

Time is not running, time is coming

By Heiner Schanz, Program Director

It is more than a year since we published our last MEG-info bulletin. The reason for this long period of quiet is not that nothing worthwhile to report has happened, quite the opposite - 2007 has been again a very turbulent year with many positive developments around the MEG-programme! This is probably best illustrated by the fact that the old "MEG-info bulletin" has been replaced by this new "MEG-newsletter", including many students' contributions next to this director's corner.

Usually directors tend to stress only the positive aspects of their operations, forgetting about the negative ones (just like no organisation or enterprise claims to manage resources in an unsustainable way...). But even trying very hard it is quite difficult to find really negative developments around the MEG in 2007: indeed, student evaluation indicates that some modules still need to be improved substantially and some gaps in the curriculum need to be addressed - but what else should be expected from a program that has been established only two years ago? Maybe, the only really negative news is that one of our pioneering students had

to leave the program due to non-conformation with its very strict examination regulations. Despite this

- particularly from the personal perspective - sad occurrence the positive news is dominating by far:

- By the end of 2006 the DAAD-German Academic Exchange Service finally decided favourably and included the MEG in its prestigious "developing countries oriented post-graduate program". This scheme provides the MEG-program 4-6 fully financed fellowships for applicants from developing countries from 2007 onwards. This allowed for the first time in 2007 also students from Africa (Malawi, Ghana and Tanzania) to join the MEG-program.
- The 1st Freiburg Forum on Environmental



big success: the 2007 forum focus was to initiate a first step towards the systematic understanding of the role of individual leadership in environmental governance by shedding light on the influencing situational, positional and individual factors. Four renowned international advo-

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Governance
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2007,
planned by
the MEG-
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cates from the fields of policy, business, civil society and science shared their individual experiences: **Dr. Vandana Shiva** (India), **Prof. Dr. Elinore Ostrom** (USA), **Sir Mark Moody-Stuart** (UK) and **H.E. Ambassador Raul Estrada-Oyuela** (Argentina). The keynotes were recapitulated by Prof. Dr. Steinar Andresen from the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (N) at the end of the forum. Our board member, Dr. Maritta von Bieberstein Koch-Weser helped to make the event a success by leading through the event with humour and imagination.

- In conjunction with the Forum the second annual **MEG-Board Advisory Meeting** was held. The MEG-Advisory Board members were in generally satisfied with the progress since the last meeting and the steps taken in response to their recommendations.
- In May 2007 also the **completely revised MEG-website** has been launched. The new website including a completely new **MEG-corporate design** with logo and tag line “Shape. Complex. Futures.” has been sponsored by two staff members, Mr. Enderlin and Mr. Pastula, from SWR - Public Broadcasting Company of the State of Baden-Württemberg under the auspices of our MEG-board member, Dr. Willi Steul. Take a look at <http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de/> and enjoy the new design.
- With the start of the summer term our pioneering member of the MEG-program committee and module coor-

dinator “Global Societal Change”, **Dr. Michael Flitner has been appointed as full professor at the University of Bremen**. While the MEG program is losing one of its most active proponents at the same time it gains a new cooperation partner, as Dr. Flitner will continue contributing to the MEG-programme.

- Student interest in the program still continues to grow: Our program coordinator, Ms. Esther Muschelknautz, and her team handled more than 463 enquiries from 97 different countries. Those enquiries resulted in **371 online-applications** out of which 30 students from 19 different countries were selected for admission. The fact that 24 students (80%) finally enrolled in the programme despite many of them having alternative offers can be taken as a further indication for the attractiveness of the program.
- Again MEG-students have been **very successful in securing interesting internship positions** - not least thanks to the active support of several MEG-lecturers and the members of our advisory board. Organisations offering internships to MEG students in 2007 include: UN Headquarters, New York, USA; EAWAG - the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, Dübendorf, Switzerland; Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Berlin, Germany; GTZ Bolivia; Macedonian Ecological Society, Skopje, Macedonia; John Dewar & Sons Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland/ United Kingdom, Bonn, Germany; Botanical Garden of Bogota, Colombia; China Environment and

