

## **FORUM**

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- Human security policy challenges

## **POLICY & RESEARCH**

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- Oil Drilling — Energy Security or Just a Quick Fix?
- Size Does Matter — Reconceptualizing Security
- Oil for Development? — World Bank's Chimera fails the Reality Test
- Return to the planet of the apes?

## **CONFERENCE REPORTS**

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- Food and Energy Crisis — Opportunities and Challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean
- International Conference on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights in Berlin
- Lester Brown's Plan B — Can we mobilize ourselves to save civilization?

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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- "Climate Change as a Security Threat — Strategies for Policy-Makers, Science and Business" in Freiburg (6-7 November)
- "A Global Contract Based on Climate Justice" in Brussels (11 November)
- "Sustaining Natural Resources and Environmental Integrity during Response to Crisis and Conflict" in Washington DC (11 November)
- "Implications of the US Elections for Foreign Policy, Climate Change and International Security" in Brussels (12 November)

## **IN BRIEF**

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- Global Hunger Index 2008, Transboundary Groundwater Resources Assessed, Coastal Communities in Asia at risk, Impact of Resource Revenues on Local Development, and Climate Refugees

## **IMPRINT/CONTACT**

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## FORUM

### Human security policy challenges

*By Andrew Morton (UNEP), Philippe Boncour (International Organization for Migration, IOM), Frank Laczko (International Organization for Migration, IOM)*

Environmental migration, as with any mass movement of population (especially when it entails international migration), has significant political ramifications in addition to humanitarian and development implications, and is therefore a truly cross-cutting issue requiring proactive intervention. Indeed, environmental issues are among the root causes of human migration and sustainable long-term solutions must take these environmental dimensions into account. The humanitarian community is already critically affected, with a predictable risk that the scale of the problem will soon overwhelm existing capacities and financial resources. Finally, environmentally induced migration is the end result of unsustainable development, and the associated demographic changes will no doubt have a cumulative impact on development priorities.

#### Key drivers

Poverty, failing ecosystems, vulnerability to natural hazards and gradual climate-driven environmental changes are all linked to environmental migration. The degradation of ecosystems, and/or demand for resources in excess of available supply, can lead to chronic poverty and hunger, high levels of communicable diseases, conflict and adaptation, or to coping strategies that include temporary or permanent migration. While natural hazards such as hurricanes and floods can affect entire nations or regions, the most dramatic impacts typically fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable (in terms of location and socio-economic status). In addition, when natural hazards abruptly destroy livelihoods, return, recovery and reintegration are not always possible. Climate change will significantly affect migration in three distinct ways. First, the effects of warming and drying in some regions will reduce agricultural potential and undermine 'ecosystem services' such as clean water and fertile soil. Second, the increase in extreme weather events – in particular, heavy precipitation and resulting flash or river floods in tropical regions – will affect people ever more and generate mass displacement. Finally, sea level rise will permanently destroy extensive and highly productive low-lying coastal areas that are home to millions of people who will have to relocate permanently.

#### Trends and patterns

Academics and international agencies estimate that there are currently several million environmental migrants, and that this number will rise to tens of millions within the next 20 years, or hundreds of millions within the next 50 years. These figures, however, are largely the result of 'educated guesswork', based on extrapolations from scattered case studies and a few highly speculative academic papers. Credible, evidence-based forecasts are needed to raise awareness, analyse impacts and direct corrective action, but work has yet to start on targeted research to develop valid estimates of potential migration and to correlate them with climate models and predictions.

At present, the great majority of environmental migrants originate in rural areas of least developed countries. This trend is expected to shift slightly in coming years, as densely populated coastal zones become increasingly affected by sea level rise and more frequent storms, and mountainous areas are affected by heavy rains and subsequent floods and landslides.

Most environmental migrants move and settle in urban centres within their home countries, with a smaller proportion migrating to neighbouring countries ('South-South migration'). An even smaller fraction migrates long distances to developed countries, contributing to the 'brain drain' phenomenon of skilled migrants. The burden thus falls overwhelmingly on least developed countries, even though it is the South-North international migration that appears most frequently in Western media.

