in Bali during the climate change meetings in December.

Finally, our work on subsidies to the biofuels industry has really taken off with extensive references to our work in the *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *Forbes* and the *New York Times*. We have completed extensive studies of U.S. and EU subsidies and have presented the results of that work to members of Congress and to a group of European MPs.

As I write this, I am off with a group from our Trade and Investment Program to Beijing to meet with our Chinese partners on a study to assess the impact of China's trade on the rest of the world and then on to Bali with our ENB and Climate Change teams. These are

**"Several IISD Board and staff members were closely involved with the 4th Assessment report."**

important times in the debates. The issues are high on the public agenda, and the planet is in distress. As always, our audiences are counting on IISD to deliver quality research, analysis, insight and reporting.

### Upcoming Meeting Coverage on IISD Linkages

Selected meetings...

- 1 **Sixth Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing**  
January 21-25, 2008, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2 **Second Symposium on the Conservation of Whales in the 21st Century**  
January 30-31, 2008, Tokyo, Japan  
(Covered by IISD Reporting Services' Your Meeting Bulletin)
- 3 **Second Meeting of the CBD Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas**  
February 11-15, 2008, Rome, Italy
- 4 **CBD SBSTTA-13 (Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice)**  
February 18-22, 2008, Rome, Italy
- 5 **Tenth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum**  
February 20-22, 2008, Monaco
- 6 **CITES 17th Meeting of the Plants Committee and 23rd Meeting of the Animals Committee**  
April 15-19, 2008 (Plants) / April 19-24, 2008 (Animals), Geneva, Switzerland

To follow current and recent coverage of international meetings on the environment and development, visit IISD's Reporting Services Web site at <http://www.iisd.ca> or subscribe to the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* at <http://www.iisd.ca/enbvol/enb-electronic.htm>

# Emissions Trading

## in North America

By Dennis Cunningham

STATES AND PROVINCES LEADING THE WAY

Is a North American-wide emissions trading system a possibility?

These days it seems Canadian provinces and U.S. states are doing most of the heavy lifting required to move the climate change agenda forward in North America. Independent provincial and state activities are rapidly transitioning to cross-border actions like the West Coast Initiative, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the Climate Registry and, most recently, the Midwest Governors Association Energy Security and Climate Stewardship Platform and Greenhouse Gas Accord. Emissions trading is emerging as an important component of these regional activities and linking trading systems could produce multiple

benefits. However, there are several design issues that need to be addressed before linking can occur.

With these issues in mind, IISD's Climate Change and Energy team and the World Resources Institute (WRI) hosted a workshop called "Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities for Establishing a North American Emissions Trading System" in Chicago on November 14–15. Through presentations and panel discussions, 30 participants— including state, provincial and federal government representatives—considered how emerging systems might be most efficiently harmonized, preserve local and regional priorities, and address concerns around stringency, equivalency of rules and competitiveness.

A discussion paper was prepared in advance of the meeting, a summary assessment of the discussions will be distributed to the participants and the dialogue will continue over the coming months. IISD and WRI hope to host another workshop in mid-2008 to complete the foundational work begun in Chicago and develop an approach to resolve some of the key technical issues associated with linking emissions trading systems in North America. Participant feedback indicated that the workshop was very successful and that this is an issue that IISD and WRI should continue to pursue.

*Dennis Cunningham is an IISD Project Officer.*

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) EXECUTIVE SECRETARY YVO DE BOER (LEFT) WITH ENB WRITERS PETER DORAN AND KATI KULOVELI. COURTESY OF IISD/EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN.



## IISD in Bali

### PROJECT STAFF AND ENB REPORTERS AT COP 13

As this issue of *IISD News* goes to press, IISD is on the ground in Bali, Indonesia, at the 13th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

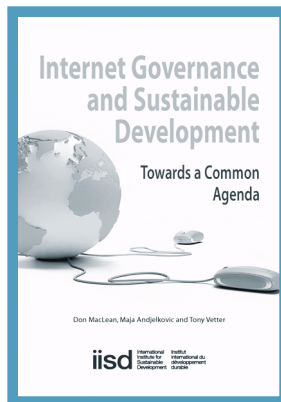
You can follow IISD's participation during and after the COP at <http://www.iisd.org/climate/unfccc/cop.asp>

And of course, our Earth Negotiations Bulletin team is covering the COP and its side events at <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop13/>

The ENB coverage includes a new blog <http://www.iisd.org> and IISD's Climate Change and Energy team member Dennis Cunningham is blogging from Bali at <http://blog.iisd.org>

## Internet Governance and Sustainable Development By Tony Vetter

### TOWARDS A COMMON AGENDA



NEW PUBLICATION INCLUDES A CD CONTAINING 10 BACKGROUND PAPERS.

In 2003, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) declared its challenge “to harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration” with a “commitment to the

communities of researchers and practitioners have spent over three decades working in relative isolation from one another, creating gaps in vocabulary and culture.

