

Dear MEGs,



Summer is upon us and we should not let you take off to your various endeavors at the end of the semester without more news from the MEG-community. A semester full of accomplishments, good and some not so good experiences, and the acceptance of the next, 4<sup>th</sup> generation of MEG students draws to a close. Just one example of the constructive input from the students' side is the recently created buddy program for the new MEGs arriving in fall. Benefiting from the experience of fellow students will make the arrival of the new generation much easier and will certainly help them make Freiburg their home during their studies. Many thanks to everybody involved in this effort!

Plenty of examples showcasing the variety of MEG follow in this newsletter, along with a thoughtful contribution about the Forum 2008. We still get very positive feedback on the Forum publication, with the most recent ones coming from Mary Evelyn Tucker from Yale University and John D'Arcy May from the Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin, pre-eminent scholars in the field of religion and environment. Both are very complimentary of the Forum itself but particularly of the quality of the essays which they found inspirational for their own work. As we attempt to change a lot and often seem to accomplish little we would like to pass this along as a reminder that we can effect change and thoughtfulness through many different venues and often unbeknownst to us.

With the end of the summer semester we are bidding farewell to a long time change agent: Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dietrich Burger will retire from his official duties. He has been invaluable to the MEG program from (and even before) the start. His contributions have been manifold and actually too numerous to list them all. The ones that stand out are certainly his efforts to establish a MEG advisory board that is second to none for a M.Sc. program in Germany, his tireless help in searching and coordinating internship positions for students, his leadership in the MEG program committee, and his teaching in the module "sustainability and governance", continuously ranked very high in student evaluations. Prof. Burger could draw on an illustrious career in sustainable development and natural resource management to inspire students and faculty alike. He held various leadership positions with GTZ where he worked for 32 years and headed the Program Office for Social and Ecological Standards prior to his retirement in 2004. He has published widely and extensively and can be considered a pioneer of forest certification. Dear to his heart has always been Brazil where Prof. Burger has worked and lived for many years. One expression of gratitude for his commitment there has been the doctor honoris causa bestowed upon Prof. Burger by the University of Paraná, Curitiba in 1991. Many personal and professional ties still link Prof.

p. 1 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)

Burger to Brazil and we suspect he will use some of his newly gained freedom to spend more time in the Southern Hemisphere! For the MEG Program, it is a gap that will not be easy to fill, so the farewell is bittersweet and not without the hope to get Prof. Burger's input beyond the date of his official retirement. For the whole MEG Program, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Prof. Burger for his unwavering commitment and patient guidance and leadership. Thank you, Prof. Burger, we wish you all the best and hope to hear from you often!

*Prof. Dr. Heiner Schanz  
Rainer Hummel  
Sabine Reinecke*

and impressed through critical thinking and skilful discussion.

These sessions also provided a chance for the students to establish contacts with the different departments, which will prove useful in the future with regards to internships, thesis supervision and potential work.



## News

- For now the third time, the first semester **MEG excursion to Geneva** took place on 18 - 20 February this year. On invitation by the UNECE / FAO Timber Section, 22 students travelled to Switzerland to get a taste of the international work and gain insights into different perspectives on environmental issues. This year, presentations from UNECE, ILO, UNCTAD, UNEP, WTO and IUCN gave an overview over current concerns and provided a basis for challenging discussions. These lively exchanges with the experts which followed the individual presentations were greatly appreciated by the students. They showed their wide interest in the issues

- On 18 and 19 April, the **second Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance** brought together the MEG community, experts and guests to share experiences and perspectives on the topic of **"The Role of Religion in Environmental Governance"**. The event, which was conceptualised and planned by the MEG class of 2006, was the shining final result of more than a year of work, perseverance and many ups and downs for students and supporters.

More than 120 guests were present in the Aula of the University for the keynote speech by Dr. Claude Martin, Chancellor of the International University Geneva on Friday. This introduction was supplemented by the experiences shared by Liza Higgins-Zogib of WWF on the topic of conservation and sacred sites. On

p. 2 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)

Saturday morning, a personal video message from His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople opened the second part of the forum, the expert roundtable discussion. The speakers engagingly discussed the issues of ethics and capacity building from their perspectives. Critical and stimulating questions and comments from the audience then opened the debate up to all participants, touching many essential points and inspiring further thinking.

Both speakers and other guests commented very positively on the Forum and its focus on open dialogue. The exchange was rounded off by an evening reception on Friday in the beautiful historic Peterhofkeller, which provided a more information setting for networking and personal contact.



