

After more than a year of intense preparatory meetings and negotiations the world's biggest ever summit called the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4, 2002.

The WSSD gathered 21,340 participants from 191 governments, intergovernment organisations and non-government organisations, the private sector, academia and scientific community.

After conclusion, many NGOs and media representatives have already started labelling the Summit as a big disappointment. Their expectations on what the multilateral system was capable of achieving were not fulfilled at Johannesburg.

WSSD produced three types of outcomes:

- a political declaration named Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development
- a 65-page Johannesburg Plan of Implementation restating existing targets and a limited number of new commitments, and
- Type II commitments made by governments and other stakeholders, including business and non-governmental organisations

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was entrusted with an enhanced role with respect to reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and fostering coherence of implementation, initiatives and partnerships. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would continue to monitor implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

One of the most discussed paragraphs in the globalisation chapter, during the preparatory process of the Summit as well as the Summit, was the text on corporate responsibility and accountability. The text is viewed as a possible stepping-stone for civil society to press its case for an international regulatory framework for corporations.

Highlighting successes and failures of the Summit one could say that reaching an agreement on the inclusion of a target on sanitation was definitely one of the major successes of the Summit. Another was, agreeing on a target on the recovery of fish stocks. The Summit was perhaps also a turning point for the prospects of "entry into force" of the Kyoto Protocol, following an indication by the Russian Federation and Canada that ratification could follow soon. However, the biggest disappointment of the WSSD was the defeat of proposals for the world's first global renewable energy target. Little progress was also

EcoConsumer

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Consumption

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mentation.

One of the main themes from Agenda 21 was action on sustainable consumption and production. This theme was slow in picking up in the last 10 years and received little new momentum at the WSSD. However, the Plan of Implementation does state about encouraging and promoting the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation encourages work on the development of indicators of sustainable development at the national level, including work on gender. The Summit also agreed that it is necessary to implement natural resource strategies, which should include targets adopted at the national and, where appropriate, regional levels to protect ecosystems and achieve integrated management of land, water and living resources.

The relationship between WTO rules and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (e.g. the Kyoto Protocol) is likely to be one of the early indicators of the degree to which the WTO is capable of accommodating a shift towards meaningful integration of the environmental and social pillars into the trade.

Although the Summit could have done much more yet, for those who had been involved in the preparatory process were actually apprehending a far worse result than what Johannesburg Summit actually offered in the end. At least, the outcome prevented any backsliding from commitments made by countries ten-years ago at the hugely successful Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992.

World Summit on Sustainable Development: Was it a failure?



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Sustainable Production

2

Boycott GE Fish

More than 200 grocers, restaurants and seafood distributors across the United States have pledged not to purchase or sell genetically engineered fish. Through the campaign, thousands of consumers and environmental and fishing groups are demanding a moratorium on the domestic marketing and importation of genetically engineered fish, including a ban on their use or release into open net pens and ponds.

Concerns about the commercial release of genetically engineered (GE) fish arose after an application was filed with the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for approval of an experimental salmon developed by Aqua Bounty Farms. The Centre for Food Safety, with the support of Friends of the Earth and more than 70 other organisations, has filed a legal action with the federal government seeking a moratorium on the approval of GE fish.

(ENS, 19.09.02)

Dangerous Recycling Poisoning India

Every year, India imports millions of tonnes of plastic, steel, other metals and discarded computers to break down and re-use, often with unskilled workers ignorant of the risks. Critics say India has become the developed world's dumping ground, rapidly poisoning itself and its billion-plus people with toxins from both the waste and the pollution from the dangerous methods used to recycle it.

The world's second-most populous country combines low wages, lax environmental laws and a huge domestic market for the recycled products. About 70,000 tonnes of scrap steel from the World Trade Centre was shipped to India before it was stopped by objections from environmentalists and unions, says Greenpeace India. It says the scrap is contaminated by asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), plastics and the lead, mercury and other contaminants in the computers and fittings inside the twin towers destroyed on September 11 last year. A preliminary study in India found no toxins, but Greenpeace and other environmental groups questioned the study's accuracy.

(PA, 06.09.02)

Mobile Phone Recycling

A group of British mobile phone operators and retailers launched a programme to encourage the reuse and recycling of handsets, which can pose serious environmental dangers when thrown away. The Fonebak programme will attempt to keep the 15 mn handsets replaced every year out of Britain's landfills. Experts warn that just one older phone battery can potentially pollute hundreds of thousands of litres of water in the ground.

Britain's environment minister, applauded the members of the industry who had taken the initiative ahead of the European Waste of Electrical and Electronic Directive due in 2004. Despite the fact that mobile phones can be used for up to seven years, Fonebak said most in the UK were replaced every one or two years. Participating companies will provide envelopes with pre-paid postage to new mobile phone buyers, who can then send their old phone to Fonebak.

(PA, 26.09.02)



Responsibility of Rich Countries

Economic and social development must be accompanied by changes in production and consumption patterns. Otherwise development would not be sustainable. Therefore, sustainable production and consumption are part of the Agenda 21 from Rio. Over the past decade, a great deal has happened and a number of policies have been initiated. However, improvements in most areas have been outweighed by increased consumption.

Consumption and production patterns must be changed in wealthy countries and in developing countries. Decoupling is pivotal to sustainable development, both in wealthy countries and developing countries.

A number of rich countries must establish sustainable production and consumption patterns domestically, for example through technological development. Then the rich countries must help develop sustainable consumption and production in developing countries, for example through capacity development and transfers and cooperation regarding sustainable technology.

(EU EN, August 2002)

Science of Recycling Sewage Sludge

The safe management of human waste has presented a fundamental environmental challenge. The national wastewater treatment infrastructure deals with millions of tonnes of domestic waste generated annually. To manage the ever-increasing volume of sewage, technology has been developed that enables to recycle some of it to the environment. The recycling plan includes applying treated sewage sludge, called biosolids, to agricultural and other lands as fertilizer.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates biosolids that are applied to land. Two years ago, at the request of EPA, the National Research Council convened a committee to examine the scientific basis of EPA's regulatory requirements for applying biosolids to land. The consensus report called on the EPA to update the scientific basis of its requirements, to improve knowledge about chemicals and disease causing pathogens that may be present in biosolids, to evaluate concerns about health effects and exposure, and to make a stronger investment in the agency programmes overseeing biosolids application and management. The report outlined positive steps the agency can take to evaluate and manage risks, respond to stakeholder concerns and protect public health.

(ENS, 20.09.02)

Dismal Recycling Record

Britain's abysmal record of reuse and recycling of household waste, its mountain of disused fridges and the widespread public resistance to plans to build incineration plants has sounded the alarm in Downing Street over the country's growing waste problem. Downing Street will be producing a report on tackling waste, in October, in which a key recommendation will be to charge every household in England for the amount of rubbish they leave out for the dustman, reports The Guardian newspaper.

The charging scheme could be up to £1 a sack or £5 per month, and is being backed by the Treasury. However, it would be run in conjunction with a free doorstep service for taking away papers, cans, bottles and plastics for recycling

(TG & Edie, 12.07.02)

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New Eco-Warriors

Parisar Vikas, an association of about 2,000 women rag-pickers, re-designated as parisar bhagins, in Mumbai, collects garbage from several localities, converts kitchen waste into compost for plants and sells the non-biodegradable waste to recycling centres. The objective of Vikas is to create a zero-garbage waste situation in urban areas and help rag-pickers to form cooperatives and participate in saving schemes and income generating schemes.

(Newstime, 09.07.02)

India Slams Rich Nations

India slammed the rich countries for "unsustainable patterns of consumption and production", saying this was causing environmental degradation and poverty. "It is this attachment to unsustainable consumption patterns and a determination to preserve and raise levels of prosperity at any cost that breeds resistance to any meaningful reform in the financial and economic structures that underpin global society and results in neglect of development agenda of environment and poverty alleviation", the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha said.

(TH, 05.09.02)

Europe could Lose US Computer Ecolabel

An European Union agreement to join an American government ecolabel scheme for computers should be annulled because it was adopted on the wrong legal basis, according to an advisor to the European Court of Justice. Considering a case brought to it by the European Commission, Advocate General said the Energy Star agreement boosted trade rather than environmental protection.

A regulation introducing the Energy Star label in the European Union was adopted last year. In approving the measure, the Council of Ministers cited the environmental protection articles of the EU treaty, while the European Commission had proposed that they use the articles promoting external trade. The council said the agreement's stated aim was to "maximise energy savings and environmental benefits," and was "trade-neutral" since many EU companies already adhered to the label's standard.

