# Connectivity 7.2.97

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## July. 2nd, VOL. 1 NO. 6

**Regional News**

**ASEAN/EU Environmental Network Launched**
June 25, 1997 - Source: Straits Times

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has agreed to establish a Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC), a regional network among member-countries and the European Union (EU). The ARCBC, to be launched with a grant from the EU of 8.5 million European Currency Units (US$ 10.6 million), will be based in the Philippines with "National Biodiversity Reference Units" located within existing institutions in other ASEAN countries. ASEAN has committed 1.8 million ECUs (US$ 2.2 million) over the next five years.

The goal of the centre, according to the report, is to curb environmental destruction through increased training, public awareness, and improvement of management strategies and trans-boundary conservation policies. "Given the complexity and the magnitude of the problem, there is an urgent need to support initiatives aimed at developing linkages and synergies and integrating efforts on a regional basis," Victor Ramos, Philippines' Environment and Natural Resources Secretary, said last week at the unveiling of the centre.

**Japan Loses Whaling Votes**
June 17, 1996 - Source: Associated Press

Japan lost two secret ballot to ease restriction on whaling in the Pacific at the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meeting this week. The 138 nation body voted 65-45 against Japan's proposal to downgrade the West Pacific Minke whale from the most endangered species list and allow limited trade in its meat. In a second vote, Japan failed in its efforts to allow trade in South Pacific Minke whales by a vote of 59-53.

**Swiss Government Pledges US$2.33M to Mekong River Commission**
Source: ISO 14000 News and Views http://www.lawinfo.com/law/ca/environmentallaw

Switzerland has agreed to pledge over $2.33 million to the Mekong River Commission (MRC) for three projects: the development of an MRC environmental management system based on an ISO 14000 Environmental Management System Model; environmental performance evaluation; and a model for MRC project-cycle assessment.

**ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Management**
June 5, 1997 - Source ASEAN Press Release

At the Fifth Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Management (WGEM) delegates reviewed its programmes and proposed revision to the ASEAN long-term goals for river water quality. The meeting also proposed a set of ASEAN Initiatives for achieving the ASEAN Long-Term Environmental Goals for Ambient Air and River Water Qualities, and delegates reviewed implementation of ISO 14000 standards in member countries. The WGEM, according to the report, is expected to play a key role in promoting ISO standards within the region.

The proposals will be submitted for approval to the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment later this year. The WGEM is one of six Working Groups formed under the auspices of the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment.

**APEC Transport Ministers Meet**
June 24-27 - Source: Reuters, Xinhua, USIS Washington File

The APEC Transport Ministers met this week and agreed on a statement covering issues ranging from improved infrastructure and liberalization of air services, to the development of satellite-based navigation systems and the need for oil spill response methods. Ministers also identified priorities such as communication system safety and promotion of environmentally sustainable development. The only measure announced addressing environmental protection was indirectly through the satellite navigation system proposal which, Ministers stated, would "improve quality of life through better management, lower fuel emissions and reduced threat to the environment". Debate between countries such as the US an China on private versus public financing schemes, and the US and Japan on the extent of aviation liberalization, may hinder further action, according to the reports.

**World Bank Approves New Loans**
June 17, 1997 - Source: The World Bank and Institute for Policy Studies

A recent report by the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and the International Trade Information Service (ITIS) shows that power projects approved by the World Bank are a major cause of global warming. Projects funded since 1992 will contribute 36 billion tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere in their lifetimes, adding to the current global output of 27.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide per year, according to the report. Furthermore, projects are reported to "significantly degrade the environment and leave the rural poor worse off".

This week the World Bank approved a loan for the Chinese Xiaolangdi Multipurpose Project II, a

flood control and dam construction project on the Yellow River. The loan to China is for US$430 million, compared to a recent loan to Indonesia for US$66.4 million to support the development of renewable energy by private developers.

**Chilean Government Adopts ISO 140001**
Source: ISO 14000 News and Views http://www.lawinfo.com/law/ca/environmentallaw

The Chilean government announced last week that it is preparing to adopt the ISO 14000 series for governmental and private accreditation of export-oriented mining, fishing and forestry industries.