### **Consequences**

Not all consequences of environmentally induced migration are negative. Leaving environmentally degraded and agriculturally unsustainable regions can be seen as a legitimate coping strategy for affected populations.

In addition, migration could potentially help slow the process of environmental degradation and allow those who remain in affected communities to adjust their livelihood strategies by changing their agricultural practices or, for instance, shifting to non-agricultural activities.

The main impacts of mass migration, however, are overwhelmingly negative; they include escalating humanitarian crises, rapid urbanisation and associated slum growth, and stalled development. Furthermore, work to date suggests that migration alone does not solve the main cause of the problem, as degraded regions are not emptied sufficiently to allow environmental recovery or poverty alleviation, and in most cases continue their inexorable decline.

### **Next steps — the key priorities**

Proactive intervention is now essential. Indeed, the international community has so far taken action in an essentially reactive manner, by responding to the frequent humanitarian crises and by (largely unsuccessfully) assisting developing countries to address explosive urban growth and slums. In the absence of successful corrective action, however, the future for many developing countries is likely to be a very difficult combination of widespread land degradation, food insecurity, unmanageable and impoverished mega-cities and large-scale migration.

While more work is needed to identify priority hotspots for intervention, forecasts and information from regions that are already affected provide some indicators. Particularly vulnerable areas include Small Island Developing States, the Sahel belt, the Bay of Bengal, dryland South and Central America, and dryland regions in Central Asia.

Both humanitarian and development assistance are clearly needed but as most of the burden falls on least developed countries, ownership at national level is essential. The following key priorities have been identified as tentative measures for achieving an effective and coordinated international response to the challenges presented by environmentally induced migration:

- gaining a better understanding and recognition of the issue
- mitigating the main causes, specifically through environmental management and climate change adaptation, and ensuring that the migration perspective is not omitted when these strategies are developed
- better managing the environmental migration processes that are already occurring, in particular with a view to enhancing their positive effects on the areas of origin and improving the carrying capacities of these areas

- integrating this issue into existing humanitarian policy practices, guidelines and forecasts
- recognising that early action and planning are critical elements of a comprehensive approach.

Addressing environmentally induced migration is undoubtedly a multi-billion dollar process but, considering the uncertainty in estimates of numbers of people likely to be affected, it is currently impossible to evaluate this cost with any measure of precision. It is clear, however, that this issue cannot be addressed through minor changes in the levels of Overseas Development Assistance alone.

### **Meeting the challenges ahead**

As a response to the growing realisation of the complex interdependencies between climate change, environmental degradation and migration, as well as the need for more collaboration and coordination at the regional, international and global levels, the Climate Change, Environment and Migration Alliance (CEEMA) was established in April 2008 in Munich, Germany, by the United Nations University (UNU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Munich Re Foundation (MRF). CEEMA is a multi-stakeholder global partnership bringing together key international organisations, groups of interested state parties, the private sector, the scientific and professional communities, and representatives of civil society.

Its main objective is to mainstream environmental and climate change considerations into migration management policies and practices, and to bring migration issues into the global environmental and climate change discourse.

The Alliance will bring together policymakers and practitioners from multiple fields to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities this nexus presents.

It provides an essential platform for interdisciplinary regional, international and global collaboration and coordination, in order to:

- raise policy and public awareness of the need for concerted action to address the challenges and realise the opportunities presented by the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus
- improve our knowledge of the complex relationships between climate change, environmental degradation and migration in terms of cause and consequence, and long-term as well as short-term patterns, through gathering, compiling and making available current information, as well as developing innovative research approaches
- provide a neutral and open forum for policy dialogue to identify and discuss major crosscutting issues. The Alliance platform will strengthen cooperative mechanisms among governments and others
- provide practical support to the most vulnerable countries and population groups through building the capacity of governments and stakeholders to respond effectively to the challenges presented by the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus.

*The complete article was first published in Issue 31 of the "Forced Migration Review", October 2008. This special edition of the FMR debates key aspects of the debate on climate change and displacement: the numbers, the definitions and the modalities – and the tension between the need for research and the need to act.*

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For more information, please see [www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)

▲Top

## **POLICY & RESEARCH**

### **Oil Drilling — Energy Security or Just a Quick Fix?**

One of the most critical debates facing the US presidential candidates, Senators John McCain and Barack Obama, is how to solve the country's dependency on foreign fossil fuels as oil prices soar and the economy continues to crumble. As a result, oil drilling has become a central theme for US energy policy.

