

Editors Column

We are pleased to bring you the October edition of our company newsletter. Regular features include information on upcoming world environmental days and events, local environmentally related news and an Environmental Legislation Corner.

The world environmental days featured in this edition are World Habitat Day and World Animal Day. Also included is information on the COP17 UN Climate Change Convention which will be held in Durban later this year.

We welcome your comments and environmental contributions which you may kindly send to The Editors on:

infor@blackcrystal.co.zw

Thank you and happy reading!
Chiyedza and Clara



Black Crystal Consulting is one of Zimbabwe's leading reputable companies offering a quality service in environmental and socioeconomic consultancy services. Black Crystal Consulting believes in ***caring for the environment beyond today*** to ensure that biodiversity is maintained and that natural resources are not depleted for the next generation.

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World Habitat Day

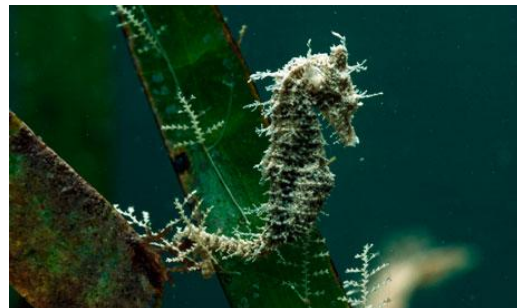
The first Monday of October has been set aside by the United Nations for the commemoration of world habitat day. It was first celebrated in 1986. The government of Mexico hosts the global celebrations this year; it will be celebrated on the 3rd of October.

The purpose of the day is to reflect on the condition of our cities and towns and the basic human right to adequate shelter. It also aims to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the habitat of future generations.

The theme for this year is cities and climate change. The UN chose this theme because climate change is fast becoming the world's number one environmental problem. Indeed, no-one today can really foresee the predicament in which a town or city will find itself in 10, 20 or 30 years time. With most human beings now dwelling in the cities we should bear in mind that cities play a larger role in influencing climate change.

Did You Know?

- The hourly destruction of an estimated 240 acres of natural habitat is directly attributable to the growth in human populations.



A dwarf seahorse is mainly found in the Bahamas in the United States of America. The species is at risk because of habitat loss.

This day is celebrated annually on the 4th of October. It was started in Florence, Italy in 1931 as a convention of ecologists highlighting the plight of endangered species. The 4th of October was chosen as the day to celebrate world animal day because it was the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. It is intended as a day of celebration for anyone who cares about animals.

Mission Statement of World Animal Day:

- To celebrate animal life in all its forms
- To celebrate humankind's relationship with the animal kingdom
- To acknowledge the diverse roles that animals play in our lives – from being our companions, supporting and helping us, to bringing a sense of wonder into our lives
- To acknowledge and be thankful for the way in which animals enrich our lives

Legislation Corner

Current animal welfare legislation in Zimbabwe falls under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (2001) which, together with the Parks and Wildlife Act (1996, revised 2001) is administered by the Ministry of Environment.

The international principles of animal welfare known as the 'Five Freedoms' demand that all animals are guaranteed:

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
2. Freedom from discomfort - by providing a suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behavior - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals' own kind.

5. Freedom from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions that avoid mental suffering.

Veterinary regulations and requirements (vaccinations, movement permits, drugs, treatments etc) fall under the Department of Veterinary Services in the Ministry of Agriculture.

FIRE A BURNING CONCERN!!!

Of the elements, water, earth and wind, fire was the easiest to recreate and to control. There are many folklores and tales as to how mankind first learned about fire and if one is to delve deeper in the science of fossil record, it states that the first wild fire occurred approximately 420 million years ago, as the levels of atmospheric oxygen rose thanks to the increase of combustible vegetation. However, even after all these millions of years, fire still retains that wild and uncontrollable quality as it still manages to ravage the earth's surface unchecked.

The ramifications of the damage relating to bush fires are expensive. With unmanaged burning the following can be expected: a reduction in biodiversity, destruction of flora and fauna, reduction of soil fertility, increased erosion and soil compaction that increases surface run-off, thereby decreasing infiltration. All this reduces water needed to recharge ground water sources.

