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MAIN HIGHLIGHT

World Bank Updates Global Economic Forecasts (March 31, 2009)

As Global Economy Deteriorates, World Bank Predicts Sharply Slower Growth in Developing World In 2009; Weak Recovery in 2010

GDP growth in the developing world will slow to a projected 2.1 per cent in 2009 from 5.8 per cent in 2008, according to World Bank (WB) estimates. The Bank has more than halved its November 2008 projection of 4.4 per cent growth in developing countries in 2009, reflecting the rapid deterioration of global financial and economic conditions.

The new *Global Economic Prospects* update also notes that global growth is expected to contract by 1.7 per cent this year. This would be the first decline in world output since World War II. GDP is projected to decline by 3 per cent in OECD countries and by 2 per cent in other high-income economies.

The World Bank's baseline forecast predicts growth momentum to turn weakly positive in 2010 as financial-sector consolidation, lost wealth and knock-on effects from the financial crisis continue to dampen economic activity. However, the pace and timing of the recovery is still highly uncertain.

"Across the developing world, we see that conditions of recession are affecting the poorest people, making them even more vulnerable than before to sudden shocks—but also reducing opportunities available to them, and frustrating their hopes," said Justin Yifu Lin, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, Development Economics "This could reverse years of progress, and is nothing less than an emergency for development."

Additional Info:

[Click here to read the press release and press report on the WB website.](#)

[Download the full report here.](#)

[Click here to visit the WB website.](#)

The upcoming *Global Monitoring Report 2009*, published annually by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and due to be released in late April, will assess the impact of the crisis on the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

CLIMATE CHANGE

News & Commentaries

- 'More greenhouse gases to be incorporated in a new climate treaty', 31st March 2009, *AFP News*
- 'Forest management could create millions of new "green jobs"', 11 March 2009, *The Hindu News*
- 'Global warming has melted Swiss-Italian border away', 24th March, in *United Nations' News*
- 'Climate change: the policy gaps', 31st March, *Guardian.co.uk*
- 'What to Expect from the New US Administration #6: Big Challenges to Climate Change', February 10, *AJISS-Commentary*

Articles

- FAO, *Adapting to Climate Change*, an international journal of forestry and forest industries, Vol. 60, 2009/1-2.

This special double issue addresses how forests and forest-dependent people will adapt to climate change

- IPCC Technical Paper VI on Climate Change and Water.
- UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2009.

This newly released report entitled 'Addressing Triple threats to Development' analyses how the financial, food/fuel and climate change challenges have affected Asia and the Pacific and considers ways of addressing them.

- FAO, The State of the World's Forests 2009.

The 2009 edition of this biennial report takes the theme 'Society, forests and forestry: adapting for the future'. This report looks at on the status of forests, recent major policy and institutional developments and key issues concerning the forest sector.

- UNHABITAT, Climate Change: Are Cities Really to Blame?
- State of the World's Cities 2008/2009 – Harmonious Cities

This report reveals that as cities grow in size and population, harmony among the spatial, social and environmental aspects of a city and between their inhabitants becomes of paramount importance. This harmony hinges on two key pillars: equity and sustainability.

- Climate Resilient Cities- a Primer on Reducing Vulnerabilities to Disaster (updated version).

New 'how-to' guide helps cities reduce their vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

FOOD SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'Inland aquaculture: Can rice-fish farming provide food security in Bangladesh?', 9 March, Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific
- 'Eliminating Drastic Food Price Spikes – a three pronged approach for reserves', March 2009, International Food Policy Research Institute
- 'MYANMAR: Rohingya face rising food insecurity', 1 April, IRIN
- 'AFGHANISTAN: Food aid not reaching most vulnerable women', children, 31 March, IRIN

Papers & Reports

- FAO, the State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2008.

The report presents a world review of fisheries and aquaculture, including trends and statistics. It highlights issues debated worldwide and profiles future scenarios with a view to providing the most current global view and perspective on fisheries and aquaculture. This issue features some of the aspects of fisheries and aquaculture that may receive increasing attention including climate change and food security.