McCain argues that dependency on foreign oil threatens the US national security and economy, because it helps to further underwrite terrorist operations. US dependency also offers little incentive for repressive regimes to accept democracy. On the other hand, Obama, who previously opposed drilling, now acknowledges that he would consider "limited offshore drilling" as a broader compromise to lowering prices at the pump. Both candidates appear to agree that the US must depend less on foreign oil and strengthen its economy and national security through increased drilling.

Critics, like Democratic Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, argue offshore drilling is only a quick fix, while others see it as an opportunity to encourage renewable energy technology. In particular, the National Intelligence Assessment Report on Climate Change testified in June that US nuclear facilities and drilling refineries run a high risk of damage due to severe storms in the near future. Not only do severe storms threaten coastlines and civilians, but so do the offshore facilities and operators. Despite safety planning measures thousands of barrels of oil, fuel and chemicals spill into the ocean each year. Recent hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico have caused seven of the 13 larger oil spills.

As Election Day rapidly approaches and the financial crisis spirals out of control, McCain and Obama need to propose a more detailed plan on how to solve the country's oil dependency and reduce the risk of environmental degradation, while protecting US citizens and strengthening the economy simultaneously. This herculean task cannot be achieved overnight with offshore drilling. (*Jeannette Allan*)

*A review of the positions of both candidates can be found [here](#)*

*A briefing by Dr. Thomas Fingar on the National Intelligence Assessment on the National Security Implications of Global Climate Change to 2030 is available [here](#)*

▲Top

## **Size Does Matter — Reconceptualizing Security**

A lot has been written about the concept of "security". Seldom, however, has this debate been presented as comprehensively as in "Globalization and Environmental Challenges. Reconceptualizing Security in the 21st Century", written by an international group of authors led by Hans Günter Brauch.

The book brings together a wide spectrum of views on different dimensions of security. The central argument of the book is that security is a product of the interaction between environment, development and peace. The overall aim is thereby to reconceptualise security in a way that fits the challenges of globalizations and global environmental change. Its target audience is thereby the informed reader, yet requires no specialized or in-depth knowledge of the subjects discussed.

Although the book comprises 75 chapters covering over 900 pages, the publishers have to a large extent managed to avoid overlaps between individual contributions. A Euro-Atlantic perspective, however, dominates the assessment of international institutions and organizations in this context. The role of the EU, NATO and OSCE is emphasized, while important organizations such as ASEAN and AU or even international financial institutions such as the World Bank have been neglected.

Nevertheless, from a regional perspective, the publication represents a refreshing change. On the one hand, it conceptualizes security from a variety of philosophical and religious viewpoints. On the other hand, it deals with the specific challenges many individual regions will face in the upcoming decades. In several instances the authors themselves come from these regions, thereby lending the chapters a high degree of authenticity. The publication does not offer specialists in the field any fundamentally new insights; its tremendous value lies in the multiplicity of perspectives. It is therefore useful as a comprehensive reference work that is sensitive to the complexity of the topics under discussion. (*Achim Maas*)

*Hans Günter Brauch et al. (ed.) 2008: Globalization and Environmental Challenges. Reconceptualising Security for the 21st Century. Berlin und Heidelberg: Springer.*

The other titles of the Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace are listed at <http://www.springer.com/series/8090>

▲Top

## **Oil for Development? — World Bank's Chimera fails the Reality Test**

The project would have "enormous potential to bring great benefits to the people of Chad and Cameroon". Former World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn spoke these words in 2002, reacting to growing criticism regarding the Bank's pipeline deal with Chad. Numerous human rights groups, parts of the Chadian parliament and even an internal inspection committee of the Bank had voiced concerns that financial support for the oil-extracting sector in Chad was likely to increase corruption, and could worsen the human rights situation and fuel the conflict between Chad and Sudan.