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Sustainable Development Reference and Research Centre (CESDRRC), Beijing, P.R. China; International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), Geneva, Switzerland; Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Berlin, Germany; UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bonn, Germany; Watershed Management Project and Mekong River Commission, Vientiane, Laos; World Health Organization (WHO), Gabon; IUCN USA & Caribbean Multilateral Office, Washington D.C., USA; IISRA (Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America), Peru-Brazil-Bolivia Hub, Peru; GTZ - Headquarters, Eschborn, Germany; Community of Salzburg, Department of Environmental Protection, Austria; Public Policy Program, Universidad Catolica de Chile, Chile; International Environmental Law Research Centre (IELRC), New Delhi, India; GTZ, New Delhi, India; Irish Prime Minister Office, Dublin; GTZ - GESOREN Project, Ecuador; London Sustainable Exchange, United Kingdom; UNEP, Geneva, Switzerland

Thanks to all internship providers and the MEG-internship coordinator Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dietrich Burger!

- On November 15, 2007 the **farewell party for the first MEG-student generation**, the MEG-class 2005, took place. About 90% of the class have submitted their MSc-thesis in time within the regular program duration of two years; the rest will submit it at the latest by the end of the year.

- The MEG-program has been awarded the **prestigious, and highly competitive 2007 Higher Education Award of the State of Baden-Württemberg (40.000 €)** for its innovative didactical and content-wise concepts, and its consequent international focus. The prize was handed over by the Minister for Science and Higher Education on December, 7th 2007. The prize allowed us to **appoint Mr. Rainer Hummel as MEG-Program Manager** for the coming years. His main task will be to strengthen internal and external communication, including contacts with our donors and sponsors.
- The MEG-guest lecture coordinator, Prof. Dr. Gerhard Oesten succeeded in organizing a very attractive **MEG-guest lecture series for the winter term**: next to presentations from our two MEG-board members, **Ms. Barbara Unmüssig** from the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation (14th Jan., 2008) and **Prof. Dr. Elshorst** from Transparency International (31st Jan., 2008) and, **Dr. Monika Zimmermann** from ICLEI (Feb. 2008, exact dates to be announced) and **Dr. Jürgen Staeck** (15th Nov., 2007) from the Environmental Safeguarding Department of the University Freiburg will provide presentations also open to the wider public.
- Within the Module “Global Societal Change” the first year **MEG-class 2007 visited the GTZ German Technical Cooperation and the KfW German Development Bank**, as well as the the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. The excursion was organized within the framework of the DAAD - MEG cooperation. Thanks to our

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Chairman of the MEG-Advisory Board, Dr. Hans Peter Schipulle for establishing contacts.

- Furthermore, on initiative and by invitation of our MEG-board member, Dr. Monika Betz the **MEG-student class 2006 visited BASF** on Nov. 29, 2007 and discussed sustainability issues of one of the world's largest chemical companies.
- The winter term will end by the already **traditional excursion of our MEG-fresh(wo)men** to Geneva. Again, Kit Prins from the UN-ECE will act as host and door-opener.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the **2nd Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance** to be held on 18-19 April 2008. The 2008 Forum topic is "The Role of Religion in Environmental Governance". Planning is well underway, with very interesting speakers and an innovative setting. Don't miss it! Please find further information on the last pages of this news letter.

Taking flight

By Rainer Hummel, MEG-Program Manager

It has often been observed that essential parts of conventions, meetings or conferences do not take place during the official agenda but during breaks, in informal after hour sessions or while going for a walk with other participants. The same holds true for our M.Sc. program. The university, program

staff and lecturers can provide important input and set the framework but ultimately the success of MEG depends on the willingness of students to contribute and learn with and from each other within but particularly beyond the classroom setting.

As the third generation of MEG-students enters into the program there is a certain feeling of coming of age. The pioneering class of 2005 is going out in the world applying themselves with their newly acquired skills. We wish them much success in their efforts to -- true to the MEG motto -- shape complex futures. Especially at this time it is nice to observe that activities are more and more initiated by students themselves and that synergies are created between and within the different MEG-classes. As a growing number of students will go through the program and take on professional positions it is our hope and expectation that you will see the development of an informal network of colleagues and friends. There is the wonderful adage that a good education will provide roots and wings. In this sense, strong student involvement in the first edition of a MEG newsletter is a logical next step in the evolution of program participants towards "taking flight" and visible proof for parts of MEG self-governed by you, the students. For the MEG-program, I would like to congratulate you to your manifold contributions and wish you, along with the imagination, the continuity and persistence needed to make this the first in a long list of MEG newsletters.