- Edward R. Boyle, 'Feed People First: How biofuels are contributing to global food shortages and price increases', Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, The North Korean Food Situation: Too Early to Break Out the Champagne.
- Edward H. Allison, et al, 'Vulnerability of national economies to the impacts of climate change on fisheries'.

- Gerald C. Nelson, 'Agriculture and Climate Change: An Agenda for Negotiation in Copenhagen'.
- Joachim von Braun, 'Overcoming the World Food and Agriculture Crisis through Policy Change and Science'.
- Miguel Robles, Maximo Torero, and Joachim von Braun, 'When Speculation Matters'.

Useful Links

- CGIAR Challenge Program on Water for Food (CPWF).

CPWF is an international, multi-institutional research initiative with a strong emphasis on North-South and South-South partnerships. The initiative brings together research scientists, development specialists, and river basin communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America to create and disseminate international public goods (IPGs) that improve the productivity of water in river basins in ways that are pro-poor, gender equitable and environmentally sustainable.

- Australian Development Gateway – Agriculture section.

This section aims to provide a range of practical resources pertaining to Australia's efforts in food security - including situation reports & early warning, emergency relief and food aid, food supply, and international cooperation.

- ASEAN Food Security Information System.

A web-based facility for storing and access of sub-national agricultural statistical data files from the country source. National focal points are responsible for maintaining the database.

Events

- IFPRI 2020 Panel Discussion: Securing a Place for Agriculture at the International Climate Change Negotiations, Washington DC, US, 27 March 2009.
- World Agricultural Forum 2009 Asia Roundtable: Balancing the Agricultural Bottom Line, Phuket, Thailand, 8-10 March 2009.

ENERGY SECURITY

News & Reports

- 'Oil prices need to rise to drive production: IEA', *Business Times Singapore*, 27 March 2009.

IEA chief economist Dr. Fatih Birol highlighted that, given the number of energy projects worldwide which had been cancelled or delayed, higher oil prices are needed to stimulate investments in traditional and renewable fuels. He pointed out that, as present oil prices hovered at US \$40-50 a barrel, many Middle East oil producers do not perceive that to suffice higher investments. However, Dr. Birol noted that oil production in the Middle East is three to four times cheaper than in other areas, such as the North Sea and Gulf of Mexico. As such, to spur production in order to allow supply to satisfy demand as soon as the global economy recovers, oil price hikes are essential.

- IEA to Study Impact of Stimulus Packages on Energy, Dow Jones, 24 March 2009.

Richard Jones, deputy executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), said on the sidelines of an oil seminar in London that the IEA plans to study the effects of economic packages unveiled worldwide on energy. Mr. Jones also expressed concerns that oil markets could tighten substantially if the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) adheres to its production cuts, saying that 'there is a real risk that supply growth may lag the (demand) recovery and lead to substantially higher prices... possibly as early as this year.'

- 'ANALYSIS – After pause, Japan nuclear power drive regains speed', *Reuters News*, 17 March 2009.

In the latest sign that Japan is emerging from years of uncertainty over nuclear energy, Tokyo has renewed its endeavour to dramatically expand the atomic power sector. This comes with a recent permission to restart the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant – the world's biggest – after it was shut down as a result of a minor radioactive leakage nuclear power plant during an earthquake in July 2007. This renewed nuclear power drive would catapult Japan to the No. 2 position in terms of global nuclear energy production, and help ensure long-term energy security while curbing greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to global warming.

- 'Sentiment toward nuclear power plant improving: study', *Reuters News*, 17 March 2009.

According to the Multinational Nuclear Power Survey, performed by New York-based Accenture, a global management consulting and technology firm working with the nuclear industry, 88 percent of more than 10,500 respondents were in favour of reducing reliance on fossil fuels to improve energy security while curbing carbon dioxide emissions. More than a third of them also opined that nuclear power could play a major role in reducing fossil fuel usage. About 37 percent of those surveyed said they were 'more supportive' as opposed to 11 percent 'less supportive' towards increasing nuclear energy utilisation.