- On the same weekend as the Forum, the annual **MEG Advisory Board Meeting** took place. Dr. Schipulle, Ms Unmüsig and Mr Elshorst met the

Program Committee to exchange views and give recommendations for the further improvement of the course. There was also a "meet and greet" session with the MEG 2009 class, where the students had the chance to give their impressions of the first semester here in Freiburg.

- On 26 & 27 April, the MEG class of 2007 had a chance to learn about and improve their team working skills at an **intercultural team-building seminar** held by Stephanie Püttker of SPICE consulting. With a mix of theoretical knowledge and interactive exercises, the two intensive days allowed the group to explore their own team dynamics and find ways of improving their interactions. The outcome was not only a better understanding of the challenge of working in a team, but also a set of key rules for class discussions, which will be applied from now on. And once again the great potential of the MEG group was confirmed, when all participants shared their positive feedback for each other at the end of the training.

- On 5th June, MEG Advisory Board member **Dr. Willi Steul**, head of the SWR broadcasting company, gave a **guest lecture on the role of media in Environmental Governance**. He discussed the obstacles and opportunities that the modern media provide for environmental governance practitioners, looking also at the role of journalists



p. 3 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)



within this information system. For the MEG 2009 students, this was a great opportunity to discuss their ideas for the Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance 2009, which will focus on the media.

- On 8<sup>th</sup> July, the **guest lecture series** continued with a visit by **Dr. Hans Schipulle**, chairman of the MEG advisory board. He reported on his work with the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, a joint effort of governments and NGOs to protect the Congo Basin Forests and provide the people with sustainable means for livelihood. Dr Schipulle has headed this group since last December.



His work also featured prominently in an article titled "The Price of Survival: What Would It Cost to Save Nature" in the German news magazine "Der Spiegel" in May. "This forest stores carbon dioxide, and thus helps to slow down global warming. It regulates the global water supply and holds valuable pharmaceuticals, we must finally realize that these are services that are worth something to us", he is quoted.

## MEG Students Attend Forum On Media And Peacebuilding

By Jan Andrew Zubiri, MEG 2009



Last June 2 to 4, four MEG 2009 students attended the Deutsche-Welle Global Media Forum on the theme 'Media in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention' in Bonn. With funding support from the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), Christiana Amuzu (Ghana), Wilhelm Kiwango (Tanzania), Bismarck Sakunda (Malawi), and Andrew Zubiri (Philippines) learned that media's reach goes beyond mere reporting on conflict-stricken areas.

On the first day, sessions focused on media intervention and Europe's relevance to prevent conflicts, and economic and political stability in Asia. The second day was dedicated to parallel sessions on topics such as truth and objectivity, journalistic-training in conflict situations, German Armed Forces' engagement on media, portrayal of the Middle East, and new media such as online reporting and blogs. During the last day, *Search for Common Ground* founders John and Susan Collin Marks presented a video clip and music video on the use of TV and radio in peacebuilding.

The forum was also a good opportunity for the students to establish networks with media practitioners and potential sponsors in preparation for the student organized event next year on the theme 'Role of Media in Environmental Governance.'

More information at: [www.dw-gmf.de](http://www.dw-gmf.de)

p. 4 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)



## Looking For A Job: Is there a place for me out there?

By *Rainer Hummel*,  
MEG Program Manager



You have worked hard to finish your education, met deadlines, adjusted to personal and financial challenges, and all this because of your interest in the field of your study course, environmental governance. At the height of your knowledge and competence there should be somebody out there aching for your skills – or not. After the emotional high of graduation and a feeling of accomplishment it can be disillusioning to find yourself on an often drawn out search for a position. This can be especially true in the field of environment and sustainability. Turns out that not only environmental problems but also environmental job searches can be wicked. It would be presumptuous to try and address the many facets of career development in a short column but a few aspects should be mentioned, if merely as food for thought and further reading.

People tend to look for the familiar. Especially after being exposed to faculty members who have made their careers in academia you might aspire to emulate them. This may be a satisfying and rewarding path for some but many attractive opportunities in the private and public sector could be more suited for your abilities – and be hidden in plain sight. There is the old stereo-

type that professors unconsciously hammer home the message that there is something distasteful about working “in the real world”. Maybe it happens. If it does, don’t fall for it. And if you decide academia is your calling do not loiter and get lost in the maze of the university system. Make sure that what you do actually enhances your knowledge and qualifications.

