



United Nations

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Sustainable agriculture and land management in the context of climate change

The *Third Regional Implementation Meeting on Sustainable Development* is taking place at the Palais des Nations, Room XIX in Geneva on 28-29 January.

Delegates representing Governments, intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and civil society organizations will discuss progress made in implementing sustainable development goals in the areas of agriculture, land management, desertification and drought. They will address particular obstacles encountered and major breakthroughs made in the UNECE region.

The meeting is also expected to touch upon the important linkages between climate change and agriculture and between climate change, desertification and drought that affect large parts of the UNECE region, in particular the Northern Mediterranean subregion, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Discussions on agriculture will address questions like how to meet the growing demand for agricultural commodities while protecting natural resources, the issue of agricultural subsidies and the competing interests between food security and bioenergy production.

Looking beyond the UNECE region, delegates will furthermore assess the support of donor countries from the UNECE region for sustainable agriculture and rural development in Africa in the context of climate change, and review obstacles and possible next steps to be taken to strengthen cooperation between these regions.

The aim of the Meeting is to prepare the contribution from the UNECE region to the 16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16, 5-16 May in New York).

The two previous Regional Implementation meetings have raised awareness of countries and stakeholders of the UNECE region's particular concerns and contributions to the global work. In addition, they highlighted the need to give increasing importance to the implementation of commitments on the ground, including on the local level. The CSD process has also benefited from relevant regional work, including, for example, in the UNECE context, the work on public participation under the Aarhus Convention and on education for sustainable development. ❖



Myrdal Lecture

Date and venue:

Tuesday, 12 February at 4 p.m. in room XIX of the Palais des Nations
Entrance: Pregny Gate, Door 40

Date et lieu:

Mardi 12 février à 16 heures
en salle XIX du Palais des Nations
Entrée: Portail de Pregny, Porte 40

For security reasons, please arrive at Pregny Gate by 3.30 p.m. at the latest. Those without a valid badge allowing entry into the UN will need to register in advance. A registration form can be obtained by calling +41 (0) 22 917 4444, or e-mailing info.ece@unece.org or online at <http://www.unece.org> (registration form).

Pour des raisons de sécurité, il est recommandé de se présenter au Portail de Pregny au plus tard à 15 h 30. Les personnes qui ne possèdent pas de badge permettant d'accéder au Palais des Nations sont priées de s'inscrire à l'avance. Un formulaire d'inscription peut être obtenu en téléphonant au +41 (0) 22 917 4444, par e-mail à info.ece@unece.org, ou en ligne <http://www.unece.org> (formulaire d'inscription).

The Lectures are named in honour of Gunnar Myrdal, first Executive Secretary of the UNECE (1947-1957), who himself received the Nobel Prize in economics in 1974. This new series is devoted to major international economic problems. The next Myrdal lecture, given by H.E. Mr. Sergei V. Lavrov, will be held on 12 February.

Douglass C. North

Douglass Cecil North, of the United States of America, gave the first lecture in the new series, on "The role of institutions in economic development".

Professor North is the co-recipient (with Robert William Fogel) of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Economics and the Spencer T. Olin Professor in Arts and Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis.

In this Myrdal lecture Professor North argued that the considerable gaps in real income per capita between richer and poorer countries reflect the quality of their institutions, which he defines as the formal rules (property rights, rule of law, etc.) and informal constraints (beliefs, social norms, traditions) that together with their enforcement characteristics shape human interaction. ❖



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Alberto Alesina



The lecture of Professor Alberto Alesina of Italy discussed why the UNECE countries have chosen rather different models of welfare state and, more generally, alternative policies to fight poverty. In particular, the lecture focused upon why the American welfare system is less generous than the typical European one, emphasizing the causes and implications of these differences. It also explored variations in welfare policies within west European countries by comparing their effectiveness, successes and failures.