- 'Over US\$6 trillion worth of investment needed for new energy infrastructure', *ChannelNewsAsia*, 4 March 2009.

Despite the global economic gloom, the 120 industry experts and potential investors who gathered at the inaugural Asia Forum for Clean Energy in Singapore concluded that the environmental sector is tipped to flourish. In all, a projected US\$6 trillion worth of investment would be needed for new energy infrastructure over the next 25 years. Clean energy business projects were presented by 11 companies at the forum, with initiatives including wind and bio-fuel energy development. Such projects could potentially reduce dependence on foreign imported oil, especially in the case of Southeast Asia.

Publications

- Timothy C. Hassett with Karin L. Borgerson, 'Harnessing Nature's Power: Deploying and Financing On-Site Renewable Energy', World Resources Institute (WRI) Report, March 2009, 1-51.

In recent years, in response to volatile energy pricing and calls to combat climate change, many large US corporations, such as Wal-Mart, had begun utilizing renewable energy systems at their headquarters. However, many companies have yet to take advantage of the incentives available for investing in on-site renewable energy, as well as the opportunities such investments entail. This WRI report argues that certain renewable energy sources, such as large-scale wind power, are already economically competitive with traditional energy (i.e. fossil fuels), yet also allowing substantial savings in average utility rates. To help promote the scaling up of renewable energy usage in the United States in order to facilitate transition to a low-carbon and highly energy-efficient economy, the authors also outlined the incentives, as well as defined several objectives and risks commonly associated with on-site energy development to help corporations in their decision-making with respect to renewable energy systems.

- Jan Horst Keppler and Christian Schulke, 'Investing in the Energy Sector: An Issue of Governance', Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI), February 2009, pp. 1-39.

The author highlight the importance of national and international governance of energy investments as a means to ensure long-term energy security. In this report, they argue that the absence of global governance of FDI in the energy sector prevented the realisation of some necessary investments, since opportunities for upstream investments in energy-rich countries by foreign energy corporations were very limited. Without a global governance framework, foreign investors face discrimination. In addition, recent attempts to establish a multilateral and legally-binding framework for energy-related FDI had resulted in only limited success. The authors postulated that uncertainties revolving around the legal framework for energy investments could jeopardise the realisation of investments necessary for guaranteeing a sufficient level of energy production to meet global needs.

WATER SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'With fresh water resources becoming scarcer worldwide due to population growth and climate change, a growing movement is working to make access to clean water a basic universal human right'. , 20 March, AlterNet.org
- Water Rights Activists Blast World Water Forum as 'Corporate Trade Show to Promote Privatization', March 23, AlterNet.org
- 'Earth is running dry and Istanbul water consensus aims to stop it', 23 March, AFP

Announcements

- The Water for Life Decade, 2005 – 2015 (ongoing)

The United Nations General Assembly, in December 2003, proclaimed the years 2005 to 2015 as the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life'. The primary goal of the 'Water for Life' Decade is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015.

Conferences, Seminars, Symposiums

- 5th World Water Forum

Over 25,000 participants took part in the 5th World Water Forum, from March 16th to 22nd in Istanbul, Turkey making it the world's biggest ever water-related event. The Forum works to put water firmly on the international agenda.

- World Water Day - 22 March 2009

On March 22, World Water Day is held to highlight the importance of freshwater and how to manage water sustainably. In 2009, under the theme 'Shared Water - Shared Opportunities', transboundary water is in focus.

- World Water Week

16-22 August 2009, Stockholm, Sweden. Hosted and organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the World Water Week in Stockholm has been the annual focal point for the planet's water issues since 1991. In 2009, the theme will be 'Accessing Water for the Common Good' with a special focus on transboundary waters.

- The First Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 5th World Water Forum

27 June 2009, Singapore

HEALTH SECURITY

News

- Teen Binge Drinking: What Do UK Professionals Say?