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This is (Not) the End, Beautiful Friend

by Karol Trejo, MEG-class 2005

I am standing exactly at the same place where I was 2 years ago: In the middle of nowhere trying to make up my mind about life. At that time things worked out pretty good. I came to Freiburg, released all my neurosis to be simply in peace with myself. Now, again I am a bit scared about having an indecent job and taking big decisions. But we'll see - It can't be that bad as long as I have the chance to take those risks.



From the Master Program I learned that we are far, far away from global prosperity and justice. The poorest become poorer and the richest... guess! Inequality is the motor of massive environmental and social depletion. But come on! That's why we are here! This is a duty for optimists.

I do not want to close the list of what I have learnt from the people I have met in Freiburg, but I will try to put it into some words. It has been amazing to observe our learning processes. Thanks for that. Thanks to the ones who talked and the ones who listened, the provocative and the quiet full of thoughtfulness and wisdom. Deutschland - It was amazing! Each German is a different one, and when the streets and the civi-

lized modernity stopped surprising me after the first week, somehow the locals impressed me in many ways every single day (next time I would definitely learn the language from the very beginning). Though English is a beautiful language, and the few but substantial Anglo representatives that I had the honour to meet are just amazing - no sarcasm included. It was always nice to figure out what the rest of us were trying to say, and it was always delightful to enjoy the special effects (sounds and body languages) that we needed to use as an aid when we were trying to express ourselves. No matter how stupid one can look, there's always something to learn from what is trying to be said. Really. No, really.

Love you all in diverse but equal, inclusive and eco-friendly ways.

From a MEG-Fan!

By Ludmilla Diniz, MEG-class 2006

I believe all modules we have had until now, with their strengths and weaknesses, delivered a valuable message. Some were tough, others more relaxing, some very reflective and others more practical oriented. However, I still have very fresh in my mind how pleasant our last module 'Ecosystem Management' was.

It was a blast to go out in the black forest, feel the smell of wet soil and be impressed by the German Forestry Management. In the soil excursion, before tasting how basic the

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pH of the soil was (yes, we put soil in our mouths!!) we were blessed by a very interesting cloud phenomenon on the top of the observation tower. They were moving so fast, we could listen to them and further on the horizon it looked like a tsunami over the hills. Pure magic!



In the last excursion to the Röhn Biosphere Reserve the importance of biodiversity conservation became clearer to me. It was shocking to see all those stuffed animals in the museum, which cannot be found in the wilderness anymore. Our guide was a very passionate forester, hard worker hands, and provided a unique perspective on the area. It was amazing to be in the old beech forests, it looked like the Robin Hood films. Peace of mind.

The fires at night in the hostel, the songs sang in our different languages, the full moon - It was the perfect end for this adventure-module. We lived like a family these days. After all, we had a mixture of feelings: Excitement for the internships, happiness for one further step and astonishment in analysing how fast the first year went on.

An Architect's Journey

By Sun-ae Kim, MEG-class 2006

Month after month, I have been regretting that I did not study something more rele-

vant to the MEG-program. Among those many practical majors like economics, political science, sociology or environmental sciences, why have I spent all my years drawing, designing buildings and studying art history? Of course, I perfectly understood the importance of green buildings as 50% of CO2 emissions come from the concrete buildings in the United States alone and that the building industry use more of the earth's natural resources than any other human activity, but working with architects has not been a direct target of my career since I decided to leave my drawing book. So where am I then?

As I begun my internship and less concerned about grades but dealing with the real everyday life of negotiations and communication, it slowly dawned upon me that I am doing a Masters of Environmental 'Governance' (MEG), not a Masters of Environment. In other words, the power of the word 'governance' finally came to me.

In my previous university, I was trained to watch people closely to understand how they react and communicate with space and other people. A famous architect uses his own language (or signatory style) to design, but good architecture gives freedom to the inhabitants to adjust and develop as its own. My hope is that my career in environmental governance as an architect will continue to contour the voice of my heart as listening to what people really think and what they are really concerned in the periods of uncertainty and

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complexity and helping to build the common ground for envisioning our own solution.

