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# News Bulletin

## Regional Environment Assessment Program-Asia

### Linking EA Professionals in Asia

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June 30, 2000

#### **EIA and environmental conventions**

Dear Friends: Should EIA practitioners examine the impacts of a given developmental activity on climate change, ozone depletion, desertification etc? Should we attempt to examine the issue of compliance with the various international environmental conventions that our countries have signed? Or if not compliance, at least examine the possible aspects that may in fact be violating a given convention in any way? Many of us are already active in giving due consideration to the Convention on Biodiversity, mainly because the convention clearly articulates integration of biodiversity concerns in EIA. Nonetheless, there are many other conventions where we need to pay due attention in our work. This point was highlighted at the IAIA 20<sup>th</sup> annual Conference in Hong Kong by Ms. Anneke Wevers and got unanimous support. The challenge is how to put the concept in practice. Please do share your views on it and we will be happy to put them in the next news bulletin.

The IAIA Conference this year was attended by some 600 participants from 80 countries. Unfortunately, most of our colleagues from South Asia were not there due to lack of funds.

The host of IAIA Conference - the Hong Kong EIA Association, plans to put all the

papers presented on CD. We will keep you informed on how to get a copy.

Preparations are underway for holding the first SAREAA Convention. It would be good to see the new leadership taking forward the SAREAA mission with a renewed commitment. Warm regards

Parvaiz Naim

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#### **REAP Hotline**

e-mail: reap@iucn.wlink.com.np;  
Fax (+9771) 536786  
*It is for NEAA members only.*

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#### **☛ SAREAA Convention**

The SAREAA President Prof Haroun Er Rashid is exploring the possibility of holding the first SAREAA Convention in Kathmandu. The tentative dates are August 18-19. The Convention would formally endorse the SAREAA Constitution and transfer the SAREAA leadership to elected representatives from the National EA Associations.

For the last 4 years, SAREAA is being managed by an ad hoc committee.

During the IAIA meeting in Hong Kong, Ms. Anneke Wevers of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the hope that the first SAREAA Convention will set a good example of transferring the SAREAA leadership in a transparent and participatory manner for further increasing the confidence of its members, and move forward with its important mission of promoting an effective use of EIA in the region.

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➤ **IAIA Awards 2000**

At the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of IAIA in Hong Kong, Dr. Ram Bahadur Khadka was awarded a certificate for his efforts in promoting EIA in South Asia.

The institutional awards for excellence were given to IUCN and Andrea Bagri for support of the Biodiversity integration in EIA, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong for strengthening impact assessment practices in China. Markus Eggenberger, Shirley Conover, Jules Scholten, Frank Vanclay were given award for their contributions to IAIA mission and Jon Teiglad was awarded for his paper on "Mega-Events and Impact on Tourism (Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal Vol 17, No. 4). Shell International Exploration & Development was recognized for standard-setting guidelines on social impact assessment, Hydro-Quebec and the Makivik Corp. for advancing Indigenous Peoples' concerns, and Certificate of appreciation for their leadership and support to IAIA went to Sarah Liao, Elvis W.K. Au, Tony Cheung, Glenn Frommer, Alan Kwok, K.C. Lam, Freeman Cheung, Mable Chan, Shelley Tung and Vikki Leung.

The Ross-Hulman Award was given to Professor Norman Lee.

***Congratulations!***

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➤ **PAGE findings**

Findings of the Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems (PAGE) were recently made public. This pioneering analysis of the world's ecosystems reveals a widespread decline in the condition of the world's ecosystems due to increasing resource demands. It warns that if the decline continues it could have devastating implications for human development and the welfare of all species. Details at <http://www.wri.org/wri/wrr2000>

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➤ **IAIA Office impacted**

While the IAIA Executive Office staff members were in Hong Kong, a severe storm in Fargo North Dakota USA totally destroyed the IAIA office. In the words of the IAIA Chief Executive Officer Ms. Rita Hamm, 'we need to learn more about risk assessment and preparedness'. Ms. Hamm has made a temporary office in her home, until the office building gets restored. All

telephone and fax lines have been transferred to her residence.