Early in 2007, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, IISD commissioned pairs of exploratory papers to be written from the perspectives of Internet governance and sustainable development on the premise that these two historically disparate policy communities will each gain if they can discover and leverage the overlap in their respective visions for the future. IISD has created the booklet *Internet Governance and Sustainable Development: Towards a Common Agenda*, which contains short editorials on each pair of papers,

including observations from an associated e-conference along with our conclusions regarding common positions, mutual challenges and differences, and where lessons from one community's experience might contribute to progress by the other. IISD launched this booklet at the second meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meeting in Rio de Janeiro in November.

achievement of sustainable development.” Internet governance, a key issue emerging from this process, is defined as “the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programs that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.”

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) believes that WSIS's commitment to sustainable development should inform the Internet governance debate. Sustainable development efforts cannot be conceived without global communications and knowledge exchange: therefore, the outcomes of the Internet governance debate will affect our ability to manage the social, environmental and economic factors of sustainable development. Unfortunately, these two

**“Sustainable development efforts cannot be conceived without global communications and knowledge exchange...”**

*Internet Governance and Sustainable Development* is available for free download at [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/igsd\\_common\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/igsd_common_agenda.pdf) or for purchase at <http://www.earthprint.com>

*Tony Vetter is an IISD Project Officer.*

## IISD's Global Subsidies Initiative Releases New Reports By Damon Vis-Dunbar

### MEDIA EVENTS SLATED FOR 2008

It has been a busy autumn for the Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI), and the months ahead are also full of activity. A series of reports on subsidies to biofuels were released in September and October; November saw the launch of a major report and seminar on investment incentives; and January will see a conference on irrigation subsidies. Meanwhile, the GSI's media capacity building program is planning journalists' workshops in Latin America and Africa for the beginning of 2008. Here is a rundown of the recent and forthcoming activities of the project that aims to put a spotlight on subsidies and the corrosive effects they can have on sustainable development.

#### BIOFUELS

One of the GSI's first areas of research was subsidies to biofuels, with no fewer than nine reports either completed or set to be released through 2008. In September, the GSI launched in London an overview report on subsidies to biofuels in selected OECD countries. That was soon followed by the release of a report on subsidies to biofuels in the European Union, which was released at the European Parliament in Brussels. Then, at the end of October, an update of the GSI's report on subsidies to biofuels in the United States was released in Washington. This is just the beginning: in 2008, the GSI will be releasing country studies on subsidies to biofuels in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Indonesia and Malaysia.

#### INVESTMENT INCENTIVES

An area of work that bridges IISD's research on investment and subsidies is "investment incentives"—government subsidies used to induce investors to choose one location over another. In November, the GSI published its first report on this topic, entitled "Investment Incentives: Growing use, uncertain benefits, uneven controls" (see [http://www.globalsubsidies.org/IMG/pdf/GSI\\_Investment\\_Incentives.pdf](http://www.globalsubsidies.org/IMG/pdf/GSI_Investment_Incentives.pdf)). As the title implies, governments at all levels are spending an increasing amount of public money on attracting investment capital. The benefits of that spending, however, are in many cases debatable. A seminar to discuss the findings of the report was held in November in Geneva, featuring presentations by the report's author, Dr. Kenneth P. Thomas, and Dr. Howard Mann, IISD's Senior International Law Advisor.



THE GSI EXAMINES THE IMPACT ON SUBSIDIES TO BIOFUELS THROUGH NINE REPORTS.

#### JOURNALISTS' MEDIA FORA

The GSI has made a special effort to educate journalists on the impacts that subsidies can have on the environment, economies and equity. Earlier this year, the GSI and the Forum of Environmental Journalists of India organized a Media Forum in Mumbai, India. The forum, which brought together 25 journalists from across India, took as its focus the role of subsidies in contributing to the agrarian crisis in India. Fora in Latin America and Africa, each with their own focus on a regional issue related to subsidies, are slated for early 2008.

For more information on these and other activities of the GSI, and to download reports, visit <http://www.globalsubsidies.org>

*Damon Vis-Dunbar is a Communications Officer with IISD's Global Subsidies Initiative.*

## IISD Meets with Investment Negotiators in Singapore

By Aaron Cosby

### PLANS UNDERWAY FOR A SECOND FORUM

On October 1–2 in Singapore, IISD and the Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, convened the first *Forum of Developing Country Investment Negotiators*. The event brought together over 30 negotiators from more than 20 developing countries to discuss common challenges, and learn about the implications of recent investor-state arbitrations for their ongoing work drafting investment treaties.

The agenda, formulated by a steering group of negotiators, gave participants time to share their experiences and learn from fellow negotiators, experienced arbitrators, distinguished academics and other expert presenters.

Developed countries have fora such as the OECD investment committee in which they can come together to discuss important issues, but

developing country negotiators typically operate in isolation from one another. Yet all face a common challenge: how to strike the right balance between the need to attract more foreign direct investment and the need to serve a wide range of public policy objectives, including economic development and the environment. The premise of this meeting was that although each country faces different challenges, there is value in bringing developing country negotiators together to learn and compare notes.