Of course, the point of origin for all career choices should be: What do I enjoy? And: What do I do well? You addressed these questions already when opting for a study course but they should be explored continuously. The answers are rarely as straightforward as it seems. Preferences change and you might have uncovered an aptitude during studying and/or living abroad that make an adjustment necessary. There is a myriad of books and websites that can prove useful if you would like to get more specific answers to these basic questions.

Once you have a pretty good idea what skills you bring to an organization you start looking for actual positions. There are of course advertisements and search engines, most organizations list openings on the internet. I would like to bring your attention to another, often overlooked, but often quite helpful possibility: the informational interview. Thereby you ask for a meeting with a representative of an organization that seems like an attractive employer for you. In the course of the meeting you learn more about them and they get to know you. The truth is that almost every organization is constantly looking to hire good people. Due to the many requirements, legal and otherwise, that come with a proper job announcement, there is a general tendency to rely on informal channels to find suitable candidates, especially in the

p. 5 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)



private sector. Initiating the contact shows that you are pro-active and interested. Even if there is no position at the time you are likely to get contacted if there is an opening in the future or you might learn about other attractive positions in the field.

The environmental field teems with volunteers. Most NGOs, in particular, could not function without the manifold efforts of uncompensated contributors. Your interest in the MEG program might have been triggered through volunteer work. When looking for gainful employment this creates a certain tension. You should be unapologetic, however, to ask for a fair compensation and benefit package when applying for a position. As professionals, your expertise should be valued in monetary terms as well. Every serious employer needs to and will understand that you need to be remunerated appropriately. If they don't, it raises serious doubts about their commitment to their employees. You should accept unpaid or underpaid positions only short term and only if there is a clear roadmap outlined to a position with proper pay and benefits.

Another question is how much you should get paid. Some ads will give a salary range for a position but frequently this is part of the interview. And time and again applicants fall into the trap of being too humble – and studies have shown that women on average ask for lower compensation than men. Of course, the number you pick needs to be in a justifiable range. If you select the upper end, however, and are prepared to say why, you come across as confident in your abilities. If

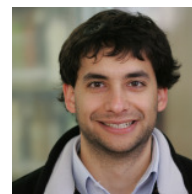
an organization would like to hire you they can always offer you less (and explain why). Rarely or never will anybody offer you more than what you asked for.

Finally, be relaxed about the scope of the decision you face. Choosing a position is an important influence on your future but hardly a life time choice any more. The tendency clearly goes towards multiple careers over our professional lives. So whatever you set out to do, keep an open mind, gain valuable experiences and grow as a person along the way.

## Reflecting On The Freiburg Forum On Environmental Governance 2008

---

*By Javier Raña, MEG 2008*



After finishing the SOE event of this year I found myself discussing with my MEG colleagues the highlights of the event: "The reception was very nice", "some of the speakers caused a strong impression", "The turn-out was good", "Friday evening was quite full", "we accomplished the goal", "we did a great job".

All of this is true, but if you notice our comments were mostly about the form of the event; almost nothing about the content itself. Moreover, after more than one year of research, reunions and preparations, the irreplaceable work of the people in the backstage, the effort of the panelists and even after the realization of the event itself, most of us still found the topic of the

p. 6 / 13

Imprint  
Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences  
Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz  
Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel  
Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz  
Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke  
79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany  
[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)

event rather boring and uninteresting. All the incredible effort resulted only in the projection of an amazing image of the forum, the master course and its students. But, was our event just image without substance? Did the event leave us merely the immediate satisfaction of the achievement of a goal after a hard work but nothing valuable for our future lives?

The name of our event "The Role of Religion in Environmental Governance" written in tiny letters in the brochure and posters seemed to pass unnoticed for the broad public and unfortunately also for us. What was actually hidden under this title?

Without undervaluing the research work of all my companions, in the following three paragraphs I would like to rescue what, in my point of view, should be the most transcendental conclusions about the topic of this year's Forum. These ideas were vaguely touched during the group preparation and the Forum itself, but if one agrees they could be some of the most important ideas to take away from this topic.



1. Environmental governance is about ethics. It is about choosing how we want to live, it is about answering the question of how we should relate with other persons and it is about deciding how our world should look like. At the same time every religion

has its own individual view and understanding about the main problems of mankind; the problem of life, of death and of cohabitation. Each religion has spent centuries developing and tuning their answers to the same questions brought up by environmental governance; how we should live, how we should relate with other beings and how we transcend to death through our actions that model the world itself.