Professor Alesina is the Nathaniel Ropes Professor of Political Economy at Harvard University and served as Chairman of the Department of Economics from 2003-2006. He obtained his PhD from Harvard in 1986. He is also a member of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Centre for Economic Policy Research. ❖

Pascal Lamy



The lecture delivered by Pascal Lamy of France focused on global governance: lessons from Europe.

Former Trade Commissioner of the European Commission, he has served as Director-General of the World Trade Organization since September 2005.

While Trade Commissioner in the European Commission, 1999 to 2004, Mr. Lamy demonstrated a great sympathy for the interests of both transition and developing countries. He also worked to ensure that the EU placed significant emphasis on integrating less-advantaged countries into the services-led global economy. He was an advocate for increased cooperation between the EU and the UN. In 2002 he addressed the first UNECE International Forum on Trade Facilitation. ❖

Joseph E. Stiglitz



Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz, of the United States of America, 2001 Nobel Laureate in Economics, delivered a lecture on the topic "The Process of European Integration and the Future of Europe".

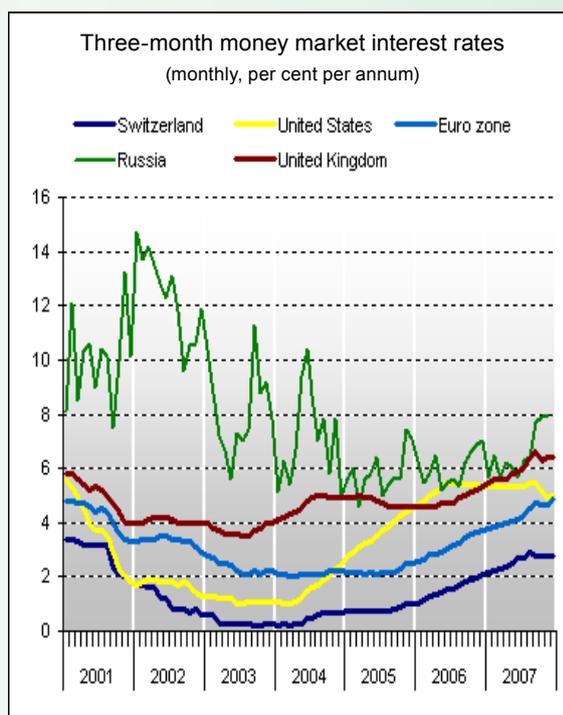
Professor Stiglitz helped create a new branch of economics, "The Economics of Information," exploring the consequences of information asymmetries and pioneering such pivotal concepts as adverse selection and moral hazard, which have now become standard tools not only of theorists, but also of policy analysts. He has also made major contributions to macro-economics and monetary theory, to development economics and trade theory, to public and corporate finance, to the theories of industrial organization and rural organization, and to the theories of welfare economics and of income and wealth distribution. ❖

Facts and Figures

Short-term interest rates up to seven-year highs in 2007

In the second half of 2007, three-month money market interest rates (represented in the chart by monthly averages of daily quotes for inter-bank loans), had risen to their highest levels in seven years in the Euro area, the United Kingdom and the United States; they edged up in Switzerland and Russia as well. The short-term interest rate dynamics in the last months of 2007 was influenced markedly by the response of major central banks to the distress on financial markets in North America and Europe.

The credit market turmoil that began in August 2007 has raised concerns about the willingness of banks to lend money to consumers and businesses, and also about tightening of inter-bank lending. The responses of the central banks to the credit crunch varied: the Federal Reserve of the United States cut its target for the federal funds rate by one percentage point during the September-December period and the Bank of England lowered a similar target by 25 basis points (in December 2007), while the European Central Bank kept its key interest rates unchanged and the Swiss National Bank raised its target rate by 25 basis points in September. In December 2007, five major banks – the Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank and the Swiss, Canadian and British central banks announced joint action to ease liquidity tensions. ❖



Source: UNECE statistical database (www.unece.org/stats/data) and national Central Banks.