Exploring Madagascar

by Mari Roald Bern, ME-class 2006

The green island has become the red island, and satellite photos show how rivers fill up deltas and estuaries with the red soil, unveiling a picture of a bleeding island. I stayed there for three months, working for the World Wide Fund for Nature: Here is one snapshot of my experience:

Rice fields - To the knees in parasite infested clay

Olivier is our agent; he has just joined the WWF. He started to work as a teacher, but quit when he noticed that his pupils could not learn anything because they were too hungry. For 20 years he has been working on agricultural development in rural areas. He smiles at me with the brown remnants of teeth that have never seen neither toothbrush nor dentist.



Sylvain and Olivier, WWF agents whom I worked with in Antananarivo

We are off to help Fransisca in her rice field. Bright green, dark green, yellow green. We have to balance on small earth

walls between the fields. I constantly have the feeling of being too tall and with too big feet for these fragile and slippery constructs. We remove our sandals and step into the warm clay. It is probably 30 degrees, and reaches halfway up to my knees. Every step I take, it sucks, and every move I make, it slurps.

We align up the rice sprouts; two thin grasses of straw are to be planted in lines, with 25 cm distance. We use a blue rope with knots: for every knot, a sprout is to be planted. The afternoon sun glows and enhances all the colours of the landscape. I feel a sudden peace; for the first time in my life I am planting what I eat.

The WWF promotes a rice culture system as part of the agricultural development. Rice in lines, a germinating process for the grains, and use of organic fertilizers increases the

yields of each parcel, and reduces thereby the need for clearing new land.

A skinny man with a torn sweater knitted sometime in the beginning of the 80s, barefoot, on skinny legs and with a hatch over his shoulder. His eyes are bright, and his face cracks open revealing the biggest, whitest teeth I have ever seen. We are greeted with a smile and “lanona ny vao vao?” (What’s new?) We answer: “Tsy Misy” (Nothing new). Of course, being white young girls there is lots of news; and we have to explain why we



are here. But common courtesy requires us to assure about no bad news. He is glad to see us, and he looks forward to work with us. He is the local king. He is troubled by the increasing hunger and diseases in his village. He is also worried that the forest clearing may reduce the water source.

During our stay we install a demonstration site on his land. We dig out terraces for rice and plant coffee, vanilla and clove trees. I ask the King what he wishes his village to be like in 20 years, the answer is no hunger, no disease and electricity. He does not want it to become a city; he does not want to have cars: they make too much dust, he says.

Explore is a programme from WWF aiming to bring young environmentalists from western countries to developing countries to experience and live how nature conservation and social issues are intrinsically interlinked, and how an organisation like the World Wide Fund for nature approaches it.

“Online Blog”

by Joe Wladkowski, MEG 2006

Dear Journal,

Well the past three months have been quite an experience, haven't they? Now that my internship is over and my time in London is reaching its end, I can hardly believe how far I've come. Sitting here packing my suitcase, it doesn't look like I've acquired much - just a couple souvenirs to bring

back for my friends and family. No, what I've picked up during my time here won't detract from my 20kg luggage limit, nor will custom officers be checking it at the border - yet they are the most valuable and important things I've gained during my time here in London.

First of all, it's all of the knowledge I've accumulated. My understanding of sustainability and sustainable development has vastly deepened. Working in London, I've learned first-hand how messages about sustainability must be tailored for all sorts of people, from wealthy financial analysts working in the City, whose concerns revolve around how many hundreds of thousands of pounds their bonuses will be this year and how they should spend it, to recently arrived immigrants, clustering with those who speak their language, holding fast to their culture and traditions, just trying to scrape by.

Secondly, it's the work experience I've received and the outputs I've produced. The results of my work will not just benefit me during the rest of the MEG program courses and help me in writing my thesis, but hopefully will also help Londoners transform their city into the global sustainability leader that they are envisioning.

But most importantly, it's all of the people I've come to know and will never forget. I've made some of the most amazing friends in these past three months, and it's the memories I've made and shared with them that I'll never forget and treasure forever. From crazy adventures during the office move, going shopping on Oxford Street, running through the rain to meetings at City

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Hall, being swarmed by crowds while giving out free energy-saving light bulbs, getting a beer (or two or three) after work, or just the great conversations during lunch, these are the times that defined my internship and my London experience. And through all of these new friendships I've grown tremendously as a person and hope that they've all gained something from me as well.