Additionally, the religious answers to these mankind problems have been, in different degrees, culturally transferred to all of us modeling the way

we think and therefore influencing our actions.

Thus, in order to understand and model our thinking and our actions that are related to the main problems of humanity; environmental

governance should pay a greater attention to the knowledge and understanding of these ideas possessed by the different religious traditions.

2. As Einstein said: "Science without religion is limp and religion without science is blind". Science is about understanding the physical world and being capable of altering it. Ethics and religion is about giving significance to those discoveries and inventions in our life. Environmental

p. 7 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)



governance is about bringing them together.

3. Nature is more than just numbers. When we are in middle of a forest do we look at the trees and perceive the amount of CO2 that they will capture? Do we look at the amount of money they will generate? Do we look at the particles that compose each tree or animal? Most of the times forests and nature are transmitting us a totality that can not be expressed in quantities. It is a feeling that goes beyond measurement and it is an experience that has a "truth" in itself.

Citing Einstein again: "Not everything that can be measured is important and not everything important can be measured". Through the veneration and respect for the creation of God, religion can help us discover the things that can not be measured, but yet contain this intrinsic importance. Religion can help us build another relation with nature that includes factors that have been left aside by science such as peace, happiness, harmony, tranquility, beauty, etc.

In the three interrelated conclusions we can observe that the links between religion and environmental governance are essential and stronger than what we imagined when we started the research to prepare the Forum. There is a lot of substance in this year's Forum and therefore I urge you to reflect on

its contents and make an ethical use of it.

Dear MEG friends: Let's keep the smile for the accomplishment of a hard task, but let us also remember to look further; to search for the insights that such an experience has provided us for our future lives and, more important; to see how we can make use of the received knowledge to help people and make of our world a better place for everybody to live in.

*Thanks to Mari, Seirra and Katrin for your useful comments*

## "Lords Of The Keys" – "Take outs" from inside the Environmental Governance Forum 2008

*By Sabine Reinecke, MEG Program Facilitator*



Having gathered already quite some experience in event organisation, as with the diplomatic Africa Forum in Namibia during my internship as MEG student or within a project at the Faculty in preparation to the COP9 in Germany, I was invited to assist in the preparation to the MEG Forum 2008. This task concerned the many little bits and bobs which needed to be done behind the scenes and allowed the students to work more on contents and the program itself, writing speeches etc.

Students have repeatedly been asking about the traits of this part of the organisation of the event, why I gladly share some

p. 8 / 13

Imprint  
Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences  
Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz  
Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel  
Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz  
Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke  
79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany  
www.meg.uni-freiburg.de





moments in the more or less 2 to 3 months of preparatory work. Being just part of a wonderful team of restless Forum planners, including Rainer Hummel and Jana Wendler, and not to forget Frau Mattheiß, our secretary and watchdog over the finances, this might still be a rather selective view, though.

While the design of the event was indicated to us pretty clearly by the students, the ideas still needed to be put in practice. We needed to book the venue for the conference, we needed the venue changed, as all chairs in the Aula were to be reorganized around a stage to be bought or rented still. We needed a venue for the evening reception, we needed food and drinks for the evening and breaks, we needed a band and to accommodate the speakers, pay their expenses ... and we needed to stay within the budget, better below.

For some things we knew we would have to demand them from the University, also to keep the expenses low, which is really an asset. I don't want to imagine the costs of the event without this great support by the University. Those "things" included for instance the venues of the Aula and the old wine cellar "Peterhofkeller". That typically implied finding out the responsible person in the administration and to approach them with a request. Evidently, there is not only a linguistic connection between the words "request" and "conquest," and just like Columbus discovered or conquered (partly painfully) America thinking he found India, an unknown part of the University revealed itself to me, too: The Administration.

As a huge academic organization the University established therein an administrative system of super and sub-division of labor accompanied by a concrete and precise system of tasks, principles and instructions. Accordingly, the person opening you the door for a visit of the Aula is not the same who may give you information if you are allowed to remove the chairs, as it is again another person who will lend you the tables in front of the door for the breaks. The one bringing the tables then is again the person who can also open the door for you, but this person cannot open all doors such as those of the university cellar. You need to contact another employee in another building, which you need to make an appointment with each time you need access to the cellar. Of course the initial application to rent the room itself goes to another section in the Rektorat (central university administration).