(ENS, 20.09.02)

World's Highest Zero Waste Town

In high up Leh, diverse groups are setting an example. They launched the Alliance for a Zero Waste Leh, spearheaded by the Ladakh Ecological Development Group. The alliance includes members from the poorest communities, tour and travel guides, environmental and women's groups and health specialists. One of the problem material is office paper and cardboard. No recycling facility exists here and apart from paper envelopes there is no use of the mountains of paper produced by various establishments. There is almost no plastic bag available after a ban. Almost all organic waste is collected and fed to the cattle which almost every prosperous family owns.

(HT, 02.09.02)

Sustainable Development Still a Far Cry

Noted personalities expressed the need for a change in lifestyle and consumption pattern to realise the goal of 'sustainable development' and to protect the environment. Addressing a seminar on "Environment for Sustainable Development" organised by the Indian

National Committee of People's Movement for UN, a voluntary organisation, the Director of United Nations Information Centre, opined that the just concluded Johannesburg Earth Summit did not attain the desired goals.

(TT, 23.09.02)

Asia, the New 'Recycle' Bin

One has heard of E.Coli as a health hazard, now comes e-waste generated by the hi-tech computer industry. With one of the highest rates of obsolescence, junked PCs and accessories like printers and toner cartridges are piling up at the rate of seven million tonnes a year in the US alone. Disposal is complicated since the waste contains over 1,000 hazardous items, and US laws prohibit dumping in landfills. In the name of "recycling", this waste is exported from the US to Asian countries, including India, Pakistan and China.

(IT, 22.07.02)

Danish Ban on Cans

A Danish ban on cans for soft and alcoholic drinks is finally being lifted, with 2,000 new machines preparing to receive cans and plastic bottles in an integrated supermarket recycling scheme. From September 23, the Danes will be able to buy cans of beer and soft drinks, paying an additional deposit returnable when the cans are disposed of in any of the recycling machines set up in supermarkets throughout the country.



(Edie, 30.08.02)

Recycles Water for Gardening

While life has almost come to a standstill in many parts of the Delhi given the acute water shortage, Tara Apartment residents say they have water for not only cooking and cleaning, but also gardening. They are recycling kitchen and bathroom water. The result is 20,000 litres of water saved every day. Centre for Science and Environment opined that 'Detergent water is considered harmful for plants, but it can certainly be used in the toilets.'

(TOI, 05.08.02)

Recycling Company a Hit

Remarkable, UK recycling company has found that its stationery made out of products such as waste tyres and plastic cups from vending machines are becoming quite a hit in supermarkets across UK. The covers of Remarkable's A6 notepads are made from recycled tyres and the paper is 100 percent recycled.

(Edie, 27.09.02)

New Europe Recycling Law

Europe's food and drink industry is preparing to fight an ambitious new proposal to raise recycling targets for packaging material in the European Union. The European Parliament takes up a bill that will require EU states to recycle 65 percent of their packaging waste by weight, against a current minimum of 55 percent. The bill also seeks to broaden the definition of packaging material.

(PA, 04.09.02)

Asian Brown Haze

A new study by scientists working with United Nations Environment Programme, suggests that a vast blanket of pollution stretching across South Asia is damaging agriculture, modifying rainfall patterns and putting millions of people at risk. Vital follow-up studies are needed to unravel the precise role that the three-kilometer-deep pollution blanket named 'Asian Brown Haze' may be having on the region's climate and the world's.

The blanket of pollution is reducing the amount of solar energy hitting the Earth's surface by as much as 10 to 15 percent, while its heat-absorbing properties are estimated to be warming the lower parts of the atmosphere considerably. This combination of surface cooling and lower atmosphere heating appears to be altering the winter monsoon, leading to a sharp fall in rainfall over northwestern parts of Asia and an increase of rainfall along the eastern coast of Asia.

(NGN, 12.08.02)

Trees might Not Serve as Sinks

According to a new report published in 'Nature' journal, scientists from Duke University have opined that trees and shrubs growing in the areas of abundant rainfall are less effective in storing carbon compared to native grasslands. Vegetation stores carbon that otherwise might trap heat in the atmosphere, driving up temperatures and leading to climate change.

In wet locations, replacing grass with shrubs and trees actually can lead to a decrease in the amount of carbon locked up in organic matter mixed in the soil. The reassessment casts doubt on whether planting trees is always a positive step to curb global warming.

(ET, 09.08.02)

US and Global Warming

According to a poll released by the Union of Concerned Scientists, around 76 percent of those surveyed said the US government should set standards requiring power plants, oil refineries and other industries to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Another 16 percent said they supported a voluntary approach, while 8 percent said they were undecided.

Antarctic Ozone Hole Divides in Two

The ozone hole over the Antarctic is not only smaller than it was in 2000 and 2001, but has split into two separate holes, according to scientists in the United States and Europe. Every year since 1979, the return of sunlight to the high latitudes of the Southern Hemisphere has produced massive depletion of ozone over Antarctica.

This September the unusual weather patterns in Southern Hemisphere's stratosphere were so strong that the ozone hole split into two pieces, informed a meteorologist at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Centre.

This breakdown is occurring exceptionally early in the year, about two months earlier than normal, confirmed a senior scientist at the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute.



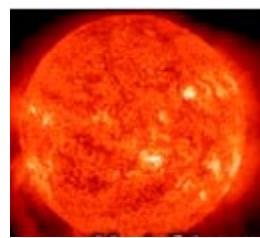
While the US government continues to refuse ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, California has passed a bill to make carmakers reduce emission of greenhouse gases. According to the bill, an immediate target would be to implement 'maximum feasible reduction' in greenhouse reductions before 2009. While the automobile industry is threatening to challenge the bill legally, it has gained strong public support.

(PA, 11.07.02 & ET, 23.07.02)

Cosmic Rays could Cause Global Warming

A long-standing debate about the causes of global warming may finally be solved. Cosmic rays from space really could help warm the planet by changing the way clouds form in the lower atmosphere.

The theory does not contradict the widely accepted idea that greenhouses gases are the main cause of global warming. But if the greenhouse gases were the sole heating mechanism involved, the Earth's surface and atmosphere would heat up at the same rate. Satellite measurements show that is not what has happened.



(TH, 05.09.02)

New Power to Cut Global Warming

Stirling Advantage Inc. has announced a new design for its power systems, which will curb human-induced global warming. The new design will produce electricity from the energy that is wasted in steam.

Replacing steam condensers the system will convert wasted energy to electricity with no additional production of CO₂ or other greenhouse gases.

Stirling Advantage believes that economic use of wasted thermal energy is a critical component of a comprehensive environmental cleanup plan. If applied globally, this approach can play a significant role in cutting the growth of fossil fuel use and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

(EVEN, 27.08.02)

Although the ozone hole is unusually small this year, about half that recorded in 2001, scientists are warning that a single year's unusual pattern does not make a long-term trend.

(ENS, 30.09.02)

Russia Done with Ozone Depleting Substances

Seven Russian enterprises have ceased production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons, the most potent ozone depleting substances (ODS). In compensation, the seven former producers will receive payment of US\$17.3mn from a group of donors organised by the World Bank.

Once one of the world's largest producers of ozone depleting substances, Russia accounted for half the world's production capacity of CFCs and halons in 1998. The end of ODS production in Russia completes the phase out of CFCs and halons in developed countries as required by the Montreal Protocol.

(ENS, 14.08.02)

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Effects of Black Carbon

A study published in the 'Science' magazine suggests that black carbon soot from coal burning, diesel engines, open fires and other sources is contributing to global warming and climate change in China and India.

Black carbon is a product of incomplete combustion that comes from industrial pollution, traffic, fires, burning of coal in homes and biomass fuels.

Unlike carbon dioxide emissions, which add to global warming by trapping heat in the atmosphere, soot emissions may contribute to global warming and climate change by absorbing sunlight, heating the air and making the atmosphere unstable. Reducing the amount of black carbon or soot would help diminish the intensity of floods in the south and droughts in the northern areas of China, in addition to having human health benefits.



(AP, 27.09.02)

Greater Awareness Needed on Climate Change

TR Baalu, the Environment Minister of India said that industry had a very important stake in climate change because they contribute around half of the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

He was speaking at a seminar titled "Climate Change and Industry: Issues and Opportunities" organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) and the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Calling for greater sensitisation on various aspects of climate change, Baalu said that given the vastness of the country, concerns should be focused on in-depth study of vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategies.

(TH, 14.07.02)

Global Warming Threatens Ocean Ecosystems

Climate change would create increasing challenges to coastal and marine ecosystems over the next century, warns a report from Pew Centre on Global Climate Change.

Temperature changes, altered patterns of rain and snowfall and rising sea level are expected to upset the delicate balance of fragile coastal ecosystems. This would influence the metabolism of marine species and alter ecological processes.

