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## FORUM

### **Grounding Security: Soil Security a Prerequisite for Human Security**

*Speech by Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)*

In the not-so-long history of humankind, our ancestors too often fought over land and water. Those days have returned. Our security as a global community depends on the extent to which we preserve our soils because "enhancing soil anywhere enhances life everywhere" and grounds security. Here I would like to introduce you to the underlying concept of "soil security". Security is a legitimate aspiration of individuals, families, communities and nation states. It seems to me that it is the quest through which mankind has learned to cooperate and realize mutual benefit from resources and for efficiency. As a societal value, security is linked to the protection, certainty, reliability, trust and confidence, and predictability of all that we depend on.

During the last few decades, the international community has realized that continuous and intensive degradation of the environment and related loss of ecosystem services can have major implications for public security at the national level, and threaten international stability.

For instance, 6 to 10 inches (18-25 cm) of topsoil are all that stand between us and extinction. There's far more to topsoil than food. The things that live in and grow from this irreplaceable and finite resource also keep us clothed, filter our air and water, provide pleasant green space and refresh the human soul. In that regard, soil is a common good, a common wealth. Only now are we starting to comprehend how the tiny life forms in soil sustain productivity and the greater environmental balance.

Land degradation spells the gradual death of soil's complex web of biota. The disappearance of just a single species from this web can be devastating. But we take soil services as "free services"; we count them as externalities that can be depleted at no cost. Because we are an all-powerful species, soil's health – and thus our own – depends in large part on how well we sustain it. This is our capital duty. The front line agents of this sustainability are those who live in the areas most vulnerable to degradation: the drylands.

Drylands are the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas of the world. This excludes natural deserts. Drylands make up roughly one third of planet Earth's land mass and are home to one third of the world's population – more than 2 billion people - half of whom are ranked at the bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index.

Drylands are also one of the most conflict prone regions of the world. In 2007, 80 percent of the major armed conflicts that affected society occurred in such vulnerable dry ecosystems. For instance, the UN Secretary-General rightly stated that "the Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change". The desert in northern Sudan has advanced southwards by 100 kilometers over the past 40 years. Rainfall has dropped by 16-30 percent and yields of the staple food, sorghum, have plummeted. The affected nomads of the Zaghawa tribe were forced to migrate southward in search of water and food for their animals. Their encounter with the

sedentary farmer tribes of the Fur and Masalit ended in conflict. This is an instance of how our deeds impact climate change, with far-reaching consequences in distant lands.

Land is a finite resource that is acquiring new value nowadays due to the competing claims for more land and water resources, driving new phenomena such as global 'land grabbing'. So land degradation should be a matter of global concern, but it is not yet!

Desertification is the name for land degradation when it occurs in the drylands. Due to drought and desertification, 12 million hectares of land are lost every year. This is an area more than the size of my country, Benin, or three times the size of Switzerland.

The world's media have a hard time telling the desertification story when there are plenty, more sensational disturbances and disasters on which to report. Perhaps the lacking coverage is also because land degradation and drought are silent and slow killers. They have a way of creeping up on us, fooling us into underestimating their urgency.

Desertification and drought are predictable, except where coupled with policy failure or a breakdown in governance. Therefore, drought and desertification should not claim lives. But they are! Why?

Drought and desertification are killing people due, in part, to public misperceptions and policy failures that stubbornly persist at all levels. Desertification is controlled and reversed whenever the soil is secured. Soil security is achieved when efforts succeed to conserve its fertility, contain land degradation and reduce the consequences of drought. Our security as individuals and as communities, therefore, depends on how we care for soil security everywhere.

Soils in the world's dry ecosystems are the most fragile and vulnerable to degradation due to water scarcity. But drylands and their people are not helpless liabilities, nor are they a burden on our efforts to achieve global sustainability. No, drylands people are vital agents of change and progress. But they have been neglected in development plans, policies and processes, despite abundant evidence that arid lands can be made productive by empowering the affected populations with the appropriate policy frameworks, incentives, technological innovations and investment.

Will they be forsaken, yet again, when the global community concludes the ongoing climate change negotiations? Time will tell! What could be the agenda for change and who will take the lead?

I would like to challenge the great minds gathered here today to pursue a decisive policy change in the way we perceive drylands and address the issues of its people in order to avoid environmentally induced conflicts.

