

Rural Week 99 to spotlight the political dimension

Nobel laureate Norman E. Borlaug, UN agency and nongovernmental organization representatives, farmers, government

officials, academics, and private sector partners will join over 400 Bank staff at the March 24-26 Rural Week, convened by the Rural Development Family at the Westfields, Va. Conference Center. Participants will explore the political implications of strategies to alleviate poverty and hunger. Sessions will include natural disaster preparedness, access to land and water, rural finance, agricultural education, climate change, trade and protectionism, gender, biotechnology, and food safety, plus an **InfoFair**. For the first time sessions will be covered by "Earth Negotiations Bulletin," which reaches 25,000 subscribers. For the full program see <http://essd.worldbank.org/essd/rdv/rdvhome.nsf/BulletinFrameHolder?OpenView>

Quality assurance and compliance has high priority

The Bank's credibility rests on effective implementation of its social and environmental "safeguard" policies. ESSD has oversight responsibility for 8 of the 10 policies. The objective is to work with the Regions, which are fully accountable for compliance with operational policies and procedures in Bank operations. Close coordination will be maintained with IFC and MIGA. To enhance projects, the ESSD Compliance and Quality Assurance Unit will provide support to the Regions aimed at:

- Proactive upstream involvement to build in-country capacity and ensure quality at entry for socially and environmentally sustainable operations
 - Effective downstream monitoring and evaluation to assure that policies are implemented and that lessons of experience are incorporated in new operations.
- To support these, the Unit will:
- Assess compliance and enhance quality through carefully selected desk reviews and field audits. This will involve working with the Quality Assurance Group (QAG) to conduct desk reviews of Bank projects. Field-based reviews will also be undertaken. The Unit will liaise with OED to ensure that findings are used to enhance compliance and quality assurance.
 - Improve institutional mechanisms to determine which

projects pose a risk to the Bank's corporate values of sustainable development, including identifying the procedures necessary for remedial action.

- Strengthen training, particularly for task managers.
- Disseminate knowledge to encourage learning, drawing on experience from inside and outside the Bank Group.

A Technical Committee comprising ESSD and Regional staff will help guide the work of the Unit. The committee will report to the Director, ENV. A Quality Assurance Committee comprising Regional Quality Assurance Coordinators will also be established. "I consider the functions of this Unit to have high priority, and I would like all ESSD staff to give it their support," says Ian Johnson. Kathryn McPhail will coordinate the program with the help of Manish Bapna (Young Professional). Colin Rees will be the Senior Technical Adviser, and Nick Van Praag will provide public information support and liaise with External Affairs.

Social Development QAG review team finds inconsistencies

ESSD was recently invited by the Bank's Quality Assurance Group (QAG) to participate in the review of the "quality at entry" of 100 lending projects. SDV analysts ranked programs in terms of stakeholder analysis and participation, social disaggregation and poverty targeting, social impact monitoring, and compliance with social safeguard policies. The reviews reveal innovations in social analysis and participation coexisting with persistent practices that undermine country ownership and program effectiveness. The team will submit its final report later this month.

Heads of state to discuss forests in Yaoundé

The Central African Forest Summit will take place in Cameroon on March 17. Initiated by President Paul Biya, the meeting will be chaired by the Duke of Edinburgh. Its goals are to promote conservation of forests of the western Congo Basin and their biodiversity through (1) creation and maintenance of an ecological representative network of protected areas and (2) sustainable use of forest resources. The summit will be preceded by an interministerial meeting to discuss technical issues. The resulting "Yaoundé Declaration" will be presented at the summit. Ian Johnson will represent the Bank.

EDs discuss Prototype Carbon Fund

On February 22, Executive Directors were updated on the status of the Prototype Carbon Fund. The EDs suggested

including a more meaningful role for host countries in the governance structure, and improving transparency and outreach to the NGO community and public. Final documentation to establish the PCF will be presented to the Board later this year.

Networks cooperate to develop social policy principles

A note on the principles of good social policy is being prepared by an inter-network effort of HD, PREM, and ESSD's Social Development Family. These principles will feed into the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). In January the Social Sector Board discussed other family contributions to CDF. These include taking stock of critical in-country inclusion issues; developing targeting mechanisms; strengthening institutional mechanisms, local governance, and participatory approaches; and analyzing civil society dynamics.

Flash from the field: India and China

Two faces of Bank work in Singrauli, India

The World Bank is initiating a project focused on social and environmental rehabilitation in Singrauli, a once pristine forest area south-east of Varanasi. Construction of a dam and a reservoir in the 1950s plus exploitation of huge coal reserves—both done with Bank assistance—resulted in the capacity to produce 40 percent of India's thermal power as well as in the growth of other industries. However, development was accompanied by severe social dislocation and disillusionment, and natural resource degradation. These effects led to the current project.