You may then not overlook that the dish washing machine in the cellar you rented is ... of course: locked. And also don't expect that the person who opens the basement has a key for this machine. The official way is to first file a form at the Rektorat to get the permission to use the machine; this permission typically is just given to professional caterers who know how to use a machine. Well, then you need to file again a form at the central key office to get the key. Sounds time consuming? Well, a bit!

But by no means start to panic if you just find out the machine has such a lock on the day of the event, a Friday, almost at noon! And don't forget to smile and be grateful when you find out that the University administration is also a social organization, where you will meet many very generous, nice and flexible people that are willing to help you instantly. They would give you –

p. 9 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)

after you highlight your years of experience in gastronomy – the permission on the phone directly with the key officer, who would then file the form with you very quickly and also invite you to mix cocktails on a summer party of his office in July.

Well, only one sour note of this moment of victory, or “conquest”, remains:

Due to the many years of experience in gastronomy you will be the only one allowed to touch the machine ... and 300 glasses still needed to be cleaned! Cheers!

## Brushing Up On Biodiversity

By Jan Andrew Zubiri,  
MEG 2009



*Respecting life, unity in diversity, and new conceptions on development. These are the core messages in the Declaration we crafted and presented to leaders of the world in the recent Conference of Parties 9 (CoP9) of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD) in Bonn. Together with 46 other participants from 17 different countries, I attended the Go4BioDiv International Youth Summit in the Wilderness Camp in Falkenstein in the Bavarian Forest, and later in Bonn.*

It was a last minute email that arrived in my inbox in the middle of crunch

time. I was finishing a paper, and the deadline to submit the application for the ‘Go4BioDiv’ International Youth Summit 2008 was less than a day away. It was a pleasant surprise to get a call from the organizers some weeks later. I remember I was at the IUCN Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland at that time for annual MEG excursion.

Fast forward to the Bavarian Forest. Forty-six participants from 18 different countries, including yours truly, spent ten days in the Wilderness Camp in Falkenstein to prepare for the big event in Bonn. Despite some language barrier, all of us spoke the common language of hope and unity. I thought the diversity of the group would no longer be a novelty because of my international MEG class. They proved me wrong.



GTZ/Go4BioDiv

Our lecturers introduced us to concepts such as access and benefits sharing (ABS), ecological footprint, and the debate on genetically-modified organisms. What I initially expected to be a holiday didn’t turn out so. Due mainly to my countless questions (and my MEG training), we had to endure late nights to develop and deliberate

p. 10 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)



on our declaration. Not only we had to flex our intellect, but also our muscles as we rehearsed for our interpretative dance that we presented on the *Plaza der Vielfalt* once we reached Bonn. In Fränau, a small town in Bavaria once famous for its thriving glass industry, we designed an ecological footprint glass art that is now travelling in different cities as an exhibit. All these were preparations for the real deal in Bonn.

In Bonn, I hosted the opening ceremony of our Expo on Biodiversity. I rubbed elbows with the lady Mayor of Bonn, Ms. Bärbel Dieckmann, and the Executive Secretary of the CBD himself, Dr. Ahmed Djoghla. The following day, our faces were plastered in *General Anzeiger*, the town paper of Bonn. Some of us even had the chance to meet the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms. Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul, and the President of Germany, Mr. Horst Köhler.

We took turns accommodating guests and touring visitors around our expo. In addition to the colorful ecological footprint glass art, a Mongolian *ger* where we held discussions and a Siberian hut were a few of our expo's main attractions. Our photo gallery which featured photos we ourselves captured conveyed the message of biodiversity and cultural diversity.

I only used to participate in international conventions in "paper," as my job back in the Philippines entailed writing official country statements to these kinds of annual conferences. The recent CBD still required me to write a message. This time though, I had the help of 46 other minds. And this time

around, I represented not only my country, but also the youth of the world.



GTZ/Go4BioDiv 1

[www.go4biodiv.org](http://www.go4biodiv.org)  
[www.freetaste.blogspot.com](http://www.freetaste.blogspot.com)

## The Power Relations Are Still There

By *Gabriela Morais, MEG 2009*



Bonn, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm. After 4 hours travelling, I left the train station and rushed into the COP-9 Convention Site, the Maritim Hotel, to get my badge printed. Tired smile on the photo, curious mind ready to learn from the negotiations and side events which would take place in the following days. It was my first time at a United Nations conference. I had the observer status as a delegate from International Forest Students Association (IFSA).