We should securitize the ground in order to ground security.

- ***Securitizing the ground*** is creating a wider global political awareness of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and their societal consequences. It is making combating DLDD a key international political commitment and upgrading DLDD to the security realm.

- **Grounding security** includes taking reactive and proactive short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for coping with desertification (soil depletion / soil insecurity) by exposing its manifold societal, environmental and economic consequences.

Never before in the history of human kind has the sustainable management of natural resources been so critical to human survival. Our generation will set human history on the path to either sustainable development or self-destruction. The good news is that we can still choose sustainability - but there is no time for procrastination.

*For the original press release, based on Mr. Gnacadja's speech at the plenary session during the Third Annual Caux Forum for Human Security at 10 July 2010 in Caux, Switzerland, please visit <http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/docs/lghumansecurity.pdf>.*

*For further information on the Caux Forum for Human Security please see <http://www.cauxforum.net/>.*

*The UNCCD Issue Paper No. 2 entitled "Securitizing the Ground, Grounding Security" is available at [http://www.unccd.int/knowledge/docs/dlidd\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unccd.int/knowledge/docs/dlidd_eng.pdf).*

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## POLICY & RESEARCH

### Perspectives for Development? – Mineral Riches in Afghanistan

*An Interview with Lorenzo Delesgues, Director of Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA), about the newly discovered Mineral Riches in Afghanistan*

*ECC: Did the news about vast mineral riches in Afghanistan that were discussed in June come as a surprise to you?*

Lorenzo Delesgues (LD): Absolutely not. There had been a lot of information circulating about this topic before this time. For example, three years ago our organization had already published a report about the potentials for Afghanistan's natural resource wealth to serve in decreasing the country's aid dependency. The only difference is that this time the information appeared in the New York Times causing a huge media attention. It is also worth mentioning that so far reports failed to address the important potentials linked to the country's abundant Lithium reserves, a mineral used for the production of cell phones, batteries and other electronic devices. The new report speaks of considerable reserves.

*ECC: The country's history in mining is still very short. Maybe you can give us a brief overview of the most important developments.*

LD: At the moment, the future for Afghanistan's natural resource exploitation is indeed very unclear. So far, there is no large-scale extraction industry. This sector has been rather dominated by local groups doing small-scale artisan mining. A big iron mine is located in Bamyan province. However, the only large scale exploitation that is taking place at the moment is done in a Chinese copper mine located in Aynak. The contractual agreements signed between the State and the Chinese company actually give good examples of how exploitation in a fragile environment can be organized to minimize the

potential for conflict. For example, it investigates how the economic spill overs of the mining industry could serve to benefit local businesses. The problem is that the contract is very technical and that it will be a challenge for the Afghan state to monitor its implementation. If you do not manage the natural wealth sustainably in the long run but for short-term profits you will definitely create an environment for conflict.

*ECC: But how realistic is the vision that Afghanistan at one point will be able to exploit the resources to its own benefit? Is it not more likely that international companies will exploit the weakness of the Afghan state for their own profits?*

LD: I agree to a certain point with you. To exploit these large reserves companies need to invest a lot of resources first. With the copper mine in Aynak, the Chinese company benefited from research that had already been done by the Russians. Most Afghan businesses lack this capacity but there are medium large enterprises that play a role in the exploitation. Already today, Afghan companies may actually have the potential to get engaged in joint ventures. And do not forget about the spill over effects of large-scale mining processes. There, Afghan companies may have good chances for business.

*ECC: How does the geographical distribution of resources look like compared to the areas that still encounter ongoing conflict?*

LD: There is a belt of natural resources running from the Northeast to the Southeast. The Aynak mine is actually very close to Kabul. Other big reserves are in Logar. The oil fields are in the North while there are numerous other locations where we expect important discoveries to be made.

*ECC: But still, how relevant will be the weakness of the Afghan central state in relationship to local warlords, Taliban strongholds or other power brokers when it comes to the exploitation of resources in their area of influence?*

LD: The large resource wealth is very concentrated but distributed across the country. In these very specific areas a large-scale exploitation would need to take place which could be well protected against potential disturbers. The problem arises much more with small-scale mining where it is easier for local strongmen to exploit the resources and therefore the incentive to make large profits is much higher. The more important question is whether the Afghan state is going to be able to hold the companies accountable to their obligations. Some developments are really promising. Let's take the Aynak mine as an example again. Whether Chinese or Kazakh, allegations of bribery have been voiced against all competitors involved.. But the Chinese contract for the Aynak mine has really been the best proposition according to many international experts. A subcontractor of the World Bank that consulted the Afghan state brokered the negotiation. As a result, the contract entails a lot of social investments, strict socio-environmental precautions (Equator principles) and important royalties for the Afghan state. [...]