Will London feel my absence once I'm gone? In the city of 8 million people with hundreds of immigrants arriving daily, the void I've left in the Tube will be filled instantaneously. New interns will pick up where I left off, and to them I wish the same, amazing experience that I have had.

Well Journal, I have to pack you into my suitcase now. I'll see you when we get back to Freiburg, and then we can catch up with all our other friends who I'm sure have all had as amazing experiences during their internships.

Seen from China: The Nobel Peace Price 2007

By Gao Ya, MEG-class 2005

When the former U.S. vice president Al Gore and IPCC received the Nobel Peace Prize of 2007 on the 12th of October in Oslo, countless news articles appeared on the media through out the world. Analysis of how and to what extent the media of each country reports on this news could provide us many insights into the nation's prevailing attitudes toward climate change

and its position in the world climate change politics. It is said that China has overtaken the US as the top CO2 emitter. Regardless the fact that China's per capita emissions are still below the global average, its fast economic growth has made its attitude toward climate change not only matter, but matter significantly. Thus, it would be interesting to investigate into what Chinese media says about the Nobel Peace Prize of this year.

"Media analysis is not only about analyzing what and how things are present, but also what and why certain things that could have been, but are not present."-

Richardson, John E.



Reading through the articles that have appeared on People's Daily Online after the announcement of the prize, the first thing that came to my attention is the very informative rather than reflective tone of all articles. The reporting concentrates on the introduction of Al Gore, IPCC, and the history of Nobel Peace Prize. Noteworthy is the lack of elaboration on climate change itself. Quoting from foreign media is frequent while from Chinese sources it is very rare, except that the Chinese government announced their congratulations to the prize winners. The second remarkable feature is the large coverage on Al Gore, U.S. presidency election and US environmental policies. The consistent message is that, "Al Gore has no intention to go for the next US presidency" and on the other hand, the "white house says it

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will not change its current environmental policy just because of Al Gore's success at Nobel". The third interesting observation is the translation of Al Gore's movie "an inconvenient truth" as "an unelectable truth" into Chinese. Proving the speculative view that this is strategically done to omit the devastating part of the climate change story requires more evidence.

It seems that China's concern over who the next US president will be and how the US environmental policy towards climate change will be like in the near future exceeds its concern over the climate change itself. The Chinese government did not make any official statement directly on climate change through the media at the time of the event, instead emphasized the non-commitment of US government. In my opinion, it shows that China wants to keep its low-profile as a developing country and pressure the big developed nations like the US to take the lead. The underlying reason for this attitude is rather straightforward: China is worried that if it commits itself strongly to climate change mitigation efforts, its two-digit economic growth will be affected, especially if the US does not take the issue seriously, it will put China in further competitive disadvantage.



Mottainai - Sustainable Concept for Gratefulness and Resource Efficiency

By Tetsuo Tachibana, MEG-class 2005

"Mottainai" is a Japanese term, which roughly means, "it is so wasteful that things are not made full use of their value". Moreover, this implies an expression of gratefulness for natural environment and people's efforts which support our life. This term is often used to link the concept of 3Rs: Reduce, Re-use, Recycle.

In my childhood, I frequently watched a public advertisement on TV regarding "Mottainai". This is an animation and the story is like this: Several children eat dinner together. Then one child starts saying: "I don't like carrots". Next child says: "I don't like cucumbers". Other children also react and start saying: "I don't like ***!!!" In the middle of night after dinner, "Mottainai Ghost" comes to the house, and threateningly tells the children "Mottainai! Mottainai! (do not waste any food!)." Next day, children gratefully eat up all dishes without likes and dislikes. This was a great lesson for children like me not to waste food as well as any other things with thankfulness. Unfortunately, later on, through the period of economic growth and bubble economy based on mass production and consumption in Japan, people have gradually forgot this excellent and modest concept.