The World Bank's contribution to the pipeline project has been one of its largest investments in Africa and was thought to be a test case in using oil revenues for

development. But the Chadian government repeatedly failed to comply with the agreement and President Deby even made attempts to increase his personal control over the revenues. While the World Bank temporarily abandoned the cooperation, it resumed the project in 2006, confidently claiming that it would be “safe to say that the greatest benefits for the population are not yet realized”.

But critics proved right after all. In September 2008, the World Bank finally pulled the plug and terminated the pipeline deal. By this time President Deby had not only secured himself an income of more than a billion dollars — by keeping a major part of the oil-revenues — he had also used a significant share of the money on military spending. In an already unstable environment, with tensions growing between Chad and its neighbour Sudan, this type of project is likely to have an impact on conflict dynamics — while the much needed development remains a chimera. (*Joeran Altenberg*)

*Information about the World Bank's engagement in Chad can be found [here](#)*

*The Press Release announcing the termination of the pipeline project is available [here](#)*

▲Top

### **Return to the planet of the apes?**

The governments of Cameroon and Nigeria are joining forces to save the remaining 300 gorillas in transboundary Cross River National Park. To improve cooperation government representatives met in September in Akamkpa, Nigeria at the head office of Cross River National Park. The meeting was supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). The partners aim at reducing bushmeat trade and illegal logging, improving field monitoring and law enforcement within the parks, and last but not least increasing community participation.

Such transboundary conservation efforts may not only have implications for the survival of the endangered species but for the overall livelihood and political context. As the recently published study “Gorillas in the Midst” by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) points out: these activities can also create or trigger social and political tensions. As the example of the Virunga-Bwindi region between DRC, Rwanda and Uganda indicates, conflicts, at least local-level, can occur as a result of conservation activities — e.g. through restriction of access to livelihood resources, new costs of conservation or unequal benefit sharing.

The International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), however, shows that conservation efforts can also contribute to peacebuilding through improved communication and dialogue among different authorities. The activities in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP), located in southwest Uganda, demonstrate the potential in this regard. Lengthy and carefully thought out consultation with the community is among the success factors that provide the overall process ownership needed to provide both conservation and peace. (*Dennis Taenzler*)

*For more information about the Cross River National Park, please see [here](#)*

*For the IISD report, please see [here](#)*

▲Top

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### **Food and Energy Crisis — Opportunities and Challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean**

Latin America is better prepared for crisis than ever before and still expects its economic growth to be over four percent. The current food and energy crisis, however, has widely varying negative effects on the region. These are the major findings of the seminar of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) organized at the behest of member countries and held in Santiago, Chile on September 4 and 5, 2008. ECLAC is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations.

The seminar examined the challenges posed for Latin America and the Caribbean by global food and energy scarcity and also analyzed public policy options to address the situation. In her welcoming address, Laura López, Secretary of the Commission for ECLAC, called this seminar the first step in a process of analysis, elaboration of proposals, and technical consultation.

The seminar's analysis of problems points to external causes and to economic as well as social effects. Some challenges are shared by the entire region, such as the need to curb inflation while, at the same time, the Federal Reserve Bank weakens the US dollar. With regard to the economy, different questions arise concerning changing terms of trade. Some net food exporters benefit from soaring food prices and need to handle their extra income wisely — but are threatened by the Dutch disease of negative effects of trade surplus-related currency appreciation on other exporting sectors. On the other hand, net food importers face the opposite problem and have to deal with worsening living standards. Social aspects of the crisis are increasing poverty and malnutrition, especially in Bolivia, Haiti, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

The seminar recommends, besides emergency aid, the following counteractive policies. With regard to food, countries shall develop policy frameworks that can tie in short-run concerns relating to price shocks with the long-term need to increase production and reposition agriculture. With regard to energy, the seminar points to four objectives: increasing energy security; promoting energy conservation and efficient use; diversifying the energy matrix; and fostering social equity in energy access and consumption. Generally, a process of economic restructuring towards new technological capabilities, while avoiding overspecialization, is required to make the region less structurally vulnerable to international price volatility. (*Manuel Adams*)

Please visit the seminar's [website](#) for further information

▲Top

### **International Conference on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights in Berlin**

Holding Transnational Corporations (TNCs) accountable for human rights violations dominated the topic of discussion at the "International Conference on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights" of the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), held October 9 and 10, 2008 in Berlin. The conference brought lawyers,



social scientists and development workers from academic institutions as well as non- and for-profit organisations together.