*This is an abbreviated version of the interview. Please access the full-length interview including an assessment of the long-run perspective [here](#). The interview was conducted by Joeran Altenberg.*

*Integrity Watch Afghanistan was founded in May 2006 with the mission to increase transparency, integrity, and accountability in Afghanistan through policy-oriented*

research, the development of monitoring tools and trainings for the facilitation of policy dialogue. For further information, please see <http://www.iwaweb.org/>.

The New York Times article on the mineral riches in Afghanistan is available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/14/world/asia/14minerals.html?scp=2&sq=afghanistan&st=cse>.

More information on the Aynak copper mine can be found in a report by E. Huntzinger at <http://www.iwaweb.org/reports/AssessmentofThreatsandOpportunitiesforDevelopment2008.html>.

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### **Urban Jungle? The Gender Dimension of Water and (In)Security**

The appalling sanitation infrastructure in the slums of Nairobi is a significant cause of gender-based violence. In its recent report "Insecurity and Indignity: Women's Experiences in the Slums of Nairobi", Amnesty International spotlights this oft-neglected dimension of the environmental security debate. According to the report, the Kenyan government is taking steps to tackle the lack of sanitary facilities as part of its efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals. However, progress is halting at best and the real risk for women of becoming victims of violence is not being addressed.

A contributing factor in this situation is that slums remain a blind spot in urban planning budgets. For instance, Kibera, an informal settlement with over a million inhabitants, has no police post. The consequences have been vividly described by Godfrey Odongo, an East Africa researcher at Amnesty International: "Women in Nairobi's settlements become prisoners in their own homes at night and sometimes well before it is dark." Rape is rampant, but like other violent crimes against women, often goes unpunished. The negative health impacts on women are obvious. According to Amnesty it would be a step forward if the government were to enforce existing regulations that require land owners to provide sanitary facilities. Yet even this is an unlikely prospect. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

The report can be downloaded is accessible under <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR32/002/2010/en/12a9d334-0b62-40e1-ae4a-e5333752d68c/afr320022010en.pdf>.

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### **Biodiversity at the Point of No Return?**

The international community has failed to meet its objective of reducing the dramatic loss in biodiversity by 2010. According to the latest Global Biodiversity Outlook, environmental deterioration is fast approaching a "tipping point" beyond which irreversible damage and the collapse of entire ecosystems could occur — with disastrous consequences for all life on earth. It is hoped that the International Year of Biodiversity will provide the impetus to change this trend. One important step forward was taken in June, when representatives from 90 countries approved establishment of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), IPBES's function is to provide decision-makers with independent and credible information on the status of biodiversity and to translate scientific inputs into workable action plans. The UN

General Assembly will discuss the formal establishment of this body at its high-level panel in September.

The UN panel will also serve as the run-up to another milestone: the Conference of the Parties (COP-10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to be held in Nagoya, Japan in October. The delegates will need to take stock of the implementation of the CBD and agree on a concrete political roadmap for protecting biodiversity. Areas of dispute centre around the creation of a network of protected areas and the negotiation of a regime on genetic resources. The disputes are along known lines: while the industrial countries are keen on promoting protected areas, developing countries are apprehensive about interference in their sovereignty over land use. These countries would like the negotiations to focus on regulating access to genetic resources and fair participation in the profits from their utilization. The industrial nations, on the other hand, fear that this may put their pharmaceutical industry's R&D at a disadvantage. Whether these hurdles can be overcome or not will have a decisive bearing on whether 2010 becomes a point of no return for nature conservation. (*Christiane Roettger*)

More information on the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to be convened on 22 September 2010 as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity is available at <http://www.un.org/ga/65/meetings/biodiversity.shtml>.

The background paper can be downloaded [here](#).