Climate change is also likely to alter patterns of wind and water circulation in the ocean environment, which may influence the vertical movement of ocean waters, increasing or decreasing the availability of nutrients and oxygen to marine species.

(ENS, 14.08.02)

Autumn Sugar Maples Threatened by Warmth

Researchers have found statistical evidence that cold-loving maples yield less juice in warmer winters. An analysis of syrup production over the past eight decades shows a decline in every New England state except Maine. Over the last 80 years, New England's typical syrup output has dropped by more than half, from more than 1.6 mn gallons per annum to fewer than 800,000.

According to scientists, much of New England could lose its maple forests over the next century. Without more control of human-made greenhouse gases,

New England's average yearly temperature could rise by six to 10 degrees over the next century.

(AP, 27.09.02)

Carbon Fund for Poor Countries

Climate Watch 5
Sixty-four of the poorest countries in the world such as Mozambique, Togo and Senegal in Africa, Honduras in Latin America and Nepal and Bangladesh in Asia could benefit from the new Community Development Carbon Fund (CDCF) launched by the World Bank at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

The World Bank and the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) have joined forces to collaborate on the US\$100mn fund, which will provide finance for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to small-scale projects in small developing countries and rural areas of all developing countries.

(Allafrica.com, 02.09.02)

Exotic Antarctic Species Face Climate Wipeout

According to a scientist of the British Antarctic Survey, thousands of the world's most exotic species of sea animals from spiders to giant woodlice could become extinct if Antarctic sea temperatures rise as predicted. Water temperatures around the Antarctic were found rising at more than twice the rate of the land temperature, having climbed by one degree in the past 15 years.

Surveys have shown that the Antarctic sea dwellers were unable to adapt to such temperature changes so they effectively suffocated due to their inability to move oxygen around their bodies. These are probably the most fragile group of animals in the world to temperature change. Several thousand species of cold-blooded invertebrate animals would be at risk if temperature rise takes place as indicated.

(Reuters, 10.09.02)

SNIPPETS

Thailand Ratifies Kyoto: Thailand ratified the Kyoto protocol. Greenpeace campaign manager for Southeast Asia said the ratification was perfectly timed as it coincided with the Earth Summit in Johannesburg where government leaders and environment advocates were meeting.

(PA, 29.08.02)

Tuvalu and Global Warming: The tiny island nation of Tuvalu sees the issue of global warming as a matter of life and death. Tuvalu, a country of 12,000 people fears it will be crushed by storms, rising ocean levels and disruptions to marine life caused by global climate change.

(USA Today, 28.08.02)

Ice Meteor due to Global Warming: A Spanish scientist says global warming may cause giant blocks of ice to fall from clear skies ripping gaping holes in cars and houses. The so-called megacryometeors, ice meteors, which tend to weigh more than 10 kg have been known to leave 1.5 metre-wide holes in houses.

(AA, 28.09.02)

Role of Breeding Bugs: Craig Venter wants to create new forms of life that will help solve the problem of global warming. He aims to create synthetic microorganisms through genetic engineering that would either consume CO₂ and turn it into raw materials for the vast range of organic chemicals or capture CO₂ and pump it down to the bottom of the ocean.

(FT, 28.09.02)

New Ways of Sustainable Energy

Speaking at a Conference at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Japanese deputy minister said industrial technology is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Japan has implemented trial tests of various technologies for generating energy by making use of renewable sources.

The project aims to establish how to distribute wind power systems by installing systems at locations with different weather conditions. Although the new technology works in Japan, it needs to be adapted and marketed to the rest of the world, particularly the developing world.

(SABCnews.com, 02.09.02)

Solar Power Light Wins Award

UK has developed a solar-powered lighting system called Re-light. The system stores solar energy during the day and uses the same to power a lamp during the night. It uses a light-emitting diode and has been found to work in harsh environment. As the light is turned on and off using an internal tilt mechanism, the whole of the electronics can be encased in resin making it robust. The manufacturers claim that Re-light can provide light continuously up to 10 hours and has a life of four years.



(FT, 04.07.02)

Fuel-ing Hopes of the Coconut

Bio diesel as an ecofriendly, non-toxic, biodegradable, sulphur-free fuel is increasingly gaining popularity worldwide. Unlike diesel, which emits heavy black smoke, the smoke emission from bio diesel is minimal. While ethanol has been focused as an alternative fuel in gasoline engine, bio diesel is been tried for diesel engine.

Bio diesel can be produced from coconut, soyabean, sunflower, rapeseed and palm oils. Coconut oil is being acclaimed as the ecofriendliest bio diesel for diesel engines. Coconut Methyl Ester, a product from coconut oil, can be used as a 100 percent fuel. Coconut oil, as automobile lubricant, has been tested in Kerala and found to be effective. The oil is already being used as bio diesel in Thailand.

(TH, 02.09.02)

Price of 'Green' Energy to Rise

A recent industry survey warns that the price of renewable energy generated from wind farms and green energy crops is set to get a steep rise. These findings are the latest in a series of warnings that British government policies are insufficient to meet tough targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A central element of government policy is a requirement that British power suppliers gradually increase the proportion of electricity they buy from renewable producers to 10 percent by 2010. According to the study by the Renewable Power Association and Platts, the world's largest energy information provider, planning delays mean it is unlikely that enough plants will be built to meet targets in the early years. Charges for available green power are likely to soar as a result, it says.

(FT, 01.07.02)

Right Medicine for Cars

According to a report of the Nature journal, University scientists have succeeded in manufacturing hydrogen from a glucose solution derived from biomass. Researchers from University of Wisconsin at Madison informed that they have found a relatively easy way of extracting hydrogen from a glucose solution. According to them the process is simple with no harmful by-products. Several major car manufacturers including Ford have already begun experimenting with fuel cells powered by hydrogen. Hydrogen produces a lot of energy and whose only by-product is water.

(Reuters & Scientific American.com, 29.08.02)

Mandatory Energy Labels in India

The Government of India enacted an Energy Conservation Act in October 2001. The Act calls for mandatory energy labelling and sets minimum standards with regard to consumption of electricity on equipment and appliances.

The implementation of the Act will bring uniformity in product comparisons on the basis of running cost of an appliance thus enabling the consumers to compare different models of different brands based on the energy consumption label. It was decided that all manufacturers should use the test procedure as described in BIS-1476 for their products.

(ET, 02.09.02)

Use of Nanoparticles in Solar Energy

AKansas State University professor has invented a new type of nanoparticle. This invention could reap big dividends in the sphere of solar power. The professor informed that he is yet to develop compounds that are comparable to current silicon solar cells, as the physics of nanoparticles is poorly understood. However, he is trying to develop nanoparticles that are just the right size for solar cells.

(TH, 15.08.02)

Hydel, the Energy Multiplier

Ministry of Power has decided to make hydropower a central focus in India's energy planning. India has a hydro potential of 150,000 MW of which only a modest fraction is been tapped. Increasing power shortage reduced the thermal-hydro ratio from 60:40 during the first three five year plans to the current 75:25. A Vision Paper produced by the Central Electricity Authority places the current power deficit at 7000 MW of peaking capacity and projects doubling of capacity by 2012. Around 31,000 MW of the new capacity should be from hydropower.

Small hydro-electricity is considered as one of the cleanest form of energy source. Apart from initial environmental cost in terms of submergence and displacement of people, hydel-power has the advantage of having high-value peaking capability, high operational efficiency and low maintenance downtime.

(ET, 24.07.02)

Power from Solid Waste

Chandigarh city will consume power generated from solid waste by 2004. House of Corporation will set up a plant for the same. The Corporation will have no financial liability and is expected to earn net revenue of Rs 5 crore per annum.

(IE, 28.09.02)

3/2002

Implementation Conference

During 24th to 26th August, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, a UK based NGO, hosted the Implementation Conference at the Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg. The purpose of this event, was to move words into action, by facilitating a series of multi-stakeholder workshops on achieving the sustainable development goals, in relation to four important issues, Health, Food Security, Freshwater and Energy.

On the Energy Issue, over fifty participants from various organisations including NGOs as CUTS, ENERGIA and Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), participated in the working groups on action plans for sustainable energy.

One such workshop, Assessing Best Practice, involving organisations as CUTS and ENERGIA, looked at the necessary criteria and tools needed to assess best practice energy projects on the ground.

Two concrete proposals emerged. One such proposal, was to launch an extensive research study on best practice grassroots sustainable energy projects, focusing possibly on two regions, India and Africa. This would be done in a collaboratively way, with CUTS, ENDA Senegal, ENERGIA and ITDG and Stakeholder Forum as their support partner.