First impressions couldn't be other than "this is the most diverse place I have ever been to". People from 190 countries, so

p. 11 / 13

Imprint  
Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences  
Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz  
Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel  
Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz  
Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke  
79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany  
[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)



many different mother tongues, people in suits, people wearing their traditional costumes. Indigenous representatives, parties' delegations including negotiators and their advisors, NGOs, business sector, independent consultants, researcher, media were all there, some or most of which trying to get their voices taken into account somehow.

The lure of the first impressions faded away quite quickly. The negotiations in the two working groups have started. You cannot avoid noticing not all the delegations are present. Some countries names are there left alone in the plenary. Some delegations are too small, even only three people and cannot be present in all the discussions – scarce resources.

The negotiations go on for hours and hours. They are delayed. Many countries have a lot to comment on the papers. When they are done, there is time left for Local and Indigenous Communities (LIC) and NGOs to have their say.

When the two working groups (lunch time and late afternoon) end their sessions, come the side events discussing biodiversity issues being negotiated. In these side events you find a variety of think tanks, NGOs, Governments and exposing their ideas and ultimately feeding somehow further negotiations, since, as professor of mine says, where do you think the governments get their ideas from? Definitely, publications and ideas debated in these events become later a good source of information to feed the debate.

In one of the side event discussions, I had the opportunity to hear a woman from an international indigenous organisation sharing her point of view on REDD, proposal to Reduce Emission and Deforestation and Degradation. Her fears were that the proposal was too complex for indigenous and local communities to understand and therefore have a concrete position on it. Besides she was afraid that what was meant to deliver benefits to the poor would actually only benefit traders and powerful landowners instead of local communities.

In the last day was able to attend there was also a manifestation of some local communities from the Amazon. They were afraid their voice was not being taken into account and the negotiations were not advancing as they should to really prevent more biodiversity lost.

From all I could see and hear in the corridors and from people I met on the way even within delegations the power relations still there. You have all these diversity but how far local and indigenous communities are actually being heard? How far developing countries, with not so huge economic power are having their positions taken into account? How far NGOs headquarters are able to integrate the diversity of countries they are working in? How far the final outcome of the conference corresponds to my view of the diversity observed in the first day? I came back with these questions in mind and no clear answer on what could and should be done to try to equalize power, but with the clear view that the power relations are definitely still there and should always be considered as we learned in class.

p. 12 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)

## Hallo From Japan

By Su Qiu, MEG 2007



Dear Meggies, a warm greeting from Japan!

I am a lucky guy: two years ago, I joined our MEG family. The "Environmental Governance" has ever made me so proud, because I can show off to all my Chinese friends that I was participating in such a cutting edge program. And later on it also made me so frustrated. Try imaging the feeling while uncovering the onion, you will find the similar feeling while defining the "Environmental Governance". But don't worry, you will get used to that.

I am a lucky guy again: two months ago, I graduated and received some interesting offers. I have conducted my master research in FSC International, which smoothly linked me to my first job offer in FSC China. And later on, I casually applied for the position of climate change associate in UNDP China, and got the offer too. Meanwhile, I received the admission of M.Sc. Sustainability Science in Tokyo University with scholarship. With no doubt, I chose the latter one. The reason is also quite simple: after this sustainability program, I still have chance to work in FSC China or UNDP China, but I am pretty sure, I will never take another master when I start working. And plus, it's my dream to take a one or two year trip in Japan. And this time it is sponsored by Japanese Government, why not?

I am a lucky guy again and again: two years later, I will graduate from this sustainability program. Here is quite different from the Freiburg-style. Lab-oriented teamwork, barbecue-oriented party, bow-oriented greeting .., so many surprises. But two things are always constant, the high quality research and the nice people. Good choice, isn't it!



And at last, hopefully, my luckiness can be shared with all you guys. Good luck, meggies!

p. 13 / 13

Imprint

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg  
Faculty of Forest and Environmental  
Sciences

Program Director  
Prof. Dr. H. Schanz

Program Manager  
Mr. Rainer Hummel

Program Coordinator  
Ms. Esther Muschelknautz

Program Facilitator  
Ms. Sabine Reinecke

79085 Freiburg i.Br.  
Germany

[www.meg.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.meg.uni-freiburg.de)