For the website of the IPBES, please visit <http://ipbes.net/>

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### **Conflict Resources Reach Wall Street**

What does Wall Street have to do with conflict resources from the Congo? A lot, according to the US Financial Reform Act. Tucked away in an annex to the Act — widely acclaimed as a milestone in financial reform — are measures aimed at preventing armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo from profiting through trade in minerals, such as tantalum. Numerous American companies, including computer and cell phone manufacturers, will be obliged to disclose annually whether their products contain minerals such as tin, tungsten or tantalum sourced from the Congo or adjoining countries.

Should this be the case, the companies must submit what measures they have in place to verify the source of the minerals. Even though specific sanctions are currently still under discussion, this provision represents a significant step towards sensitizing consumers about the conflict connection in everyday appliances. Industry has always pointed to the difficulty in tracing the minerals from source to end use, especially in the area of information and communications technology. Industry leaders have also voiced opposition to comparing basic minerals with more high-profile resources like blood diamonds, for which the Kimberley Process was created in 2003 to certify gemstones' non-conflict status.

However, Robert D. Hormats, Under Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs in the US State Department is unmoved by such arguments. In his blog entries and speeches he highlights existing and encouraging industry initiatives, such as the Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition and the Global e-Sustainability Initiative. These



industry groups are attempting to certify smelting plants that source tantalum solely from mines in the Congo and neighbouring countries that follow sound social and environmental practices. Civil society initiatives like the Enough Project view such steps as more than overdue if the tragedy in the Congo is to be tackled. At the same time, in their blog Enough employees David Sullivan and Laura Heaton have responded to accusations that they are simplistically reducing the causes of the horrific situation in the region merely to conflict resources: "There are numerous other pressure points that the international community should help address, from security sector reform to justice and accountability, from ensuring a more transparent process for returning refugees, to devising a more effective strategy to dismantle the FDLR and to demobilize Congo's many militia groups. But the conflict minerals issue resonates with a potent group of actors in the United States, namely, advocates and concerned consumers who do not want their purchases to fund armed groups in Congo, a handful of dedicated members of Congress and leaders in the Obama administration who see a lasting solution to the Congo conflict as part of their personal priorities and legacies, and increasingly, leaders in the electronics industry itself, which is responding to the moral and consumer pressure to take on this issue." (*Dennis Taenzler*)

The complete speech by Robert D. Hormats is available at <http://www.state.gov/e/rls/rmk/2010/143784.htm>.

For further information on the Enough Project please see <http://www.enoughproject.org/>.

More information about the "Financial Reform Act" is available at [http://ecc-platform.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2313](http://ecc-platform.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2313).

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### **Transforming Environmental Conflicts in Ecuador**

In terms of biodiversity, Ecuador ranks among the richest countries worldwide. About 26 percent of its territory is declared a protected area. The management of these areas often results in a conflict of interest between conservation and the economic needs of the local population – whose livelihoods often directly depend on the availability of the natural resources. Restrictions in access to their land are therefore likely to result in frustration and stern disapproval. This may even be the case if they principally agree on the need to protect the resources. The designation of the Nangaritza Protected Forest in Southern Ecuador is an example of how initial skepticism within local communities escalated to violence and hostage-taking of protected area management staff. In a recent journal published by the German Development Service (DED), an affected employee critiques the reasons for this escalation: Lacking cultural and social understanding vis-à-vis local farmers, as well as insufficient information and failure to foster meaningful participation in all phases of the planning process. Protected area management needs to be based on close and equal cooperation with local stakeholders. In the case of the Nangaritza conflict, mediation by a local NGO and their facilitation of dialogue could finally establish a trusting relationship.

Another protected area in northern Ecuador has become the focus of much economic interest: Yasuní National Park holds large reservoirs of crude oil under its diverse rain forests. On 3 August, after tedious negotiations, representatives of Ecuador and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement on the future of the Park. Ecuador agreed to leave the oil reserves untapped, thereby preserving Yasuní's rich



biodiversity and avoiding further CO2 emissions. In return, Ecuador will be compensated with at least half of the foregone oil revenues, estimated at \$6 billion. (*Christiane Roettger*)

The DED's publication (in German) "Die Transformation von Umwelt- und Ressourcenkonflikten" can be accessed [here](#).

More information on the agreement concerning Yasuní National Park is available [here](#) and in an earlier [ECC article](#) from February 2010.