Although TNCs act globally, national jurisdiction — especially in the developed world — is sufficient to win trials against TNCs violating human rights, e.g. under the Alien Tort Statute. India, though a developing country, was presented as a successful example in order to bring TNCs violations to justice. Other ongoing trials in developing countries such as Nigeria, DRC, Chad, the Philippines and South Africa were also discussed. Litigation is seen as part of the solution to put pressure on TNCs to respect human rights. However, the negative ramifications of suing TNCs can increase the risk of intimidation, blackmailing etc. for victims, witnesses and lawyers.

The role of soft law approaches, such as public private partnerships (PPPs) or the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises are continuously being debated. PPPs are described as “talking shops” or the privatization of standards, therefore soft laws are equal to “avoiding law” or even “disappearing law”. On the other hand, supporters of soft law instruments see them as a first step to hard law, thus “emerging law”. Nevertheless, it was agreed upon that the polarization between soft and hard law is misleading. Approaches must be balanced and holistic, including prevention instruments to litigation and voluntary to mandatory instruments. Furthermore, human rights defenders must find more creative ways to hold TNCs increasingly accountable for their actions.

*(Meike Westerkamp)*

▲Top

### **Lester Brown’s Plan B — Can we mobilize ourselves to save civilization?**

“Saving civilization is not a spectator sport” is Lester Brown’s — president of the Earth Policy Institute — battle cry. He was invited last month by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the sustainability network 3plusX to speak to over 100 interested participants in Berlin. Brown’s talk echoed the latest edition of his Institute’s well-regarded book ‘Plan B 3.0—Mobilizing to Save Civilization’, which critiques the unsustainable outcomes of a ‘business-as-usual’ mentality. Early warning signs of a global civilization collapse are reflected in natural systems degradation — such as the net worldwide forest loss of over 7 million hectares per year, or the unsustainable use of more than 75 percent of global fisheries.

Current CO2 reduction goals often aim too far in the future to fit the political arena’s nearsighted vision. On the other hand, Plan B’s short-term, ambitious goal of 80 percent CO2 emission reductions by 2020 is more to the liking of many environmental professionals. But how will that goal be achieved? Members of 3plusX and others asked where the necessary incentives, leadership, and financial resources would come from. Brown stressed that rising levels of awareness and expanding grassroots mobilization are key to driving change where it is needed most — at the leadership level. His main action plan, however, is tax reform, a system of equally lowering income taxes and raising carbon taxes familiar to Europe in general, and Germany in particular.

Good examples of what individual countries, states, investors or leaders have accomplished in the climate and energy sectors abounded in Brown’s speech. However, a clear description of how the massive and speedy economic reform necessary for the reduction goals would be achieved, as described in his book, was lacking. Comparisons to the tremendous feats of the US manufacturing sector during WWII were made in

reference to the kind of 'wartime speed' mobilization needed to reduce global climate change. Yet, it remains doubtful whether or not triggers are obvious enough for society to undertake such immediate efforts. Nevertheless, Brown pleaded a strong case that is anything but escapist: Just last year New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clarke took a radical step in announcing total carbon neutrality as a central policy goal – that sets a good example for the way to saving civilization. (*Irina Comardicea*)

*For a podcast summary of Lester Brown's lecture at the GTZ please see <http://www.gtz.de/en/aktuell/24829.htm>*

*For complete access to Lester Brown's book (in PDF format) please see <http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/Contents.htm>*

▲Top

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

### **"Climate Change as a Security Threat — Strategies for Policy-Makers, Science and Business" in Freiburg (6-7 November)**

The event will focus on potential conflict constellations caused by climate change and the impacts these conflicts may have on peace and security. Moreover the conference will bring these issues to the attention of a broader public and further support opportunities for dialogue. The Federal Foreign Minister Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister of State Dr h.c. Gernot Erler and Lord Mayor of the City of Freiburg Dr Dieter Salomon will open the international conference. Highly regarded speakers will enrich the programme, among them Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Director General of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri. The conference programme will be complemented by two special events: a Benefit Concert of the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and an Exhibition entitled "Environment, Conflict and Cooperation".