In 2005, when Professor Wangari Maathai

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visited Japan after receiving novel peace prize, she came to know this word. Now she has revived “Mottainai” in Japan, and spread it all over the world. When I joined the Climate Change Conference in Nairobi last year, I had an opportunity to meet Prof. Maathai and got a book with her special message for MEG students and her signature. The title is “Unbowed” which describes her inspiring life. I donated this book for MEG students to the Forest library. You can search for this book, but I would encourage everybody to also search for and reflect upon old wisdom in your country!

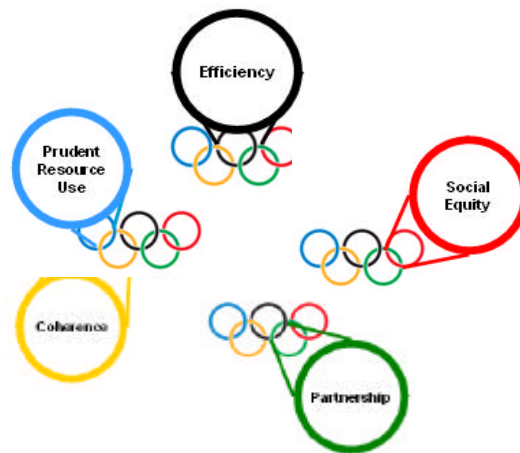
Beijing: From a Grey Sky to Green Olympics - A Collective Perception of International Students

By Su Qui, MEG-class 2005

Beijing is the capital of China, an old and also booming power in the world. Recently, it is again put under the spotlight, with another title: “Hostess of Olympic 2008”. However, this time, things do not go so smoothly, challenges are coming. Can Beijing fulfil the commitment to Green Olympics? Can the city change its current image of “world capital of air pollution”?

A group of international students from M.Sc. Environmental Governance, equipped with the knowledge weapon from the module “Sustainability & Governance”, forming an “Independent Assessment Committee of Air Pollution in Beijing”, are right there waiting.

Combined with the 3-Dimension (Economic, Environmental & Social Dimensions) of Sustainable Development Process, we believe, Beijing Olympics should be beyond environmentally green. And including also the 2-Axis (Special and Temporal Axis), we further recommend Beijing Olympics try to extend the green lifespan and meanwhile not sacrifice the green well being of the city’s neighbours. However, we are also worrying: an all-inclusive plan sometimes could end up as a “mission impossible”. Therefore, we are going to launch a public consultation process: Do we need to set a priority checklist for Beijing Olympics, and what are your top 3 priorities?



Some Thoughts on Russia and its Climate Change Policy

By Elena Batkova, MEG-class 2006

Russian environmental policy has come under unprecedented pressure to become more

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efficient in the recent decades. This pressure should be considered as an opportunity for environmental policy; however, there are still perplexing implications for this process. Once Winston Churchill remarked that predicting what action Russia would take was “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma”. To understand the country-specific enigma this is a challenge of the world community these days, while Russia is becoming progressively prominent player in the “world game affairs”.

Russia is currently benefiting from high oil prices, thus filling up Golden Reserves and Stabilization Fund with petrodollars, and at the same time developing its economy without actual consideration of environmental aspects. As a result, the environmental priorities have receded moving forward country’s economic goals. This could bring significant danger to country’s economy and lead to even more environmental deterioration as well as associated with it social conflicts from the long-term perspective.

Environmental policy in Russia has become increasingly dependent on specifics of economic and political development. Moreover, Russian perception of sustainability as well as environmental preservation is traditionally understood by state as rather “uncomfortable for current economic development of the country”. It has not been adequately realised yet in Russia that without considering environmental dimension there is no chance to reach long-term economic growth and double country’s GDP in ten years period, as have been targeted by the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

At the same time, Russia has played an important role in international climate change regime since 1991. First, opposing Geneva Declaration and reflecting politically and economically on the withdrawal of the US, which has reduced country’s economic interests, since the major potential “customer” of its emissions otherwise have been left behind. Second, changing its political “mood” and eventually ratifying the Protocol on November 5, 2004.

However, it was definitely a complex path for Russia to finally make step forward towards the Kyoto, and the pitfalls did not have only economic nature (as most of the international and national experts point out), but rather hidden internal turbulence and debates as well as political position to follow “country’s interests”.