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## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### America on the Look-out for the "Clean Energy App"

Nobel Prize winner and US Secretary of Energy Steven Chu invited them, and they turned out in numbers. Twenty-four government delegations came to Washington, DC to participate in the "first ever" – as the Americans declared – Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), a follow on to President Obama's Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF) in 2009, which aimed to support the international climate process. The Forum, in fact, presented a number of Technology Action Plans for different segments of a low-carbon energy economy in Copenhagen. The delegations in Washington sought to build on these outcomes, take up individual recommendations from the plans and develop these further.

The result is a motley mix of applications that would do a smartphone proud. Multilateral working groups will focus on a diverse spectrum ranging from energy efficiency in household appliances to electromobility and from Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) to globally mapping potential sites for biomass utilization or scaling up solar and wind energy. However, this is mostly a case of old wine in new bottles. Activities that are already ongoing merely receive a financial update and join in the ranks of the US initiative. This may actually be useful where it facilitates bundling and utilizing synergies at the international level, as is the case with the long-term strategy for building solar and wind energy capacities envisaged by Germany, Denmark and Spain.

But if the US government hoped that its high-charged performance and international endorsement would foster climate-friendly momentum on the domestic front, it was in for disappointment. Its ambitions of a leadership role in shaping global energy policy have been undermined by the lack of corresponding legislation at home. Thus, from a negotiating perspective, the United States will once again go into the next climate conference in Cancún without domestic backing. Although individual states have introduced encouraging regulations, these alone are not sufficient to fill the national vacuum. This problem was highlighted in a recently released study of the World Resources Institute. Years of delay appear likely. Cold comfort then that the next Clean Energy Ministerial is slated to take place as soon as spring 2011 in Abu Dhabi. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

For further information on the CEM, please see <http://www.cleanenergyministerial.org/materials.html>.

The study "Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the United States Using Existing Federal Authorities and State Action" published by the World Resources Institute is available [here](#).

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### **Past=Future? Trondheim Conference on Climate Change and Security**

Following the meager results of the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, it no longer seems realistic that the rise in global temperatures can be restricted to 2°C. The potential consequences have been termed "dramatic" by several authors. At the "Climate Change and Security" conference, held at the Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters in Trondheim from 21-24 June 2010, about 100 experts examined the impact of climate change on peace, conflict and security.

With its overarching theme of climate change and security, the conference covered a range of issues and regions. Many of the presentations focused on Africa and the impact of climate change on armed conflicts. There was broad agreement that climate change will have a series of challenging impacts, especially in the areas of food supply, health, disaster protection and economic development. Several participants, however, questioned whether these impacts could really reverse the general trend towards a more peaceful world – the number of internal wars and those between countries has been steadily declining.

It was striking that several presentations adopted a historical approach. Many of the scholars felt that in the past decades there was no significant link between climate change and conflict. However, this approach is itself debatable. During the decades in question, parameters such as rainfall patterns fluctuated within known limits. The affected societies were able to adjust to changes over a period of centuries. Climate change, on the other hand, will likely lead to greater changes in these parameters in shorter periods. Moreover, there is hardly any historical precedent for climate change phenomena, such as Arctic melting. The same is true of several other historical examples, such as the Cold War producing a multipolar world. It remains an open question whether climate change will actually result in more conflicts – or more cooperation. Regardless, "looking in the rearview mirror" is hardly an adequate method of making policy decisions. (*Achim Maas*)

More information on the conference and presentations are available at: <http://climsec.prio.no/>.

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### **Transboundary Conservation Emerges as an Essential Mechanism in Tropical Forests**

Ecosystems do not recognize political boundaries. The rise of potentially devastating global problems such as climate change, water shortages and biodiversity loss means that transboundary cooperation in landscape and ecosystem management has become imperative. Increasingly, nations in Latin America, Africa and Asia are working together to establish new transboundary conservation areas (TBCAs). There are now dozens of examples of transboundary conservation initiatives in tropical forests covering more than 50 million hectares. The Cordillera del Condor transboundary conservation initiative

between Ecuador and Peru, for example, has helped improve relations between governments and local indigenous peoples and also empowered the latter to strengthen their cultural identities, renew cross-border family ties and seek new livelihood opportunities. The initiative has also greatly improved the management of the area's important ecosystems.

