



If we take care of the Earth,
the Earth will take care of us.

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National news

Report reveals key role for civil society policy making in a changing climate

Addis Ababa, Capital– Civil Society plays key roles in pushing for new laws, programmes, policies or strategies on climate change, in holding governments to account on their commitments; in identifying the lack of joined-up government response to climate change; and in ensuring that national policy making does not forget the poor and vulnerable. These are the findings of a report launched on May 20, 2012 at the the UN climate talks in Bonn by coalition of more than 20 civil society networks in developing countries, with support from the international institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and CARE through the Climate Capacity Consortium. The report – Southern voices on climate policy choices: civil society advocacy on climate change provides an analysis of the tools and tactics advocacy groups use to influence policy responses to climate change. The report highlights the importance to civil society networks of engaging with the media to reach the general public and key decision – makers, and of having good relations with governments to influence policy making and planning.

(For more information visit www.ethiopianreporter.com May 20, 2012)

Africa's vanishing Lake Chad puts 30 million lives at risk

Addis Ababa, Capital– As you approach lake Chad basin from Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria, the evidence of despair is telling. The air is dusty, the wind is fierce and unrelenting, the plants are wilting and the earth is turning into sand dunes. The lives of herders, fisherfolks and farmers are teetering on the edge as the lake dries up before their eyes. Vegetation and water, the traditional staples of livelihood for the lake Chad community dwellers, are vanishing. Vultures feast on dead cows as drought and desertification take their toll. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has called the situation an “ecological catastrophe,” predicting that the lake could disappear this century. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), a regional body that regulates the use of the basin's water and other natural resources, maintain that inefficient damming and irrigation methods by the countries bordering the lake are partly responsible for its shrinkage. As part of the lake dry up, most farmers and cattle herders have moved towards greener areas, where they compete for land resources with host communities. Others have gone to Kano, Abuja, Lagos and other big cities for menial jobs or to roam the streets as beggars.

(For more information visit www.capitalethiopia.com May 20, 2012)

International news

Cutting air pollution has an instant impact on heart health, experts believe, after reviewing studies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) - The work in the Journal of the American Medical Association involved medical tests on 125 volunteers living in one of the world's most polluted cities. When pollution dipped during the Games, the researchers saw significant signs of better health among the volunteers. They say this is "biological proof" that pollution can harm the heart. The British Heart Foundation said the link between heart disease and pollution had been known for some time but it was still not clear why this relationship existed. China took major steps to improve Beijing air quality for the 2008 Olympic Games after the International Olympic Committee had warned of some events being postponed. China managed to clean up its air that summer by closing factories and allowing cars on the roads only every other day. There were concerns at the time that air quality could prove hazardous to the health of athletes and spectators. The team at the University of Southern California took blood samples from the healthy volunteers both before and after the Games - when pollution levels were high - as well as during the Games, when the levels were much lower. This was to see if changing levels of air pollution had any effect on heart risk. Specifically, they measured blood pressure and looked for blood markers linked to clotting and inflammation - known risk factors for heart disease. They saw big improvements in these measures when the pollution levels went down.

(For more information visit <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-18070869>)

Science academies urge action on environmental issues

scidev.net (May 14, 2012) - The world's top science academies have urged world leaders to engage more closely with the research community to help solve key environmental problems facing humanity, ahead of the G8 summit in the United States later this week (18–19 May). The so-called 'G Science' statements — issued consensually by 15 national science academies — call for an innovative scientific approach to three major issues: solving water and energy needs simultaneously; combating natural and man-made disasters; and accurately assessing greenhouse gas emissions. The first statement urges governments to pursue an integrated approach to water and energy issues, stressing the interdependence of these resources and their impact on food security. Efforts should be made to integrate research and policy in both areas. The second statement calls for strategies to increase resilience to disasters, such as improving health systems and infrastructure, and applying advanced technology to monitor, warn and respond to disasters more efficiently. The final statement outlines the need for accurate, standardized measures of greenhouse gas emissions.

(For more information visit <http://www.scidev.net/en/agriculture-and-environment/news/science-academies-urge-action-on-environmental-issues.html>)

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