Energy Issues

7

'Green' Multifamily Housing

Harlem has been selected as a site for building energy-efficient, affordable multifamily housing condominium with "smart" technologies for residents. The \$40mn development in New York City is the largest in the United States.

The condominium will not only help bridge the housing affordability gap for urban families but are environmentally friendly and provide many of the modern amenities people want.

(Greenbiz.com, 10.07.02)

Nuke Lobby Growing Stronger?

Nuclear power will be 'an important component of the world's energy picture in the 21st century,' says Spencer Abraham, the US secretary of energy. In a speech in Tokyo before the Generation IV International Forum, Abraham said that nuclear energy has all the virtues of renewable energy sources with the added virtue of being 'extraordinarily economical.'

(USIS OT, 23.09.02)

Miyagi Nuclear Fuel Tax Faces Hike

The Miyagi Prefectural Government in Japan plans to raise its tax on nuclear fuel from current 7 percent to 10 percent, bringing its rate in line with Niigata and Fukui prefectures. According to officials the hike is likely to be implemented in June, when the rate is subject to its mandated five-yearly review.

(JT, 27.09.02)

Solar-Sets Gain Popularity

The demand for solar energy has increased as an alternative source of energy in Okhaldhunga eastern hill district in Nepal. This development has taken place since the Maoist rebels destroyed a micro-hydro power plant about five months ago. The locals began to install solar powered panels ever since the rebels destroyed the micro-hydropower plant at Thotne River.

(TKP, 26.09.02)

SNIPPETS

MoU on Renewable Energy: Pakistan and China signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to cooperate in producing electricity through renewable energy resources. It was agreed that Chinese government would extend financial and technical assistance to Pakistan for the development of windmills and solar technology.

(BR, 27.09.02)

Wastage of Wind Energy Resource: According to Ireland's government-funded renewable energy organisation, Ireland is failing to harness its vast resources of renewable energy. Instead it is choosing to spend billions of euros on imported fossil fuels.

(Edie, 27.09.02)

Tool to Find Energy Cost of Buildings: A software programme of National Renewable Energy Laboratory, called Energy-10, enables building designers to estimate the energy life-cycle costs of a new building by simply entering numbers into the programme.

(EVN, 05.08.02)

Environment

Coral Reefs on the Decline

8 The first global survey of the health of coral reefs by the Coral Reef Check Programme at University of California reveals that coral reefs are in serious decline. This is being further aggravated with over fishing. Scientists and volunteers found that over fishing has affected 95 percent of the coral reefs monitored since 1997. At least four species of reef fish, hunted for food or to adorn aquariums face extinction, further threatening the bio-diversity of the marine ecosystems.

According to a founder of the Reef Check programme, coral reefs have been damaged more in the last 20 years than they have in the last 1000 years. Reefs make up just 0.09 percent of the area of the world's oceans and are spread around the globe. All of the world's reefs except one near Madagascar show signs of declining health. Pollution and increased amounts of sediments is said to be another cause for the deteriorating health of reefs. Another study has identified bacteria found in the intestines of humans and other animals as a cause of a disease killing Elkhorn in the Caribbean Sea.

(ET, 27.08.02)

Plastic Solution for Roads

A marriage between hot bitumen and molten plastic waste could well turn out to be the perfect solution for battered roads and disposing tonnes of plastic waste. Plastic increases the road's load bearing capacity, makes it more heat resistant and prevents rainwater from seeping down. As the water is not incinerated, no toxic gases are released. This finding by a Chemistry Professor from Tamil Nadu finally found official recognition when Chennai Corporation agreed to test out the formula.

(HT, 23.09.02)

Africa Needs Green Growth to Fight Pollution

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) releasing "Africa Environment Outlook," said Africans are likely to suffer increasing pollution, ill health and loss of farmland unless the continent adopts "clean" technologies. Africa is extremely vulnerable to global warming because of its dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Crop yields in parts of Southern Africa may fall by as much as 20 percent if global warming continues.

Experts fear significant extinction of plants and animals over coming decades if global warming grows unchecked. The problem of air pollution is made worse by taxes that encourage dirty fuels, a sharp rise in the import of cars and out-dated, inefficient industrial plants. The report, urged a wide range of antipollution measures by African nations and foreign development partners.

(ENN, 05.07.02)

New Air Pollution Rules Target off Road Vehicles

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued new emission standards for the engines of off road vehicles including snowmobiles, motorcycles, all terrain vehicles and recreational diesel powered boats. When fully implemented in 2012, the standards are expected to prevent the release of more than two million tonnes of air pollution each year.

The EPA regulations have no affect on existing engines, and will apply only to new engines produced in 2004 and beyond. The agency says its new standards will help the nation avoid about 1,000 premature deaths each year,

prevent 1,000 hospital admissions, reduce 23,400 cases of asthma attacks and prevent 200,000 days of lost work.

But critics say that the new standards fail to protect human health and environment. It even fails to meet clean technology requirements established by the federal Clean Air Act.

(ENS, 17.09.02)

Health and Environmental Effects of Air Pollution

Releasing a book titled "A Citizen's Guide to Air Pollution" at the annual conference of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology, a leading medical expert said that all levels of government in Canada have failed to address the serious health and environmental effects of air pollution. The pollution annually contributes to serious respiratory diseases for thousands of Canadians.

Sufficient scientific evidence now exists to show that people around the world are experiencing adverse human health, environmental and economic impacts because of increasing air pollution. The author cautioned that until governments and policy makers address the serious affects of air pollution on human health, the incidence of diseases like asthma would continue to accelerate.

(DSN, 12.08.02)

Acid Rain Threatening Songbirds

The latest findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggest that acid rain is contributing to declining songbird populations. A study found that this decline, over the past 30 years, could be closely correlated with levels of the atmospheric pollution acid rain. The study was conducted on the breeding patterns of North American wood thrushes since 1966 in eastern United States.



The scientists of Cornell University, New York, said that acid rain might affect calcium levels in the soil weakening the ability of birds to make strong shells for their eggs.

Low calcium might also affect the populations of soil-dwelling animals that birds live on, or increase the risk of poisoning through the uptake of other substances that can replace calcium in the diet.

(Independent.co.uk, 13.08.02)

Transgenic Animals: Environmental Threat !

Genetically engineered animals could pose a serious threat to environment if they escape and introduce their engineered genes into wild populations, concludes a report prepared by the National Academies' National Research Council. However, the report "Animal Biotechnology: Identifying Science Based Concerns," found no evidence that products from cloned livestock are unsafe for human consumption.

In transgenic animals developed for human consumption, there is a low probability that some of the new proteins produced through genes inserted from other species could trigger allergic or hypersensitive reactions in a small percentage of people. The allergic reactions to foods range from mild irritation to systemic reactions that can swell tissues, shut down breathing and lead to death.

3/2002

According to the report, the uncertainty surrounding new proteins and the potential impact on consumers who may be allergic is serious enough to elicit a moderate level of food safety concern. The Food and Drug Administration of USA felt that the report would aid the agency in determining the safety of certain animal biotechnology products.

(ENS, 21.08.02)

Vietnam Takes Stock of Environmental Degradation

A new World Bank report titled "Vietnam Environment Monitor 2002" states that in last 50 years, there has been a rapid economic growth in Vietnam. This economic growth has brought with it the environmental problems experienced by all the developing countries. Vietnam's natural forest cover has shrunk from 43 to 29 percent of land area, there is an acute shortage of arable land and habitat loss has led to a rise in the number of threatened species.

Sedimentation and pollution are threatening the health of rivers. Overfishing, destruction of coral reefs and mangroves has reduced fishing yield. Vice minister of Science, Technology and Environment, says the data gathered for the report will help the country implement its environmental priorities as outlined in the National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (2001-2010).

The national strategy aims to change the behavior of polluters and involve communities and citizens more fully in environmental protection.

(ENS, 19.09.02)

Fishy Issue

In a study, researchers from University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute show that the impact of "endocrine-disrupting" chemicals is greatest in fish. Fish are more susceptible to damage from common household pollutants than previously thought.

Harmful compounds in human pollutants interact directly with sex genes in the brain of the fish rather than with estrogen receptors in other tissues. The researchers discovered that many more classes of environmental chemicals are functioning as endocrine-disrupting chemicals. These chemicals are interacting directly with genes that are critical for reproductive success.

The study results suggest that direct chemical disruption of the brain aromatase gene directly affects production of brain estrogen, may be a key mechanism behind the endocrine-related disturbance of normal reproduction and development in fish.

(NGN, 29.07.02)

Nations Pledge Environment Funds

The United States and 31 other countries pledged a total of \$2.92bn to support the work on environment over the next four years. The Bush administration's pledge of \$500mn to the Global Environmental Facility will go to support the organisation's work to promote clean and efficient energy, biodiversity programmes and water cleanup efforts.

