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FEATURED STORY

Editors note: While it is encouraging to hear supportive arguments from world leaders regarding protection of mangroves, which MAP has been proclaiming for over twenty years now, it is important to present the facts carefully. Please be sure to read our LAST WORD in this issue.

Mangroves under threat from shrimp farms: U.N.



NORWAY - Valuable mangrove forests that protect coastlines, sustain sealife and help slow climate change are being wrecked by the spread of shrimp and fish farms, a U.N.-backed study showed on Wednesday. About a fifth of mangroves worldwide have been lost since 1980, mostly because of clearance to make way for the farms which often get choked with waste, antibiotics and fertilizers, according to the study. Intact mangroves were almost always more valuable than shrimp farms, said its authors, who drew on forestry and conservation expertise from several U.N. organizations. Mangroves - trees and shrubs that grow in salty coastal sediment - can be found in 123 nations in the tropics and sub-tropics and cover an area slightly larger than Nepal. They are nurseries for wild fish stocks, sources

of wood for building and serve as buffers to storm surges. They absorb carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas from burning of fossil fuels, and store it in their roots. And their growth can help counteract the effects of rising sea levels as it elevates coastlines. "There is an opportunity for many countries to go for restoration of mangroves," Hanneke Van Lavieren, lead author of the study at the U.N. University's Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNWEH), told Reuters. "Mangroves can be seen as a key ecosystem for food security in the world," she said. [READ MORE](#)

AFRICA

Disquiet Over Lamu Port Project

KENYA – A fledgling project to build a huge new port, oil refinery and transport hub on Kenya's northern coastline promises to deliver thousands of jobs and is a pillar of the government's long-term development agenda. But critics fear the project will displace tens of thousands of people in Lamu District, exacerbate decades of marginalization, degrade marine environments essential to local livelihoods and increase the risk of conflict as the country gears up for elections in March 2013. "This project will displace many people from their homes... yet the government is not very clear on what plans they have for those who will be displaced," Abubakar-Al Amudi, chairperson of Save Lamu, a coalition of organizations dedicated to saving the Lamu Archipelago from environmental destruction, told IRIN. [READ MORE](#)

ASIA

MAP-Asia Participants in China Mangrove Workshop



CHINA – Jim Enright, MAP-Asia’s Coordinator, recently attended a “Regional Workshop on Catalyzing Incentives for Sustainable Management and Restoration of Mangroves in Asia and the Pacific”, Oct.29-31, 2012 held in the coastal city of Beihai, in the south part of Guangxi, China. The workshop was sponsored and organized by Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) based in Beijing, China which is an initiative of APEC economies launched in 2008 to enhance capacity building and information exchange in the forestry sector in the region. This was the first opportunity for MAP to meet and dialogue with APFNet which adds to our regional network. The workshop was by co-sponsored by IUCN, PEMSEA, ITTO, TNC and WWF. Workshop participants came from China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Germany, UK, and Mexico. [READ MORE](#)

Zhanjiang Mangrove National Nature Reserve functions

CHINA - Covering four counties (cities) and four districts, Zhanjiang Mangrove National Nature Reserve (ZMNNR) situates at the southernmost tip of Mainland China on the Leizhou Peninsula of Guangdong Province. ZMNNR had a total area of 20278.8 ha, 9200 ha of which were covered by mangroves and accounted for 78% of all mangrove areas in Guangdong province and 33% of the national total. It was a nature reserve with largest mangrove area with a rich biodiversity in the mainland China. An inclusion into the Ramsar list in January 2002 enabled the reserve to become an internationally important area in protecting biodiversity and ecosystem. In 2006 the reserve was appointed as a national demonstration reserve. There were 51 demonstration reserves in the whole China, 2 of which were located in Guangdong province. In August 2012, ZMNNR was included into

MAB (Man and Biosphere, China) to become a member of the MAB (China) Network The greatest result achieved by ZMNNR since its establishment is the almost-stop of deforestation for the purpose of shrimp and fish farming due to its legal enforcement and patrolling. Three levels of resource management system “headquarter-field station-protection plot” were set up. Resource management was enhanced further with an establishment of a mangrove police station by the reserve in early 2012. [READ MORE](#)

China prohibits fresh shrimp imports from Vietnam

VIETNAM - Vietnamese officials have been astonished with the information that China has prohibited to import fresh shrimp from Vietnam. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has requested its belonging agencies to clarify why China has released the decision to prohibit importing fresh shrimp from Vietnam. No state management agency had been informed about the news until a seafood company sent a dispatch to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT), informing that it could not export shrimp to China. An official of MOIT said the information came from Tuong Huu Company headquartered in Tan Phu district of HCM City. “At first, we thought that China only temporarily stopped importing products from Tuong Huu only. However, later, the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam has confirmed that the ban would be applied to all fresh seafood products from Vietnam,” he said. The Chinese side informed that there are three main reasons that prompt its competent agencies to stop importing shrimp from Vietnam. [READ MORE](#)