England's Chief Medical Officer has advised that people under 15 should avoid alcohol altogether, and those from ages 15-17 should drink alcohol only under the supervision of an adult. According to the latest government estimates, over 360,000 11-15 year olds get drunk each week in the UK, putting young people at risk to liver damage, depression, damage to brain development, and long-term drinking problems.

- Nigeria: Fighting Lethal Lassa Fever

An outbreak of Lassa fever in Nigeria has so far claimed eight lives since February. Over 93 cases of the infectious disease have been recorded so far. The fever is characterised as an acute viral hemorrhagic condition transmitted through contact with the urine or faeces of rodents, especially rats and shrews. Lassa fever can also be transmitted through direct contact with the bodily fluids and faeces

of an infected person or through airborne particles

- Synthetic Biology Can Help Extend Anti-malaria Drug Effectiveness

Studies have demonstrated that synthetic biology may be used in the production of artemisinin, an anti-malarial agent, and that it may help in increasing both the efficiency of production and the effectiveness of anti-malarial drugs.

- Avian Influenza Alert – WHO

The WHO's Influenza reports are listed, with the most recent dated to 11 March, detailing a case of H5N1 in Egypt, where the patient had been handling dead and infected poultry. There are no cases of local transmission reported as of the latest report.

Articles

- Obama Allocates Funds for Health-care Priorities

The Obama administration has listed out budget priorities for health in its economic stimulus package and budget bill. Among the concerns listed are HIV/AIDS prevention, Medicaid and autism research. US \$19 billion has also been allotted to enable the development of electronic health records, with the goal of ensuring that all Americans have electronic records by 2014.

- Stem-cell Experts Raise Concerns about Medical Tourism

Concerns have been growing that stem-cell treatment, when availed in countries with unlicensed practitioners or lacking in legal guidelines, could result in adverse side effects. The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR), in late 2008, released guidelines for patients who are seeking stem-cell treatments from unlicensed doctors overseas in increasing numbers. Treatments utilizing stem cell technology are still in clinical trials, but some doctors and hospitals have offered experimental treatments, which resulted in serious side effects in some patients.

- Royal Society Urges Integration of Human and Veterinary Medicine

Noting the increase in infectious diseases worldwide, a group of researchers and health experts from the Royal Society are urging the integration of human and veterinary medicine at the subnational, national, and international levels. The cooperative research umbrella could cover technical expertise, research, and funding for the study of infectious diseases, and provide a network for information sharing.

- Health and Foreign Policy: Vital Signs

The volatile international system rapidly shifts the world's attention from one issue to the next. Health issues are not immune to this, as even rising awareness of bioterrorism and rampant viruses such as H5N1 compete for attention with other issues such as climate change or the financial meltdown. How then can health issues rise to the foreground of international discourse? This article discusses the obstacles and challenges that need to be overcome to allow health issues to assume primary importance.

Events

- Ministerial Meeting of High M/XDR-TB Burden Countries, Date: 1-3 April 2009, Place: Beijing, China

High-level ministers from countries that are highly affected by M/XDR-TB have been invited to meet by the Chinese government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to build consensus and commitment to fight this special form of TB and to develop strategic national 5-year plans to ensure the resilience of their public health systems.

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

World Water Development Report (WWDR)

The latest instalment of the 3rd UN World Water Development Report was released at the 5th World

Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey on March 16, 2009.

The World Water Development Report (WWDR) is the United Nation's flagship report on water released every three years in conjunction with the World Water Forum. It provides a comprehensive review of the state of the world's freshwater resources. The reports aims to:

- provide decision-makers with the tools to implement sustainable use of our water.
- provide a mechanism for monitoring changes in the resource and its management and tracking progress towards achieving targets, particularly those of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- offer best practices as well as in-depth theoretical analyses to help stimulate ideas and actions for better stewardship in the water sector.