While the process of Kyoto negotiations, Russia’s Green House Gas emissions has dropped down tremendously in 1990 due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, which directly reflected on the country’s industrial production output. Russia has enormous potential therefore of over-compliance and capacity to sell its emissions and attract investments mainly via Joint Implementation. As a result, most of the Western experts have projected that Russia should have been enormously interested in ratifying such an agreement, which could benefit in diverse ways country’s economic, institutional and financial ontogenesis. However, here was the point where “Russian enigma” has shown up and spread even more confusion out onto the West about its “national” capriciousness and puzzling political interests, which world community is still trying to understand.

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Lessons learned during my master thesis research on CSR in Peru

by Ana Lucia Pinto, MEG-class 2005

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a new topic in the media and for the public in Peru. There are no clear groups of pressure in relation to social and environmental concerns. Economic aspects and social demands can play a key role, such as a source of investment for the government or of employment especially for indigenous peoples in the use of natural resources.

It was a great experience to write my master thesis in Peru, a challenge to do interviews, then to analyze the data in Spanish and to write it in English. Therefore, I would like to share some opportunities and risks identified with you:

Opportunities: Look for an interesting topic in the media, CSR is currently growing as a business practice in Peru, and Agro-industry is an economical sector with high recognition in Peruvian economy, matching CSR in Agro-industry allowed me to interview in some cases General Managers of companies, due that they were very interested in the study and most of the time they were the ones who introduced me with other managers to interview.

A study made in your own country can be more attractive, people appreciate that you are interested in applying your acquired knowledge in your country. From my point of view, managers were very confi-

dent and open with me, regarding the information they gave, and in some cases I felt that they were very enthusiastic telling me why they have CSR initiatives in their companies, these great experiences include funny stories regarding their employees and customers response.

Risks: People do not like to be recorded, they feel uncomfortable and of course they would not allow you to take pictures. Also, because they have high positions, they are busy people, therefore they will not give you more than 40 minutes. For instance you have to review all external information available and be well prepared, if they notice that you have not even reviewed the company's web page, it can be a very bad start for the interview.

I can say that the most difficult part for me was analyzing qualitative data. I have realized that I have gathered a lot of information, and I wanted not to lose anything, therefore it is better to set boundaries from the very beginning of your study. Also, I thought before that conducting interviews was the most difficult part; I was surprised about it, because it was easy to do, and managers were very friendly and interested to share the information.

Finally, it was motivating to have the opportunity to share my results with different experts in Latin American region, and hopefully to contribute with information about management practices and looking forward to encouraging companies to integrate environmental and social aspects into their operations by CSR business practices.

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First Announcement

2008 Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance

The Role of Religion in Environmental Governance

18 - 19 April 2008, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

The annual Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance is planned and organised by the M.Sc. Environmental Governance (MEG) programme students in a fully independent manner over the course of their first three semesters, as part of their educational training in the MEG programme at the University Freiburg. The professors only provide administrative and conceptual support.

2008 Forum Topic: Whereas the concept of environmental governance has received increasing attention in recent years, the role of religion in this context is yet to be explored - from its influence on individual actors to shaping cultural frameworks.

On the one hand, religion can contribute to one's personal understanding of environmental problems and provide guidance towards sustainable actions. The discursive role of religions can influence societal beliefs, values and norms that consequently can change individual behaviours. On the other hand, the role of religion and religious stakeholders in collective actions can be of crucial importance. Religious institutions in participatory processes can provide

the public sphere with tools to grasp moral dimensions of environmental concerns. Finally, in collaborative policy making processes religious affiliation can be an obstacle or a catalyst for achieving agreements.

The aim of the 2008 Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance is to initiate a resilient dialogue across boundaries, disciplines and sectors encouraging outside the box thinking.

The 2008 Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance is organised as a one-and-a-half day event. On Friday afternoon, a keynote speaker will introduce the Forum and reflect upon the role of religion in environmental governance. On Saturday, a World Café will take place to enable an open interdisciplinary discussion, and to stimulate communication, participation, and exchange of ideas among all participants.

The MEG-class 2006 invites renowned individuals and experts from various academic disciplines - theology, philosophy, ethics, education, social sciences, natural sciences, conflict management, as well as practitioners from political, environmental, and religious organizations. Future environmental leaders, namely students and junior staff from NGOs, are also encouraged to attend.

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