The International Conference on Biodiversity Conservation in Transboundary Tropical Forests, held in Quito on 21–24 July 2010, reviewed some of the most significant TBCA initiatives and canvassed the essential elements for their success. The participants concluded that there is no single approach to the governance of TBCAs, but power-sharing between different levels of government should be emphasized, along with cooperation, consensus building and the empowerment of civil society and grassroots actors. TBCAs have spurred innovation in the governance of natural resources, such as the emergence of local indigenous governments. In such cases, the political integrity of local community entities is superimposed on ecosystem integrity, thereby promoting the transition of relationships from "vertical" to "horizontal" between state and local community entities.

The participants agreed that harmonizing and aligning law-enforcement capacities among affected countries can improve the effectiveness of TBCAs in combating transboundary illegal activities like poaching and wildlife smuggling. The strong integration of communities across borders has been shown to be another catalyst of effective law enforcement. Well implemented, TBCA initiatives can greatly increase the participation of people living in or near TBCAs in the sustainable use and management of natural resources. They can help to reduce tension between the state and local stakeholders. (*Christiane Roettger on the basis of the ITTO press release*)

This article is based on a press release including the final statement of the participants, which is available at [http://www.itto.int/news\\_releases/id=2381](http://www.itto.int/news_releases/id=2381).

For an overview on the presentation materials made at the conference, please visit [http://www.fnatura.org/documentos/conferencia\\_2/c\\_i\\_bosques.php](http://www.fnatura.org/documentos/conferencia_2/c_i_bosques.php).

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events are also regularly published at <http://www.ecc-platform.org/>.

### "World Water Week" in Stockholm (5-11 September)

Organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute, this year's World Water Week focuses on "the water quality challenge: prevention, wise use and abatement". It seeks to deepen the understanding of the challenges of water quality and to foster an exchange of ideas among the international water community, bringing together experts, practitioners, decision makers and leaders. The conference comprises a wide range of workshops, seminars, and side events, as well as field trips and prize ceremonies.

For further information, please see <http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>.

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### **"Advanced Multi-Party Negotiation of Environmental Disputes" in Lakewood, CO (14-16 September)**

This workshop is organized by the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution and provides an opportunity for participants to apply their skills in interest-based negotiations to more complex multi-party negotiation settings. Participants should already have basic training in interest-based negotiation. The workshop aims to help natural resource managers become more effective in environmental conflict negotiation, prevention and management.

For further information, please see <http://www.ecr.gov/Training/Courses.aspx?id=1>.

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### **"Illegal Trade in Natural Resources – What Can Brussels Do?" in Brussels (29-30 September)**

This conference, organized by the Institute for Environmental Security, seeks to promote EU-based solutions for combating illegal trade in natural resources. As part of the Pathfinder 2010 project, the conference explores the impact of illegal trade in natural resources on the environment, development and security. It focuses on importing states and the creation of new legal mechanisms aimed at restricting illegal trade. Participants will include policy makers as well as representatives from private companies, NGOs, IGOs and the media.

For further information, please see <http://www.envirosecurity.org/pathfinder/conference/index.php>.

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### **"2010 Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change" in Berlin (8-9 October)**

Part of a series of annual research conferences on the human dimensions of global environmental change, this year's conference aims to bring together scientists from different social science disciplines that are addressing the social dimensions of environmental change and governance. It is organized by the Environmental Policy Research Centre of Free University Berlin in cooperation with the German Development Institute.

For further information, please see <http://www.berlinconference.org/2010/>.

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## IN BRIEF

### Human Right to Water, Security and Environment, and the Role of Transparency in Mitigating the Resource Curse in the Niger Delta

[Access to clean water is a human right](#): The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which amended the right to clean water in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The proposal was introduced by Bolivia, and the final text received 122 votes in favor, no dissenting votes and some abstentions. 163 out of 192 member states were present.

The recently published book "[Security and the Environment](#)" provides an overview of the links between securitisation theory and the debate about environmental threats. It uses changing US environmental security policy to propose a revision of securitisation theory, which should both allow insights into the intentions of key actors and enable moral evaluations in the environmental sector of security.

In June 2010, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) published an occasional paper entitled "[Revenue transparency to mitigate the resource curse in the Niger Delta](#)?" The paper analyzes the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and its potential to mitigate negative consequences of oil extraction in the Niger Delta and to overcome the so-called resource curse.

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This newsletter is financed in part by the German Federal Environmental Agency and the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety.

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