About the Report

'Water in Changing World' addresses a number of themes including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), groundwater, biodiversity, water and migration, water and infrastructure, bio-fuels, etc. It also includes valuable data and graphs on water availability, water use and distribution. (349 pages)

Accompanying Case Study Volume

'Facing the Challenges' includes 20 case studies from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, where conditions of water-related stress and socio-economic settings vary widely. The case studies provide an in-depth analysis of the state of freshwater resources and related challenges that directly affect the livelihoods of people in the societies covered. (52 pages)

Previous World Water Development Reports

- 1st UN World Water Development Report: 'Water for People, Water for Life,' was launched on World Water Day (22 March 2003) at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan.

This edition laid the foundation for subsequent editions, concentrating essentially on evaluating what progress has been made, and not made, since the Rio Summit and on developing effective assessment methodologies. The Report encompasses a broad range of components, focusing on human stewardship of freshwater, that complex aggregation of policies, legislation, social programmes, economic approaches and management strategies through which we seek to achieve water sustainability.

- 2nd UN World Water Development Report: 'Water, a shared responsibility' was launched on World Water Day (22 March 2006) at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City, Mexico.

The Report builds on the conclusions of the 1st United Nations World Water Development Report 'Water for People, Water for Life' published in 2003. It presents a comprehensive picture of freshwater resources in all regions and most countries of the world as it tracks progress towards the water-related targets of the UN Millennium Development Goals and examines a range of key issues including population growth and increasing urbanization, changing ecosystems, food production, health, industry and energy, as well as risk management, valuing and paying for water and increasing knowledge and capacity. Sixteen case studies look at typical water resource challenges and provide valuable insights into different facets of the water crisis and management responses.

Finally, the report outlines a set of conclusions and recommendations to guide future action and encourage sustainable use, productivity and management of our increasingly scarce freshwater resources.

Additional information

- The full World Water Development Report can be download via this link ([click here](#)).
- More information on international water conventions can be found at the World Water Council website. ([click here](#))
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s Water Portal

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 30th Session of the IPCC, Antalya, Turkey 21 - 23 April 2009.

The focus of this meeting will be on the future of the IPCC, in particular the scoping of the 5th Assessment Report. The Panel is also invited to consider the outcome of the Scoping Meeting for a possible Special Report on 'Extreme events and disasters: managing the risks', and of the Expert Meeting on 'Alternative common metrics to calculate the CO₂ equivalence of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases'.

- The World Bank Group's Energy Week 2009: Energy, Development and Climate Change, Washington DC, US, 31 March - 2 April 2009
- FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) World Forest Week 2009, Rome, Italy, 16 – 20 March 2009.
- BioEnergy Forum 2009, 28-29 April 2009, Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore.

Attended by speakers from corporate, government and research organisations dealing with bio-energy and agriculture, this forum will showcase topical presentations and tackle issues and opportunities in the bio-energy value chain. The event will also highlight the agriculture industry's potential for bio-energy production, as well as other related issues.

- Financing Renewable Energy Conference: Using Tax Credits to Finance Solar, Wind and Other Renewable Sources, 30 April – 1 May 2009, Hotel Nikko San Francisco, San Francisco, California, United States of America.

Organised by the Novogradac & Company LLP, a San Francisco-based national consulting and certified public accounting firm as well as member of the American Council on Renewable Energy, this conference shall explore the prospects for renewable energy tax credit programs. The agenda will include discussions of developer's perspectives on the solar energy market, as well as tax equity market updates, using the US solar energy industry as the theme. ([click here to see brochure](#))

- 17th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD - 17) New York, USA - 4 - 15 May 2009.

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was established by the UN General Assembly in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit. The Commission is responsible for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The upcoming CSD - 17 is a policy session focusing on the following thematic issues: agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa.

- The First Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 5th World Water Forum, 27 June 2009, Singapore.
- Water for Food Conference, 9-11 June 2009 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

About Us

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies is a research centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Please visit the Centre's website at www.rsis.edu.sg/nts/home.html, for more information or email us at NTS_Centre@ntu.edu.sg.