The US commitment includes support of \$107.5mn annually plus an additional \$70mn in 2006, the fourth year, if the fund meets various performance targets. The environmental fund, based within the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington, has allocated \$4.2bn over the past decade to support 1,000 environmental projects in 160 developing countries.

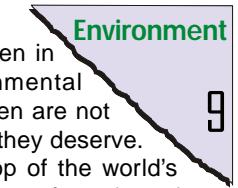
(Miami.com, 07.08.02)

Poisoning Our Future

A recent UN report called "Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health" reveals the children are not treated with the protection and care they deserve. The report places children at the top of the world's agenda and presents the impact of a changing environment on their health. Researchers have found that in the early months of his life, a child's ability to detoxify and excrete chemicals is far lower than that of an adult.

The report has once again confirmed that diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections are two of the leading factors for child mortality. These diseases can be prevented by provision of clean drinking water and hygienic sanitation.

(TP, 16.07.02)



Rain Gardens are Good for Earth

Rain gardens can have a big impact on the environment. Employing naturally occurring depressions in the terrain and wherever rainwater collects, rain gardens use gravel and native plants to filter pollution from storm run off. Hence, it also helps in improving water quality.

(ET, 27.08.02)



Study on Shrimp Farming

Quaculture Authority held a two-day consultative workshop on sustainable shrimp farming. The Conference also highlighted the necessity of coordinated research between the Government and industry relating domestication of Monodon and other species. The conference also called for the National Bank for Agriculture And Rural Development to review its policy on shrimp farming which could facilitate its advancement for obtaining insurance covers for hatcheries and so on.

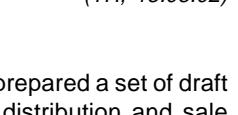
(TH, 31.08.02)

Kerala HC Bans Toxic Pesticide

Kerala High Court has temporarily banned sale, distribution and unrestricted use of a pesticide called endosulfan. The court's decision came in the wake of writ petitions filed by various organisations such as Nature Lovers Movement, Peoples Council for Social Justice and the Samantha Law Society.

The petitioners claimed that endosulfan was banned in 2001 at it was found to be toxic. However, the ban was withdrawn during February 2002 in violation of Article21 (Right to Life). Counsel for Pesticide Manufacturers and Formulators opined that endosulfan cannot be conclusively held as main cause of health hazards.

(TH, 13.08.02)



Ban of Small Plastic Bags

Environment ministry of India has prepared a set of draft rules for banning manufacture, distribution and sale of plastic bags smaller than 8 by 12 inches in size. It has also drafted rules for compulsory registration of plastic carry bag and container manufacturing units.

Officials are of opinion that registration of units will enable state pollution control boards to monitor whether such units maintain operational norms or not. The argument behind excluding the thicker plastic bags from the purview of such a ban is that it does not pose problems in waste management like the smaller ones.

(TOI, 25.07.02)

Basic Needs

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Hunger in a World of Plenty

Even as subsidised farmers in the northern hemisphere produce mountains of surplus food, at least 13 mn people in southern Africa risk starvation, with millions more hungry in Afghanistan, North Korea, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The United Nations wants to cut the number of the chronically under-nourished earning less than \$1 a day to some 400 mn from 815 mn. But it is falling behind, with declines of just six million a year and not the 22 mn needed.

Currently, debate is going on genetically modified crop as a solution to world hunger. However, the existing know-how excluding gene technology is sufficient to generate enough food to meet the needs of developing countries today.

(PA, 15.08.02)

Use Biotech to Help Poor, Not Rich

A recent survey of 28 leading scientists from around the world concludes that using biotechnology to produce simple nutritional and hygienic improvements and cheap vaccines would do more to improve global health than the development of high-tech treatments. The study, published in US journal Nature Genetics, calls for urgent attention to be paid to the inequality in health care between the developed and developing world, where more than five billion people live. The study found that ninety percent of all medical research is targeted at problems affecting only 10 percent of the world's population.

(PA, 30.09.02)

Children's Earth Summit

Recently the first Children's Earth Summit was held at Johannesburg. At the summit, 110 delegates from around the world made a five-point declaration to address a range of issues pertaining to basic rights, education, health and poverty and pledged to do their best to make the world a better place to live in the next 10 years. The 12-member Indian delegation which comprised school children from across the country, said the summit brought to the fore the vision of the children about the earth they want to inherit.

(BL, 06.09.02)

Survey Findings Sound Alarm

A model project to eliminate malnutrition in the Nilgiris by March 2003 has assumed significance in the wake of a report released by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-2. The report has sound the alarm, with 37 percent of children in Tamil Nadu suffering from 'underweight', 29 percent from 'stunting' and 20 percent from 'wasting', a result of chronic under nutrition. The survey identified 9185 children in the 'severely and moderate' malnourished category and 13,469 in the 'mild' category.

Training and awareness programmes have been launched for all primary health centre (PHC) doctors and paramedical staff. Each PHC would be given a list containing details of malnourished children in the area, to provide individual attention and also maintain a register of progress for each child. As NFHS-2 indicates, the nutritional status of children is intimately related to the household's standard of living, the economic assistance schemes have been lined up for parents.

(TH, 01.09.02)

Scientists Pioneer Malaria Vaccine

Five hundred million people contract malaria every year and the disease kills 2.7 mn, three-quarters of these are children under five. British scientists have pioneered a vaccine against malaria that they believe could save millions of lives. Tests of the vaccination, which employs an innovative approach, have shown that it can produce significant protection against the infection, which is one of the world's biggest killers.



Safety studies have been conducted on 170 people in Britain and Africa. The Oxford University's department of medicine informed the vaccine is safe and effective. The vaccine's target is Plasmodium falciparum, the most dangerous of four types of malaria that can affect the brain and is responsible for 99 percent of malaria deaths.

(TH, 19.08.02)

Poverty Alleviation Parameters

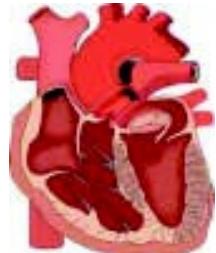
Bangladesh is beset with the basic problem of how to cope with poverty and starvation of its teeming millions and how to reverse the rapid deterioration of the quality of life of the population. Almost half of the population remains in an environment of uncertainty about their living. They have no source of income, with which they can meet their day-to-day requirement. Many of the poor millions have, for ages, looked for an assured employment from which they could earn enough to meet all basic needs. The expectations of the people for basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, medicare and education are increasing constantly.

(TBO, 09.07.02 & 01.08.02)

Higher Rate of Heart Disease

Indians have the highest rate of heart disease, usually two to three times higher than Americans, Europeans, Chinese and Japanese, according to a study by University of California-Berkeley Centre for Family and Community Health. Researchers have determined that Indo-Americans face a higher risk of heart disease, despite the fact that nearly half of them are vegetarians and lack many of the disease's other traditional risk factors.

In the below-30 age group, the Coronary Artery Disease mortality among Indians is three-fold higher than whites in the UK and 10-fold higher than Chinese in Singapore. About 25 percent of heart attacks among men of Indian descent occur when they are younger than 40. This is unheard of in other populations, reported San Jose Mercury News.



(TH, 29.07.02)

Making Water for All a Reality

Suez has been active in South Africa since the 1980s through its water division, Ondeo, and its local affiliate, WSSA (Water and Sanitation Services South Africa). For more than 20 years, its priority has been to improve water and sanitation in poor communities. Today, the group provides water and waste services to South Africans at all social levels. Active in every province, it is the nation's largest private water provider.

(IHT, 31.08.02)

3/2002

Water Table Shows Drastic Decline

The sharp decline in water table in Jalandhar district of Punjab requires effective corrective measures. Experts in the Groundwater Table Cell in Department of Agriculture say if the water table dip continues at the same pace, the residents may not find even a single drop of water to fulfill their basic needs in the coming 25 years.

(IE, 06.07.02)

270,000 Literacy Centres to be Set up

The secretary education has disclosed that some 270,000 literacy centres will be established in Pakistan under the government's literacy programme to educate common man. The secretary was speaking at the national award distribution ceremony for the students and teachers of primary and middle schools.

(Dawn, 25.09.02)

Schemes for the Poor

On the 55th anniversary of Independence Day, the Government of India announced a number of new socio-economic initiatives. Prominent among them are:

- A participative social security scheme for the poor and the middle
- Rs. 256 crores for one lakh slum houses in the current year
- One lakh hand pumps for water scarce areas
- One lakh traditional drinking water sources to be revived.
- Drinking water for one lakh rural primary schools
- National scholarships for the disabled
- A national Plan of Action for children
- Medical care scheme for ex-serviceman and dependents

(TH, 15.08.02)

The People Equation

An eminent Harvard biologist Edward Wilson in his book "The Future of Life," observes that the world is now engaged in a race between forces that are destroying the living environment and those that can be harnessed to save it.