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➤ **The 2000 Sophie Prize**

Ms. Liao Xiaoyi (Sheri Liao), environmental journalist and activist representing the Global Village Beijing is the winner of The 2000 Sophie Prize. Details at [www.ifce.org/gvb/](http://www.ifce.org/gvb/)

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➤ **Quiz EIA-2**

At the IAIA Hong Kong meeting, a paper was presented on the possible impacts of siting a large industry in one of the habitats of an endangered bird species. When asked, 'how many birds you would want to save to have a sustaining population, the answer was, 'a thousand, 2 thousand, five thousand....' Now keeping this in mind, here is a hypothetical situation for a brain jog:

Assume that the proponents of the factory approach you and say, 'please let us use this site to build our factory. In turn, we will help you develop another site of your choice for these birds to thrive without any threat. And we will also support your research for increasing the population of these birds'.

How would you respond to this argument in your EIA report?

Please send in your response to Ms. Neera Pradhan within one-month time.

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➤ **Quiz EIA-1**

In the March issue of this News Bulletin, we presented to you the first Quiz EIA as follows:

"On a largely undisturbed river, engineers propose building of 5 hydropower dams. What would be your approach for assessing their impacts, especially on the biodiversity?"

As you would have noted, it was quite a challenging exercise. Many colleagues who responded dealt with this complex situation as if it was one activity. Nonetheless, there were several words of wisdom interspersed in those responses. We therefore decided not to reproduce any single response, but rather distill all the good points from these and present to you a summary that may be of more interest and value. The following is the outcome:

Some basic assumption included the following:

- 1- In many cases, there are more than one sites considered for dam construction. From the first approximation to the detailed engineering design, many things change. These changes may mean a change in the zone of influence of a proposed dam.
- 2- Since many dams are proposed on the river, it may be difficult to visualize some of the overlapping zones of influence.
- 3- It is not likely that construction on all dams will begin simultaneously.
- 4- Those who will begin first may normally get many privileges and may end up affecting a large area without much resistance from the concerned authorities and other stakeholders. But those who come later may have to pay heavy price to get an entry into the river system. This situation creates unfair situation for entrepreneurs and at times lead to corruption and use of unfair and unlawful means to make use of the river.
- 5- In such a situation, rather than first getting all possible information on the proposed dams (which may not be available with any details at this early planning stage anyway), it may be more useful to do a full study of the entire river stretch and its basin.
- 6- Identify the biodiversity hotspots and other localities of social, cultural, ethical and economic value.
- 7- On the basis of this study, assign sensitivity classes to the various stretches of the river.
- 8- The subsequent EIA of individual dams should demonstrate that the dam would neither be located in the sensitive parts (like the biodiversity hotspots), nor the hotspots would come under the zone of influence of a proposed activity.

This proactive approach to avoiding negative impacts is open to debate. Please send your views to Ms. Neera Pradhan

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#### **NEAA News**

#### **☉ NEAB, Bangladesh celebrates Environment Day**

On 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2000, NEAB organized a seminar titled, "Incorporating EIA in the National Policies and Plans" at the Paribesh Mela organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forest. Attended by around 100 participants

[officials, researchers, environmentalists, and students], the keynote paper was read by Dr Mahbubur Rahman, Member, NEAB Executive Board. Besides, holding the seminar, NEAB also put up a stall with exhibits like, EIA Training Manuals, Newsletter, books and brochures published so far. The stall attracted many visitors and it provided an opportunity to make people aware of NEAB activities.

Their new e-mail: [neab@citechco.net](mailto:neab@citechco.net)

#### **☉ MOU signed with NEIAA, Nepal**

An agreement was signed between REAP and NEIAA Nepal, under CDEA Project on 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2000, to strengthen the EA process and capacity building in Nepal. According to the MOU, NEIAA plans to conduct various training programs, workshops, publish EIA specialist directory of Nepal, EIA newsletter for Nepal and maintain a resource center for EA related materials. Dr. Ram B. Khadka signed the MOU as the President of the NEIAA.

Their new e-mail: [neiaan@ntc.net.np](mailto:neiaan@ntc.net.np)

#### **☉ Second General Body Meeting of PEAA, Pakistan**

The Second General body Meeting of the Pakistan Environmental Assessment Association was held on Saturday May 27, 2000 at Dreamland Motel in Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting discussed important matters like the finalization of PEAA constitution, progress towards registration, the activities for 20000, debate upon the changes suggested in the SAREAA constitution and the SAREAA convention. The meeting also determined the direction of PEAA and effectiveness in dealing with the day to day EA related issues and capacity building of EA in Pakistan.