Further information on the event is available at <http://www.freiburg-konferenz.de>

▲Top

### **"A Global Contract Based on Climate Justice" in Brussels (11 November)**

In response to the manifold challenges of climate change the Ecosocial Forum Europe, together with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and a multi-party group of Members of the European Parliament, among them Jens Holm, Othmar Karas, Jo Leinen, Caroline Lucas, Vittorio Prodi and Anders Wijkman have decided to organise a high-level conference with the goal of influencing the international climate negotiations. The goal of the conference is to create a stimulating environment for dialogue in order to inform Members of the European Parliament and other stakeholders such as civil society, public institutions and the business and financial sector of the necessity for a Global Contract based on climate justice.

Further information on the event is available at <http://www.global-contract.eu/>

▲Top

### **"Sustaining Natural Resources and Environmental Integrity during Response to Crisis and Conflict" in Washington DC (11 November)**

Post-conflict and post-disaster response programs are often designed and implemented quickly, with the highest priority given to basic health services, water and sanitation, and infrastructure. Environmental issues typically receive much less systematic attention, and crisis-response programs can sometimes cause additional environmental degradation. This session, organized by the Environmental Change and Security Program (ECSP) at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, will examine strategies to mitigate the negative social and environmental impacts of responding to conflict and crisis. Presenters will discuss how long-term considerations such as natural resource management (NRM) can best be integrated into crisis response and will also highlight areas in need of future attention, innovation, and investment.

Further information on the event is available [here](#)

▲Top

### **"Implications of the US Elections for Foreign Policy, Climate Change and International Security" in Brussels (12 November)**

Given the crash of 2008 and the linked crises in finance, trade, environment and foreign policy, the US Presidential election result seems more important than ever to those in the rest of the world without a vote. Key questions that are going to be debated at the conference include: Are European expectations of a President Obama unrealistically high? How would a President McCain respond to a Europe that had overwhelmingly backed his opponent? At the beginning of the campaign both candidates were seen as environmentally benign when compared with President George W Bush. Does the choice of Governor Palin as Vice Presidential candidate underline that this perceived environmental parity is no longer accurate?

Information on the event is available at <http://www.envirosecurity.org/ccis/afterthevote/>

▲Top

## **IN BRIEF**

### **Global Hunger Index 2008, Transboundary Groundwater Resources Assessed, Coastal Communities in Asia at risk, Impact of Resource Revenues on Local Development, and Climate Refugees**

For the World Food Day, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in conjunction with Welthungerhilfe (formerly known as German Agro-Action) and Concern Worldwide has published the new **World Hunger Index 2008**. The index documents alarming or extremely alarming levels of hunger in thirty-three countries around the world. More information and the index itself are accessible [here](#).

▲Top

The World-wide Hydrogeological Mapping and Assessment Program (WHYMAP) has published a **map of world-wide transboundary groundwater resources**.

Accordingly, almost 96% of the planet's freshwater resources are to be found in underground aquifers, most of which straddle national boundaries. The map and further information is available [here](#).

▲Top

World Vision has released a new Planet Prepare Report on the impact of **climate change in coastal areas in Asia**. The findings suggest that increased sea levels and a growing number of natural disasters can potentially threaten small islands, impose unprecedented challenges on Mega Cities in coastal areas and are likely to be a strong driver of climate induced migration. The report can be found [here](#).

▲Top

The new UN Sustainable Development Innovation Brief addresses the **use of non-renewable resource revenues for sustainable local development**. It discusses the performance and impacts of activities financed by revenues from natural resources in selected African and Latin American countries. Furthermore, it identifies problems and provides ideas on how to improve the efficiency and equitable use of such revenues for sustainable development. The report is available [here](#).

▲Top

In the course of the international **EFMSV-Conference on climate induced migration** in Bonn, the research project EACH-FOR presented its preliminary findings. Germanwatch and the ECC-Platform organized one of the many workshops at the convention. Academics and practitioners discussed the issue of "Climate Change, Migration and European Foreign Policy". The preliminary results of EACH-FOR are available for download [here](#).

▲Top

## IMPRINT/CONTACT

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[▲Top](#)