Chinese complete indicators handbook

With assistance of ENV staff a Chinese language handbook on indicators for sustainable development will soon be published in Beijing by the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA). SEPA officials expect the handbook to be widely used by provincial and municipal governments. Four Chinese researchers were trained at the Bank, and ENV staff assisted SEPA to organize two workshops in Beijing to discuss the framework and application of indicators, focusing on urban environmental issues.

World Water Day to be marked by events worldwide

To celebrate World Water Day on March 22, the first meeting of the World Commission on Water for the 21st Century will take place in Cairo. Formed in 1998, the commission is chaired by Ismail Serageldin. On March 15-19 the Seventh Nile 2002 Conference will convene all the riparian nations that share the Nile Basin to discuss comprehensive water resources development of the Basin for the 21st century. The Organization of American States, the National Environmental Authority, and the Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean invite pre-registration for the Third Inter-American Dialogue on Water Management: Facing the Emerging Water Crisis in the 21st Century in Panama City, Panama, March 21-25. LAC is also participating. For details see <http://iwrn.ces.fau.edu/mainenglish.html> To register, go to <http://www2.usma.ac.pa/~cathalac/dialogue3.htm>.

Biosafety negotiations reach temporary impasse

A Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in Cartagena, Colombia on February 22 to adopt a Biosafety Protocol but reached an impasse on February 24, mainly on trade in biotechnology products and damage

liability issues. This sixth round of negotiations was suspended indefinitely, with a deadline to adopt a "Cartagena Protocol" by May 2000. In the current text the Global Environment Facility would act as a facilitator for capacity building in biosafety in recipient countries. GEF already has a \$2.74 million pilot project in operation through the United Nations Environment Programme to develop norms for assistance for capacity building. The project covers 18 recipient countries directly and funds regional consultations on the subject.

National Geographic initiates collaboration with ESSD

National Geographic representatives met with Bob Watson, Ken Newcombe, Maria Elena Matheus, and Francis Dobbs on February 19 to explore collaboration. The Bank representatives suggested that the magazine illustrate articles in its Millennium Series with Bank project success stories and recommended specific projects for use next year. They emphasized the importance of communities as implementing agents of projects and the relevance of cultural knowledge.

ACS Family begins work

The Administrative and Client Support (ACS) Group in the Operation Core Services (OCS) Network is up and running! Its purposes are to provide ACS staff with resources that encourage professional excellence and development to help the Bank Group meet its goals and (2) to enable sharing of knowledge and best practice among ACS staff. The Committee to EDI/LLC (ACS Sub-committee on Training) and the Committee on Professional Development Grants (ACS Grants Administration) are operational. The ESSD (anchor) representative to the ACS Board, Louise Shaw Barry, will work 25 percent of her time on ACS issues.

Bank presents environmental films March 23 and 24

The World Bank will present 2 films followed by panel discussions in this year's Washington, DC Environmental Film Festival. On March 23 "No Place to Run" will be shown at noon in J1-050. On the subject of epidemics, it looks at the plague in India, cholera in Peru, and Lyme disease in the United States. On March 24 "Nature's Pharmacy," which looks at efforts to preserve medicinal plants, will be shown at noon in J1-050. For the many environmental films and locations being shown throughout the city March 18-28, see <http://www.capaccess.org/ane/eff>

New Publications

Biotechnology and Biosafety I. Serageldin and W. Collins
Mainstreaming Gender and Development in the World Bank: Progress and Recommendations C. Moser, A. Torqvist, and B. von Bronkhorst
Pollution Prevention and Abatement Handbook 1998 World Bank
Rural Infrastructure from a World Bank Perspective: A Knowledge Management Framework L. Pouliquen

Calendar

March

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| 15-16 | WTO High-level Symposium on Trade and Environment —Geneva. Ian Johnson speaking 3/15 |
| 15-18 | Central African Forest Summit —Yaoundé. Ian Johnson speaking 3/17 |
| 22 | World Water Day —Multiple events. See story above. |
| 18-28 | Environmental Film Festival —Washington, DC |
| 23 | "No Place to Run," film and panel —J1-050, noon |
| 24 | "Nature's Pharmacy," film and panel —J1-050, noon
Other locations: http://www.capaccess.org/ane/eff |
| 24-26 | Rural Week —Westfields, Va. Theme: Rural Development: The Political Dimension |

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