Their new e-mail: [peaa@iucnp.org](mailto:peaa@iucnp.org)

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#### **REAP round-up**

#### **✓ Regional EA Conference Proceedings: Available now!!**

We hope you have already received your copy of the Proceedings of the First Annual South Asian Environment Assessment Conference, December 4-7, 1999, Kathmandu Nepal. The proceedings carry selected papers presented at the conference

on different issues like biodiversity concerns in EIA, Women participation in EIA, transboundary impacts and strategies to share information, EIA of water related projects, country report on the EIA system etc. The summaries of various sessions were posted on the Internet. Selected responses received are also included in the Proceedings.

If you need a copy, please contact Ms. Trishna Rai [reap@iucn.wlink.com.np](mailto:reap@iucn.wlink.com.np)

✓ **Welcome Anne-Marie Dusablon**

Ms. Anne-Marie Magny Dusablon, will be working with REAP as an intern from July to October 2000. She is a student of Rosemary College, Canada. Her internship is sponsored by CIDA. The topic of her interest is "Integrating Biodiversity concerns in EIA".

Contact e-mail during her stay in Kathmandu: [reap-intern@iucn.wlink.com.np](mailto:reap-intern@iucn.wlink.com.np)

**Announcements:**

⇒> October 17-20: The Fourth International Conference and Biennial Meeting, Argonne, Illinois, USA: Science and Technology assessment and Forecasting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: tools, methods and case studies for evaluating sustainable development. URL: [www.iatafi.org](http://www.iatafi.org), <http://web.ead.anl.gov/iatafi2000/>

⇒> October 22-27: The Ninth International Coral Reef Symposium, Bali, Indonesia: World Coral Reefs in the New Millennium: Bridging Research and Management for Sustainable Development. Scholarships for 6 Science Writers/Journalists from North America, Asia, Australia and Europe will be offered. Deadline is July 15, 2000 for submission of necessary documents not exceeding 2 pages (mini CV or Bio; a sample of articles – if you are a freelancer, please include a list of the outlets that routinely publish your articles; a short one or two paragraph description of your interest and what issues your coverage of coral issue will focus on). Submit to Jessica Brown at Sea Web, #202-483-9570 phone, 202-483-9354 fax, Email:

[jbrown@seaweb.org](mailto:jbrown@seaweb.org). URL: [www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org) and [www.nova.edu/ocean/9icrs.html#Update](http://www.nova.edu/ocean/9icrs.html#Update)

⇒> December 13-14: **Ground Water Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA:** A Transboundary, Strategic and Geopolitical Resource Assoc. of Ground Water Scientists and Engineers Annual Meeting. The Call for Abstracts and submission info is online at: <http://www.ngwa.org/education/agwse2.html> Contact Bob Masters, Conference Coordinator, e-mail: [rmaste@ngwa.org](mailto:rmaste@ngwa.org), Phone at 1-800-551-7379, ext. 527 (toll free in USA) or 1-614-898-7791, ext. 527 (outside USA). URL: [www.ngwa.org/education/agwse2.html](http://www.ngwa.org/education/agwse2.html).

⇒> December 14-17: The **International Scientific Conference**, Chios, Greece: Tourism on Islands and Specific Destinations. Deadline is September 30, 2000 for submission of abstract (one A4 page), short CV (ten lines), e-mail or fax numbers for direct contact. Submit to Prof. Dr. G. Zacharatos and Assistant Prof. P. Tsartas, e-mail: [conf.tour@aegean.gr](mailto:conf.tour@aegean.gr) or to address University of the Aegean, Program of Postgraduate Studies in Tourism Planning, Management and Policy, 54 M. Livanou str. 82100 Chios, Greece, Fax no. +30-271-35399. For further information contact: Mr. P. Tsartas or Mr. Th. Stavrinoudis, tel. No. +30-271-35317, fax no. +30-217-35399, e-mail: [conf.tour@aegean.gr](mailto:conf.tour@aegean.gr)

⇒> July 2000: **Health Impact Assessment workshop** at the Public Health Association Conference at Palmerston North, New Zealand. Details at [www.pha.org.nz](http://www.pha.org.nz)

◆ **WWF** International provides job opportunity for a **Press Officer** for its Communications Department, to be based in Gland, Switzerland. Closing date for application is July 14, 2000. Interested candidates should send a covering letter with their CV to Miriam Fuhrer, Human Resources Assistant, [mfuhrer@wwfint.org](mailto:mfuhrer@wwfint.org), Tel: +41-22-364-9306, Fax: +41-22-364-7850

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