Wilson states that the poorest 20 percent of the world's people account for just 1.3 percent of private consumption expenditures, while the wealthiest 20 percent account for 86 percent of private consumption.

There are an astounding 25 mn environmental refugees in the world today. In the world's poorest countries, 1,60,000 people migrate from rural areas to towns and cities every day. These very cities face escalating environmental health challenges. The poorest people in the poorest countries being forced to occupy the most fragile land intensify natural disasters.

(TCM, 08.08.02)

Death Toll from Hepatitis E Put at Four

At least four people died from the hepatitis E virus (HEV), believed to have spread in parts of northern and northeastern Japan during the 1990s, a Tokyo-based hospital researcher said. This is the first confirmation of HEV-related deaths in Japan, prompting a Health Ministry investigation into the spread of the virus. HEV is usually found in developing countries with high rainfall, poor sanitation and is commonly spread through consumption of water or food contaminated with feces of the virus carriers.

(JT, 22.07.02)

Basic Needs

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Drought Worsens Hunger

Frequent drought and natural disasters in Central America are causing crop failures and food shortages affecting more than eight million people, the UN Food Aid agency said.

World Food Programme (WFP), which has carried out a survey into food supplies in Central America, estimates that 8.6 mn people live in the rural areas of a "drought corridor", deprived of rain during planting and harvesting season. While droughts affect the largest swathes of land, disasters such as the mudslides in Guatemala or the 2000 earthquake in El Salvador, affect the same vulnerable areas, the organisation said.

(PA, 30.09.02)

AIDS: Key Cause of Famine

According to International Federation of the Red Cross, the famine in Southern Africa is the worst food emergency in the world after Balkan crisis in the 1990s. The impact of food shortages is made worse by high rates of HIV infection.

When AIDS takes hold, food availability is reduced as workers become too ill to work the land, care for livestock and maintain essential machinery. The pandemic first affects the most productive generation aged 15 to 49 leaving behind the elderly and children, unlike many other diseases that hit the most infirm first.

The most affected African countries could lose up to 26 percent of agricultural labour force within two decades.

(Allafrica.com, 06.09.02)

Sanitation in India

From October the people of Kerala will get their lessons on "handwashing" from the scientists of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine sponsored by World Bank, which aims at reducing the annual incidence of sanitation-related death amongst children by more than 40 percent, from the present 6,000 deaths every day.

(TP, 24.09.02)

The School Sanitation and Hygiene Project in 250 schools of Bangalore Urban district, aims at spreading the message of hygiene education and environmental sanitation in the community through students.

(DH, 06.09.02)

The Andhra Pradesh municipal administration is opting for the latest equipment to solve sanitation problem in the town. Warangal is the only city in Andhra Pradesh to introduce latest technology to maintain sanitation.

(Newstime, 22.08.02)

The district administration in adivasi dominated Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh organised a competition in which over a lakh school going children were given crash course on various aspects of personal, household and village sanitation.

(AA, 05.08.02)

The Chennai Corporation proposes to construct 200 sanitary complexes all over the city. The civic body has invited private companies to construct these complexes consisting of lavatory and bath area on land procured by the Corporation.

(TH, 07.07.02)

Affluence

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Heatitis E: Affluents at Risk
Studies have shown that as socio-economic status improves, the age of contracting Hepatitis A and E is likely to increase. This is because affluent people are overcautious and take steps to ensure that their children are not exposed to contaminated food or water and hence are more likely to catch the disease in adulthood. Doctors say the risk factor arises due to lack of immunity in their body.

(IE, 18.07.02)

Poverty in a Land of Plenty

Hartford once celebrated as USA's insurance capital and one of the richest cities is now among poorest. Although it has the nation's highest per capita income it also has a split-level economy of affluent suburbs. Economists, historians and government officials blame lack of strong political leadership for the downfall of the city. They cite city's inability to build any constructive racial alliances within its own borders as well as systematic problems as major causes.

(NYT, 26.08.02)

World Meat Demand on the Rise

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) forecasts that global meat consumption will grow by 2 percent annually till the end of 2015. Since early 1980s, global meat output, consumption and trade have expanded considerably driven by population growth, rising incomes, urbanisation, changing diets and opening up of markets.

According to FAO, most of this increase will occur in developing countries, where consumption is expected to grow by 2.7 percent per year. In contrast, consumption of meat will grow by 0.6 percent per year in rich countries. FAO has warned that increased trade and transport links has raised risks of the spread of animal diseases across borders.

(PA, 28.08.02)

Hunting Dogs Given Mobiles

As the bear and duck-hunting season started in the land of Nokia, hunters are hoping to track game better by strapping cell phones with tracking devices onto the backs of the dogs. A dog's bark will help determine what sort of animal it has tracked from hundreds, if not thousands of kilometers way, and hunters will be able to give orders on the two-way mobile system.



The cell phone is equipped with global system of mobile phone (GSM), a technology widely used in Europe. Hunters have tested it for more than a year on several dogs in different weather conditions and it worked well.

(TOI, 22.08.02)

Foeticide Slur on Posh Delhi

Delhi provided statistical proof that wealthier the areas, the greater the discrimination against the girl child. The latest data from 2001 census reveal that the areas in Delhi with the largest number of 'missing girls' for female foeticide are also some of the most abysmally low child sex ratios. The sex ratio for any age group is defined as the number of females per 100 males in a particular region.

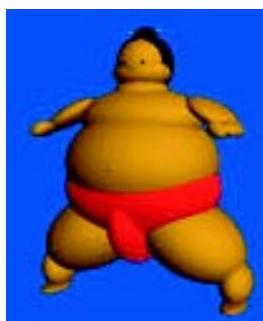
(TOI, 19.09.02)

Hepatitis E: Affluents at Risk

Fighting the Urban Malaise

Obesity is now as much a cause for concern as malnutrition and it is no longer confined to merely developed rich nations. The rate of obesity in developing countries like India is also increasing.

Childs Trust Hospital conducted a study in Delhi spanning over 17 years among girls from the same socio-economic background between the age of 10 and 15. It shows that, while the number of girls with normal weight has decreased from 72.52 percent in 1981 to 70.67 percent in 1998, the number of obese girls has increased from 10.43 percent in 1981 to 19.16 percent in 1998.



Although this may not seem like a massive increase, it shows that the problem of plenty has arrived in India. A beauty and fitness company says that 40 per cent of their clients are obese or overweight adolescents. In India and other developing countries, obesity is considered an urban malaise but there are fears that this may soon spread to the rural areas.

(TH, 18.09.02)

Prosperity and Affluence Double-edged

As development goals, prosperity and affluence can be double-edged. On the one hand, prosperity enables a better standard of living and increased welfare and possibly a more equal distribution of assets and income. On the other, it can also set in motion a cycle of over consumption, excessive demand for luxury products, unsustainable demand for resources, which is the general malaise of affluence.

Some behavioural scientists have gathered fairly conclusive evidence that, after a certain threshold, additional consumption contributes little to welfare, yet over consumption is picking up both in the North and South.

(www.worldbank.org)

Immigration Cut into Income in New York

New US census data shows a surprising drop in median income of New York. This has puzzled the demographers and appears to be attributable to immigration. The data indicates that median household incomes rose across most of Manhattan in the 90's, with especially big leaps in places including Tribeca and parts of Harlem. Simultaneously, drops occurred in much of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, Jackson Heights and Eastern Flushing where longtime residents have moved out and been replaced by immigrants.

(NYT, 06.08.02)

Hallam has More Brass than Windsor

A suburb of Sheffield has attracted Britain's high earners, says a recent study. The Hallam district of Sheffield is home to the largest number of affluent people anywhere in England outside London, says Barclays bank. Almost eight percent of those living in the suburb claim to earn more than £60,000. This is a higher percentage than traditionally wealthy areas such as Windsor, Berks, Tunbridge Wells and Kent.

(news.telegraph.co.uk, 14.08.02)

3/2002

Rape of Rocks

Pre-historic rocks are turning out to be a favourite medium for companies to advertise on without any qualms. From the heights of Manali to the National highway that connects Jammu and Srinagar it's the same sordid story. The Supreme Court of India has imposed a penalty of Rs. 200,000 each on two leading soft drink companies and Rs. 100,000 on ten other organisations for repairing the environmental damage caused to the Rohtang Pass and adjoining areas by painting their advertisements on rocks. Several others have come under the hammer for painting advertisements on the eco-fragile rocks along the Manali-Rohtang stretch.