The lack of knowledge and consequence is a primary result of uncontrolled wildfires. For example; poachers start fires in order to flush their targets from the safety of the vegetation. In resettled and communal areas, people smoke out bees using grass torches to get to the honey, but are not always careful to properly put out the fires. At bus terminuses, passengers start little fires to warm themselves whilst waiting, but often board buses without dousing them. Veld fires

can also be ignited by burning cigarette stubs carelessly thrown out of moving vehicles by drivers or passengers. During the winter months many resettled farmers use burning as a method to clear their fields but often do not stop the fires as they move further out of their boundaries. **Only in extreme cases are veld fires induced by natural factors like lightning.**

In a country like Zimbabwe, where we have a high percentage of combustible biomass it seemed sensible to have a legislation that relates to the use and control of fire. Hence the Forest Act was first written in 1949 which forbids people from burning, growing or standing vegetation on any land without prior notice to the occupants of all adjoining land and the police.

Extract from Tikki Hywood article

Veld fires are lowly becoming a permanent environmental problem in Zimbabwe and are a cause for concern. Aside from destroying vegetation and homesteads, veld fires also contribute to air pollution. The smoke pollutes the air which then has potential negative health impacts especially for the human respiratory system. According to the forest commission statistics, a total of 7 500 fire incidences were experienced country wide as at October 2010, and 950,905 ha of natural vegetation was destroyed.

More Statistics on Fire

At least 5000 ha of gazetted forests have been destroyed this year alone since the set of the veld fire season in May in Zimbabwe.

Last year 110 000 ha of gazetted forests were destroyed by the fire. On a tragic note 21 people lost their lives in the fires country wide.

An average 96 691 ha of land per province were burnt in the 2010 veld fire compared to 2009 which had 95 081 hectares

Fire is not the only factor contributing to increased air pollution – of increasing concern is the high level of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in Zimbabwe and globally:

Congratulations to Sharon Waterworth

Sharon has recently been awarded Chartered Environmentalist (C.Env) status from the Institute of Environmental Science in London, UK.

This is an achievement that validates the quality of her work and endorses her professionalism. It also shows her dedication and commitment to sustainable development.

On POPs and PCBs

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management has recently been publishing advertisements announcing that they are conducting inventories of the above items. These are highly toxic chemicals that remain in the environment for long periods of time before breaking down into less harmful substances, and whose concentrations accumulate in the fatty tissue of human beings and other living organisms over time.

Globally most of these chemicals have been banned for use, or have been targeted for elimination under the Stockholm Convention, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory. The Ministry statement says the United Nations, through the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agricultural Organisation is providing financial assistance for the destruction of these chemicals. **One of the key requirements for qualifying for**

the assistance is for a country to produce accurate inventories of the quantities of PCBs, Obsolete Pesticide Stocks and Unintentionally-Produced POPs that it has.

The purpose of these inventories is to fulfill a requirement for accessing funding for destroying the unwanted chemicals. The Ministry is seeking the cooperation of organisations that may have unwanted stocks of these harmful chemicals in providing the required information during the inventory process, leading to a win-win situation for everyone. The statement says organisations which may be affected include: companies with electrical transformers; organisations that stock pesticides; Local authorities; organisations /companies whose activities and processes involve the use of elevated temperatures; organisations which operate landfills/dumpsites; Mines and mineral processing companies; and the chemical industry.

Those who are able to provide the required information are requested to contact the POPs Office in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management, in order to get the exact details of the information that is required.

Contact the POPs Office on: (04) 701681-3 or (0773) 341112;
Email: popzim@iwayafrica.co.zw

United Nations COP17 Climate Change talks in Durban

The 17th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be held in Durban, South Africa from 28 November to 9 December 2011. The Conference of the Parties (COP) will bring together representatives of the world's governments, international organizations and civil society together to discuss climate change. Since 1995 the COP have met

annually to assess progress in dealing with climate change.

A key issue in the COP17 talks in Durban is global negotiations for a new binding agreement which will replace the Kyoto Protocol - an agreement signed in 1997 that legally binds almost 40 developed countries to emission cuts from 2008-2012 in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - which expires at the end of 2012.

Participants planing to attend from Zimbabwe include a top level Government delegation, representatives from private companies, NGO's and members from the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSDZ) Technical Committee on Climate Change.

This is the first time that a COP meeting will be held so close to Zimbabwe thereby offering an opportunity for us to initiate networking and discussion of potential viable interventions and identify possible partners in implementing climate change mitigation measures.

Sharon Waterworth, from Black Crystal, is a member of the BCSDZ and explains that business has an important role to play in climate change adaptation and mitigation. These actions can be implemented through Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs). To this end the Committee is working on a concept paper for NAMAs that will feed into the National Climate Change Policy and be presented at COP17. The committee is working closely with companies to gather their views and technical input so that the BCSDZ can best represent its membership at the World Business Initiative sessions being held at the conference.