**Ministers Agree to Not Agree**
June 17, 1997 - Source: Sydney Morning Herald

At the thirteenth meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC), Commonwealth responsibility for airport and defense base pollution continued to dominate discussions. Although the Council, made up of the two country's environment ministries, has studied this issue for the past three consecutive years, it only agreed to continue studying Commonwealth responsibility for its environmental pollution.

**China**

**PRC will end CFC use in Atomized Product Sector**
June 14, 1997 - Source: China Daily

According to the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), China will end the use of chemical Carbon Fluoride Chlorine (CFCs) in its atomized products industries by the end of 1997. Atomized products include perfume, styling mousse, pesticide and spray paint which use CFCs as propellants. Roughly 150 enterprises in China manufacture atomized products, an industry expected to continue to grow at an annual rate of 9 percent in the next three years. According to the report, these steps are in step with China's requirements under the Montreal Protocol.

**Hong Kong to Keep WTO Status**
June 19, 1997 - Source: Straits Times

Hong Kong will keep its World Trade Organization (WTO) status, as its new government, China, continues a 10 year battle for membership. Hong Kong will also retain its status as an independent entity within the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

**Indonesia**

**Indonesian Farmers Suffer Loss to Developers**
June 24, 1997 - Source: Central News Agency (Taiwan)

According to a recent report by professor Bunasor Sanim at the Bogor Agriculture Institute, urban development, industrial and infrastructure development have caused a one million hectare loss in Indonesian farmland in the last five years. Indonesian farming has been particularly hurt in Java's highly fertile farmland where 50 to 60 percent of the development has occurred.

**Japan**

**Japanese PM Shows Poor Environmental Leadership**
June 26th, 1997 - Source: Reuters

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has come under fierce criticism from Japanese NGOs in response to the Prime Ministers efforts to take leadership on environmental issues. Yurika Ayukawa of World Wide Fund for Nature doubts that Hashimoto will be able to achieve his own proposed targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions at the December conference on global warming in Kyoto. Hashimoto is also criticized for his handling of a nuclear accident cover-up in March; his support of a public works project which destroyed Japan's largest tidal wetland in April; and support of the construction of Osaka's new airport which will endanger rare coral reefs. The international environmental community, according to the report, shares the Japanese NGO fear that Hashimoto will continue his poor environmental record at Kyoto by supporting Australia's reliance on coal and hence high emission levels.

## Malaysia

### Malaysian Minister Slams NGOs

June 19, 1997 - Source: Straits Times

During a question and answer period at the recent International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, accused NGOs of siding with developed countries in their stifling growth rates in developing countries. Dr. Lim claims that NGOs are now going though the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to exert pressure on politicians not to support development of industries such as forestry and palm oil on environmental and social grounds. Thereby, according to the Minister, helping developed countries to protect their industries by putting developing countries out of competition right from the start.

"I'd like to ask NGOs in this country like the WWF, Tenaganita, Friends of the Earth, Sahabat Alam, Nature Society and others of their stand ... whether they are going to support us or not?" he asked. "Are they on our side?"

## Philippines

### Thousands of Fishermen to be Jobless by 2000

June 28, 1997 - Source: Straits Times

120,000 Filipino fishermen will lose their livelihood by the year 2000 unless access to fishery resources were restricted, according to a government commissioned team on natural resource accounting. Marian de los Angeles, the head of the team, concluded that fishing of small, surface-dwelling fish would have to be reduced by 50 per cent or face the collapse of some of the country's most important fisheries, a 2 billion pesos industry. Ms de los Angeles concluded that overfishing resulted from the apparent lack of regulation.

### Philippines to Maintain Sea Passage Agreement with Taiwan

June 24, 1997 Source: Central News Agency (Taiwan)

According to the Philippine Council of Agriculture, the disputed 1991 sea lane passage agreement between the Philippines and Taiwan is to remain in place. The agreement, which allows passage of Taiwanese fishing vessels through Philippine waters, had been violated when Taiwanese fishermen dropped fishing nets on their way to fish in South Pacific international waters. In exchange for the right to passage, the agreement stipulates that Taiwan must help the Philippines in development of agriculture and aquaculture industries and improvement of fishing ports.