River elegy :Laos admits work is going ahead on a controversial dam

LAOS - THE Mekong river, snaking its way through the heart of South-East Asia, has long sustained the world’s biggest and most productive inland fishery, supplying protein for around 65m mainly poor people from four riparian countries, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. But scientists warn that this ecosystem is gravely threatened by the Lao government’s rush to exploit its water resources, egged on by Thai, Chinese and European energy companies. The decision by Laos to push ahead with the giant Xayaburi dam makes

it the first of what could prove to be a cascade of 11 proposed dams on the lower Mekong. Because the decision fails to take account of the consequences for downstream countries, it has raised tensions with neighbours. Having long pretended otherwise, the Lao government recently asserted that construction was forging ahead, and indeed was on schedule. That prompted a warning from the president of Vietnam, Truong Tan Sang, that “tensions over water resources are not only threatening economic growth in many countries, but also presenting a source of conflict”. [READ MORE](#)

Communities want to manage mangrove forest

INDONESIA - Kadek Bobby Susila has been actively taking part in demonstrations by an environmental NGO to oppose the Bali administration giving rights to a private company to manage a mangrove forest. The 28-year-old is the only resident of Suwung Kauh — where the mangrove forest is located, who has joined the protest. Bobby wished the mangrove forest could be managed by local communities like other natural tourist sites, such as Tanah Lot in Tabanan, the Monkey Forest in Ubud, or the mangrove forest in Jungut Batu, Nusa Ceningan. “But the local community here don’t understand how to manage it,” he said sadly. He joined the protest of his own accord because he had learned from personal experience about the importance of preserving mangroves to protect the environment. [READ MORE](#)

Phulbari braces for shutdown

BANGLADESH - The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, and Power and Ports on Friday will enforce a daylong general strike in Phulbari on Saturday after authorities prevented it from staging protests. Leaders of the committee announced the fresh agitation programme from a meeting at Nimtoli intersection at Phulbari ignoring the ban the administration had imposed on public gatherings in the area. The indefinite embargo was slapped just before the committee was supposed to stage demonstrations against an order of the Ministry of Home Affairs for assisting British company Asia Energy. The committee has been protesting against open-pit coal mining in the district, and

demanding implementation of the 2006 Phulbari deal. [READ MORE](#)

AMERICAS

Mangrove conversion takes huge environmental toll



USA - Conversion of mangrove forests is taking a huge toll on coastal ecosystems, an international team of researchers said, warning that replacing tidal forest with shrimp farms and other forms of development is a bad economic tradeoff both short and long-term. “The benefits of this industry have too often been short lived due to poor planning with ponds being abandoned when pollution or disease take hold, leaving unproductive saline pools and depleted coastal fisheries,” said Hanneke Van Lavieren, a United Nations University scientist who was the lead author of the recent policy brief. “Such large-scale conversion has had major negative environmental impacts, including collapses in wild fisheries. In a region where fishing in and around mangroves is a critical activity providing food and income for millions of people, the socio-economic impacts of this conversion have been tremendous,” said Van Laviere, the coastal zones program officer at UNU’s Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health. “There is now a growing awareness of the importance of mangroves and government and community-led efforts are under way to restore or replant mangroves, and to improve legal systems to regulate future use,” she added. [READ MORE](#)

EUROPE

Erasmus Mundus Masters Program in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems

BELGIUM - Laboratory of Systems Ecology and Resource Management at Université Libre de Bruxelles announced the official launch of the the Erasmus Mundus Masters Program in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems – TROPIMUNDO and of its online Information and Application Module. This is a unique international Masters program with mobility to two European countries and an entire semester in the tropics focusing on rainforests and wetlands, mangrove forests or coral reefs. The European Commission provides a limited number of full scholarships. Multiple specialisations are included. TROPIMUNDO students will be able to concentrate on botany, zoology and integrative ecosystem approaches. Specialisation is possible on the evolution of tropical flora and vegetation, on faunistic assemblages, on informatics tools to treat and manage biodiversity data and databases (biogeographical, genetical, geographical information systems), and more. [READ MORE](#)

LAST WORD

Reaction to Our Lead Story

Regarding the assertion "Countries such as Australia and Brazil had been good at preserving their mangroves while nations including Indonesia, China and Vietnam had lost big tracts and projects to restore them needed more support" found in your article Mangroves Under Threat From Shrimp Farms, this is NOT true, at least for Brazil. Through recent amendments (May 2012) to the Brazilian Forest Code, our government has just a granted shrimp industry with up to 35% of our mangroves (please see enclosed refs) to be converted into ponds. Brazil shelters the 2nd - 3rd largest mangrove area in the world and such acts represent a threat for climate mitigation policies and international agreements.

Additionally, we did nothing to restore our coastal wetlands. A recent review on mangrove restoration revealed that if all efforts had worked out one hundred percent (which did not happen), we therefore would have restored between 1994 (first planting) and 2012 an area equivalent to two and a half soccer fields!!

As you can see, Brazil is very far away from being a role model in wetlands management.

Best,

André Rovai

REF 1 - Carbon mismanagement in Brazil - NATURE CLIMATE CHANGE | VOL 2 | NOVEMBER 2012

REF 2 - Protecting Brazil's Coastal Wetlands - SCIENCE VOL 335 30 MARCH 2012

*~ If you'd like to have the **last word** on this or any other mangrove related topic, please send us your submission for upcoming newsletters. We'll choose one per issue to have "the last word". While we can't promise to publish everyone's letter, we do encourage anyone to post comments on our Blog at [www. mangroveactionproject.blogspot.com](http://www.mangroveactionproject.blogspot.com)*

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