This premise was strongly supported by the participants, who agreed overwhelmingly on the value of the event and the need for more such



IISD'S HOWARD MANN (LEFT) AND AARON COSBEY (RIGHT) CONFER WITH ANN FLORINI, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE ON ASIA AND GLOBALISATION.

events. IISD is in the process of raising funds for a second forum, as well as exploring other recommendations made by the participants for serving the negotiators' community. All meeting materials can be found at [http://www.iisd.org/investment/capacity/dci\\_forum\\_2007.asp](http://www.iisd.org/investment/capacity/dci_forum_2007.asp)

*Aaron Cosby is an IISD Associate and Senior Project Advisor.*

## Twenty Years after Brundtland

By Donna Huffam

### CONFERENCE LOOKS AT CANADA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE

In 1987, Terry Waite was kidnapped in Beirut, the Unabomber made headlines, Black Monday devastated the stock market, The Simpsons first appeared on TV and the Brundtland Commission released *Our Common Future*.

That was only 20 years ago. For today's university students mingling at October's "Facing Forward – Looking Back" conference, it is difficult to imagine a time when environmental awareness was not an issue. And yet presenters and conference attendees were keenly aware that only two decades have passed since the phrase "sustainable development" hit our lexicon.

Taken in context, it is a very short time frame in which to judge our progress towards sustainable development in Canada. And yet, for IISD and Carleton University, it was critical to take the time to do so. As approximately 150 participants gathered at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, there was a clear sense that all were a part of the history of sustainable development in Canada, and hopefully a significant part of its future.

Presenters such as David Anderson, Canada's former federal Minister of Environment, and Jim MacNeill, IISD's Chair Emeritus and Secretary General of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland

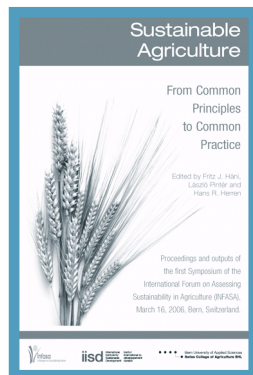
Commission), provided fascinating perspective on the complexities of sustainable development in a developed world, including the politics of decision-making, the limitations of Canada's climate, the vagaries of the business world and the challenges of the "elephant next door." Most speakers concluded that, although Canada made a strong start implementing the Brundtland Report, the effort has not been sustained.

Conference presentations and a background paper are available at <http://www.iisd.org/sd/brundtland.asp>

*Donna Huffam is IISD's Media and Communications Officer.*



## Sustainable Agriculture



PROJECT SEEKS "EXCELLENCE IN THE USE OF INDICATOR AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE."

### NEW PUBLICATION EMERGES FROM INTERNATIONAL FORUM

*Sustainable Agriculture, from Common Principles to Common Practice* is the first book published by the International Forum on Assessing Sustainability in Agriculture (INFASA). The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the Swiss College of Agriculture (SHL) are leading a multi-year forum (INFASA) to seek excellence in the use of indicator and assessment

systems for sustainable agriculture. The pillars of science, policy and practice will form the basis of an ongoing dialogue on these tools to strategically advance the agricultural sustainability agenda.

The book and CD include case studies and synthesis of the first symposium held in Bern, Switzerland, in March 2006.

*Sustainable Agriculture* is available for free download at [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/infasa\\_common\\_principles.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/infasa_common_principles.pdf) or for purchase at <http://www.earthprint.com>

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The International Institute for Sustainable Development contributes to sustainable development by advancing policy recommendations on international trade and investment, economic policy, climate change, measurement and assessment, and sustainable natural resources management. Through the Internet, we report on international negotiations and share knowledge gained through collaborative projects with global partners, resulting in more rigorous research, capacity building in developing countries and better dialogue between North and South.

IISD's vision is better living for all—sustainably; its mission is to champion innovation, enabling societies to live sustainably. IISD is registered as a charitable organization in Canada and has 501(c)(3) status in the United States. IISD receives core operating support from the Government of Canada, provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Environment Canada; and from the Province of Manitoba. The Institute receives project funding from numerous governments inside and outside Canada, United Nations agencies, foundations and the private sector.

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## IISD People



IISD Board Member **Angela Cropper** was named Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



IISD Associate **Anthony Hodge** has been appointed the first Kinross Professor of Mining and Sustainability at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. While at Queen's, Dr. Hodge will also hold the Helen and Arthur Stollery Professorship in Mining Engineering and Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering.



**Ian R. Seymour**, IISD's Secretary-Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer, has been elected Second Vice-President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba.



IISD Senior Researcher **Dale Rothman** was recently elected Vice-President of The Integrated Assessment Society (TIAS).



**Ingrid Bamsley**, one of the IISD Reporting Services team leaders, has successfully defended her doctorate at the Law Faculty at Oxford. Her dissertation is "Understanding the Domestic Implementation of International Law on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights."

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