## Thailand

### US, Thai Navies Work to Save Reefs
June 29, 1997 - Source: Bangkok Post

As part of their annual Carat97 military exercise, Thai and US Navy divers placed permanent anchor buoys on a coral reef off of Pattaya to prevent damage to the reef from commercial and private vessels dropping anchor on the reef. The purpose of the third annual training exercise, according to the report, is to promote cooperation and goodwill between the two countries while providing mutually beneficial training opportunities for the two navies.

### Thailand Buys Electricity from Laos
June 20, 1997 - Source: The Bangkok Post

According to a June 19th report from the Thai Deputy Governor Boonchu Direkstaporn, Thailand has agreed to buy 700 megawatts of power generated from Laos's Nam Ngum 2 and 3 dams. By 2006, Thailand will be purchasing up to 3,000 MW of electricity from Laos. Under a previous agreement, Thailand agreed to purchase 1,014 MW of power from Laos through the Namtern-Hinboon hydro power project, the Huay Hoh project and the Hongsa Lignite project.

### Thailand Assesses Effects of the Shrimp Boycott
June 26, 1997 - Source: Bangkok Post

The boycott of Thai shrimp to 'large importing countries' in response to environmentally harmful fishing practices has had a profound effect on the industry, according to the Thai shrimp industry. Last year, Thailand's revenue from shrimp exports dipped to an estimated 43 billion baht from 51 billion baht in 1995. The forecast export value for 1997 is only 40 billion baht.

In particular, according to the report, the US shrimp embargo from May to November of last year was particularly devastating. The ban was in response to an Earth Island suit in the US International Trade Court, pressuring the government to bar imports of shrimp products unless shrimpers in exporting countries installed turtle-excluder devices (TEDs). The ban has since been lifted, as the US is now satisfied with Thailand's progress in having shrimpers install TEDs.

However, Thailand's shrimp aquaculture industry is now worried that it will be hit hard if similar bans are imposed as environmentalist realize the destructive nature of shrimp farming. Cultured shrimp comprise more than 70% of total Thai production. "Not only environmental concerns, but also health concerns among consumers and governments worldwide have turned out to be very tough non-tariff barriers such as ISO 14000 [environmental certification]. The agricultural products export trade will face a lot more difficulties in marketing," said Dr Sompop Manarungsarn, a lecturer at the Chulalongkorn University. Thailand's request for a WTO ruling on the US shrimp/TED ban is widely seen as a means to head-off future sanctions against Thailand's shrimp aquaculture industry.

## United States

### No Agreement at Pacific Salmon Negotiations
June 26, 1997 - Source: US State Department

The US State Department and the Government of Canada failed to reach an agreement on the

Pacific salmon fisheries agreement. The announcement, made June 26th, means that the 1997 fishing season will proceed in absence of a long-term solution regarding salmon conservation.

**US Shrimp Ban to Go Before the WTO**
June 18, 1997 - Source: Reuters

The US will stand by its ban on shrimp products from countries who do not protect sea turtles from destructive shrimp harvesting practices when the case reaches the WTO, according to the Clinton Administration. According to the report, the US will argue that the ban falls under WTO exceptions which permit bans that are necessary to protect human, animal or plant life. The US will have to prove that the shrimp ban is the only way to protect the endangered sea turtle if the exception is to be applied. Furthermore, US trade officials argue that as shrimp imports have not fallen since the ban was imposed, the ban is not protectionist. Shrimp imports to the US from India and Pakistan rose in 1996 whereas imports from Thailand fell.

***Connectivity*** is a bi-monthly information service reporting on trade, environment and development issues in the Asia-Pacific. The *Monitor* is emailed to members of the ***Asia Pacific Regional Environment Network*** (APRENet). To register for this free service please fill out the on-line registration form at or send email to nautilus@nautilus.org

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