Products ranging from cement to rubber slippers have found free advertisement space on the ancient rocks in Tumkur district of Bangalore. In Rajasthan the State Forest Department is leading a pack of government organisations in making the Amer hills their favourite graffiti ground. After a couple of pictures of the graffiti were published in a newspaper the graffiti was covered with black paint, causing further damage to the rocks.

(IE, 03.09.02, NIE, 25.09.02, HT, 10.09.02)

Green Claims Code

The Green Claims Code was launched in 1998. The code sets out the standards for information on the environmental impacts of consumer products. Within UK, the Trading Standards Officers have powers under the Trade Descriptions Act to deal with claims that are demonstrably false or are found to be misleading. The Director-General of Fair Trading can also take action against misleading claims under the Control of Misleading Advertisement Regulations 1998. If you think an ad to be misleading, following action could be taken:

- You can contact the head office of the manufacturer making the claim (or the retailer's head office, if the product is the retailer's 'own brand'). Ask for an explanation of the claim. Ask how it can be shown to comply with the Green Claims Code.
- Where you believe that a green claim is simply untrue, or even after explanations from manufacturer or the retailer you believe that a claim may be misleading, it is best to take this up with your local authority trading standards department. Give them details of the claim that you believe may be false or misleading, and any other information that is relevant.
- Complaints about a claim in a radio or television advertisement can be made to the Radio Authority or the Independent Television Commission. Complaints about printed or cinema advertisements or those on the Internet can be made to the Advertising Standards Authority.

(DEFRA)

Puffing will Evoke Action

The tobacco giants, ITC and VST, which put up huge hoardings promoting cigarettes, are pulling them down overnight. The Andhra Pradesh Prohibition of Smoking and Health Protection Act, 2002, has come into force and people smoking in public places in the State are to be penalised. The Act bans advertisement or promotion of smoking in any form, imposes penalties for smoking in banned places and even imprisonment for clandestine sale of cigarettes.

(TH, 18.07.02)

Surrogate Ads and India

The recent ban on the surrogate advertisements promoting liquor on television has opened a fresh round of debate among the talking heads. The parliamentary consultative committee in India on surrogate advertisement, observed that Mc Dowells and Gilbeys Green Label were the cases of surrogate advertisement since there was clear recall of the actual product, which is liquor in each case following which the Indian Information and Broadcasting ministry sent show cause notices to television channels quoting the Cable Television Networks Rules Act 2001 and called for a ban on such commercials.



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According to the act no broadcaster is permitted to show advertisement, which promotes directly or indirectly the promotion of alcohol, liquor or other intoxicants. The liquor product has shown negative growth rates plunging to a current 2.5 mn cases from a 3.7 mn cases in 2000 while there has been a de-growth in cigarette volumes ever since the Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation) Bill 2001 called for a ban on smoking in public places and on surrogate advertising with a total ban on sponsoring of sports and cultural events by cigarette and other tobacco product companies.

(TH, 05.08.02)

Ad Watchdog Slams Domain Registry of Europe

Advertising Watchdog Authority (ASA) slammed Domain Registry of Europe (DRoE) for misleading consumers with mails that look similar to bills. The Canada-based domain registration outfit is currently targeting domain holders in the UK with unsolicited letters that readers claim look like bills. DRoE maintains that the letters point out that the notice is not a bill. However, the argument failed to satisfy the ASA.

ASA considers that the mailing suggests that it is an official notice and misleadingly exaggerates the importance of the mail's content. It fails to clearly indicate that this is an advertisement. ASA have therefore asked for the advertisers' assurance that the mailing is amended to delete the words "Important Notice" and stating upfront that it is an advertisement.

(TR, 16.08.02)

Watchdog Urges Consumer Role in Farm Food

According to the chairman of food standards agency, the public is being confused and potentially misled by food labels that advertise more than 20 farm assurance schemes. A review by the agency found that the Schemes are unclear and inconsistent, do not provide much information about their standards, do not have consistent core criteria, and are governed by industry with little consumer involvement.

(TG, 10.07.02)

Banned Ads

The Rajasthan State Human Rights Commission in India has asked the state government to issue necessary notification to prohibit the manufacture, sale, display and advertisement of "pan masala" and "gutka". Western Railway has also banned 'gutka' and 'pan masala' related advertisements within the railway premises and trains.

(TH, 23.07.02 & TFPJ, 03.08.02)



Beware of Health Pills

Pills and powders, which claim to enhance health, are having a free run in the market. They can be advertised without restriction. They can even be sold without a prescription at the chemist's shop or even the local grocery store. But doctors warn that many of these products may actually be detrimental to health.

(TOI, 07.08.02)

Labeling Cosmetics may Help Prevent Cancers

User-friendly labels on cosmetics can help the consumers to reduce the avoidable risks of cancer and other disease by shunning unsafe cosmetic products and shopping for safer alternatives. Cosmetics are even more deserving of warning labels since the hazardous ingredients pose risks of cancer, genetic damage and reproductive toxicity, including infertility.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency responsible for the safety of cosmetics, does not require label warnings on the risks of cosmetic ingredients. The law does not mandate pre-market approval for cosmetics, but does mandate pre-market approval of the safety and effectiveness of drugs. The Environmental Health Network of California is petitioning the US FDA asking for warning labels on cosmetics to identify allergens and hazardous substances contained in the same.

(ENS, 15.08.02)

Safety of Sewage Sludge Fertilizer

Sewage sludge used to fertilise gardens, golf courses and farms needs to be investigated by the US Environment Protection Agency to see if the thick mud-like material cause illnesses, said a report. Sewage sludge is prized by many gardeners and farmers as a rich fertilizer might contain dangerous chemicals such as dioxin.

(PA, 04.07.02)

Sale of Tainted Diet Medicines

Japanese officials are worried about how to stop proliferation of tainted weight-loss supplements that killed three people and made hundreds ill. Last month three types of Chinese-made drugs billed as herbal medicines contained potentially poisonous chemicals.

(IHT, 01.08.02)

Zinc Supplements may Harm Unborn Babies

Research has shown that zinc supplements improve infant growth and protect young children in poor countries from infectious diseases. However, scientists at the Centre for International Child Health in London said they also have negative effects.

The scientists do not know how zinc supplements during pregnancy influence child development. One theory suggests they could cause deficiencies in other micronutrients in the infant or may have a direct influence on brain development in the womb.

The researchers acknowledged zinc deficiency in developing countries is a problem because of a diet low in animal protein and high in fibre.

(TOI, 27.07.02)

Porpoise Sold as Whalemeat

A London based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) has alleged that packages labeled "whalemeat" for sale in a Japanese supermarket contained porpoise meat.

EIA charges that the inaccurate labeling "was in contravention" of Japan's Agricultural Standard (JAS) law that requires the common species name and origin of the product to be clearly labeled.



EIA cautioned that due to this widespread sale of dolphin and porpoise meat as whalemeat, Japanese consumers are at risk of high levels of mercury and other dangerous chemicals present in small cetacean products.

(ENS, 25.09.02)

'Blood Stations' Caused Steep Rise in Aids

Thousands of Chinese peasants who sold their blood to government-sponsored "blood stations" have contracted HIV-AIDS. As many as 35 percent to 45 percent of donors in some areas of Henan in north China were infected because of inadequate safety precautions, says a report of the provincial health department.

(TG, 10.09.02)

Inquiry on Pain Killers

French Health Authorities are planning to launch an investigation into the safety and effectiveness of two of the biggest selling anti-inflammatory drugs. They have asked the London based European Medicines Evaluation Agency to reexamine claims that Celebrex, an arthritis treatment made by Pharmacia and Vioxx, which was developed by Merck, cause fewer digestive intestinal side effects than older, cheaper anti-inflammatory drugs.

(FT, 24.07.02)

Unapproved Pesticides Found in Food

Over 99 percent of food is safe to eat, says a UK government report. The report shows two-thirds of food is pesticide free and the remainder has levels of legal residues below statutory limits. Some of the food surveyed contained pesticides that are not approved for crop use in the UK, with some residues exceeding safety limits.

(Edie, 27.09.02)

Estrogen Therapy Raises Ovarian Cancer Risk

In a study to challenge the safety of postmenopausal hormones, National Cancer Institute scientists report that women who take estrogen are more likely to develop ovarian cancer than those who do not. The longer women take estrogen, the greater their ovarian cancer risk, the study found.

(USA Today, 16.07.02)

Power Suppliers to Ensure Safety Norms

Going by two recent orders of the apex consumer court, in India the electric supply undertakings have to pay equal attention to safety. In these two orders, the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission has sent a clear signal that it will not condone violations of safety norms in power distribution and transmission.

(TOI, 15.07.02)

3/2002

Launch of Partnership Initiative on Atmosphere

On August 27 2002, CUTS and United Nations Environment Programme launched a partnership initiative titled "Network of People and their Representatives



for Action on Atmospheric Issues" at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. The initiative is designed to address the linkage between unsustainable production and consumption and atmospheric problems.

The initiative has received endorsement from Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Climate Action Network and Pelangi. The next meeting of the initiative would be held during the 8th Conference of Parties at New Delhi, India.

Event on Sustainable Consumption at WSSD

The International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption (ICSPAC) organised an event on 27th August 2002 titled 'The world in 2012: Towards a 10-year plan to achieve SPAC' at WSSD. CUTS was one of the co-organisers of the event.

At the event, around 250 participants exchanged views on issues like unsustainable production and advertising, inequalities of existing market infrastructure, the need for partnerships and information exchange, unsustainable military consumption and production.

Chapter 4

Thank you for your electronic newsletter Chapter 4 2/2002 with a lot of information. Please be kind enough to send me how to make the formulation of "Lignite" and "Fly Ash" which act as organic insecticide that could be used on fruits and vegetables.

*Hemakumara Nanayakkara
Member of Parliament
Sri Lanka*

Informative Newsletter

Thank you very much for sending the CUTS newsletter Chapter 4. I think it is very informative, especially the article on "Eco-friendly ways of making chips" which is an issue we have been working on for more than 20 years. We are very interested in working very closely with groups in India since India is becoming such an important high-tech centre.

*Ted Smith
Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
San Jose, USA*

Useful Publication

We have been receiving your newsletter regularly. It is a very useful publication. Also please send us two copies of your monograph "Greening the Lead Acid Battery Sector: Structure, Problems and Needs" for our library.

*Sonam Dawa
Executive Director,
Ladakh Ecological Development Group
Leh, Ladakh, India*

Event on Sustainable Development

An event was organised by the International Steering Group (ISG) along with the Citizens' Alliance for Protection of Korea (CACPK) on 27th August 2002 at NASREC Expo centre to discuss the Southern views on various issues related to sustainable development. CUTS was invited to deliberate on the Indian Scenario of Sustainable Production and Consumption. Discussions also took place on other issues like sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism and the key aspects to make society sustainable.

Seminar on Ozone Depleting Substance Rules, 2000

On International Ozone Day, September 16, CUTS organised a seminar titled "ODS (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000: Challenges before Indian Industry and Servicing Sector." The recommendations were:

- Ask government to appoint a Liaison officer to attend meetings on ODS and build a good network between government and civil society.
- Ask Human and Institutional Development in Ecological Refrigeration (HIDECOR) to extend the geographical spread of its work. Otherwise ask Ozone Cell of India to ensure proper training of the formal and informal servicing units in the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning sector not covered under the present HIDECOR project.
- Prepare a road map for proper implementation of ODS Rules 2000.
- Ask government to ensure that servicing units receive money for change over to environment friendlier options through Global Environment Facility (GEF) mechanism.

Feedback

Readers' Choice

We thankfully acknowledge the receipt of the two issues No. 1 & 2 (2002) of EcoConsumer sent by you to our organisation. We find the said quarterly quite useful and shall be grateful if you continue to send it to us. It will be largely read by readers using our library. Hope you will respond to our request favourably.

P.V.Mehta

*Librarian, Consumer Education & Research Centre
Ahmedabad, India*

EcoConsumer: Useful Resource Material

Thank you very much for sending me EcoConsumer. I go through it thoroughly and found that the newsletter is very useful informative resource for our work and would like to receive it regularly.

*Arunayan Sharma
Director, Centre for Ecological Engineering
Malda, West Bengal, India*

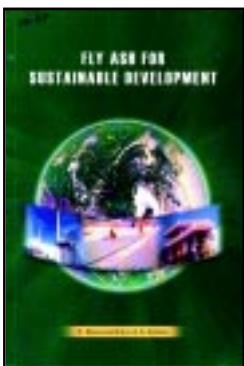
Newsletter for Awareness Generation

Shushilan is a non-government organisation working in the southwest coastal region in Bangladesh to protect and save the largest mangrove in Sunderbans. We saw your newsletter EcoConsumer and feel this newsletter will help us a lot in awareness generation. Please send us a copy on a regular basis to enrich our knowledge.

*Md. Nasir Uddin Faruq
Programme Manager, Shushilan
Bangladesh*

Fly Ash for Sustainable Development

The use of pozzolanic materials has gained significance in the wake of the substantial emphasis on the conversion of agro-industrial waste into potential building materials with a "waste to wealth" or "refuse to resource" approach. This has been demanded by the considerations of ecological, economic and environmental sustainability in addition to the pursuit for excellence in concrete mixes with strength as well as durability. This book by Shri Kalidas and Dr. Bhanumatidas highlighting the use of pozzolanic materials is good in content and depth.



Divided into eight chapters, this book gives a comprehensive coverage on fly ash. It starts from the chemistry of coal and fly, explains the usage of fly ash in advanced concrete technology and most importantly its impact on sustainable development. It nullifies many negative myths on fly ash and its applications.

The practitioners of cement and concrete technology would particularly find the book useful. It would also serve as a good reference document for the faculty of chemical and civil engineering, captains of brick and construction industry.

of chemical and civil engineering, captains of brick and construction industry.

Water Sustainability: Issues for Development

Water is needed in all aspects of life. However, the United Nations estimate that still more than a billion people lack access to fresh water. The looming water crisis is one of the critical challenges facing the world today.

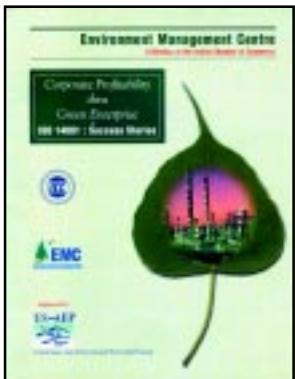
This briefing paper examines the problems related to availability, use and management aspects of water. It highlights some options available for better management of water and another important dimension from the point of view of sustainability viz. private-public partnership in water use and management.

South Asian Parliamentarian Consultation on Atmospheric Issues

South Asian Parliamentarian Consultation on atmospheric issues was organised by the CUTS-CSPAC, UNEP-DTIE OzonAction Programme and South

Corporate Profitability through Green Enterprise

For long, environmental issues have always been put on the backburner, either because the problems were huge that any individual effort seemed insignificant, or due to purely indifferent attitude. Of late, the corporate response to environmental issues has undergone a profound change. The driving force of this corporate awakening is not just a reiteration of social responsibility, but a realisation that concern for the environment can actually lead to profitability.



This compendium compiled by the Environment Management Centre of the Indian Chamber of Commerce showcases 24 successful case studies of Indian companies, which have implemented an Environment Management System, derived benefits and has also gone in for ISO 14000 Certification. It also provides information on the certifiers.

The compendium can be said to be a useful handbook for corporates, managers and management students who wish to know more on ISO 14000 Standards and Certification, its procedure and pursue environmental excellence in Indian conditions.

Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) on May 10-11, 2001 at New Delhi.

This briefing paper tries to highlight the background of the consultation, country profiles, the deliberations that took place and some crucial policy responses that were outlined at the consultation.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

After more than a year of intense preparations and negotiations the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4, 2002.

This briefing paper tries to highlight the preparatory process before WSSD, proceeding at WSSD, CUTS-CSPAC contribution in the WSSD process, outcome and implications of this crucial meeting.

SOURCES

AA: ASIAN AGE, AP: ASSOCIATED PRESS, BL: BUSINESS LINE, BR: BUSINESS RECORDER, DEFRA: DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS, DH: DECCAN HERALD, DSN: DAVID SUKHI NEWS, ENN: ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NETWORK, ENS: ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, ET: THE ECONOMIC TIMES, EUEN: EU ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER, EVEN: EARTH VISION ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS, FT: FINANCIAL TIMES, HT: HINDUSTAN TIMES, IE: INDIAN EXPRESS, IHT: INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, IT: INDIA TODAY, JT: JAPAN TIMES, NGN: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC NEWS, NIE: NEW INDIAN EXPRESS, NYT: NEW YORK TIMES, PA: PLANET ARK, TBO: THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER, TCSM: THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, TFPJ: THE FREE PRESS JOURNAL, TG: THE GUARDIAN, TH: THE HINDU, TKP: THE KATHMANDU POST, TOI: THE TIMES OF INDIA, TP: THE PIONEER, TR: THE REGISTER, TT: THE TRIBUNE, USIS OT: UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE OFFICIAL TEXT.

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