

Inside The Earth Institute

a monthly e-newsletter

November 2003

Message from Jeff Sachs



Real Video (14:34) 

Quicktime Video (14:34) 

The November video message from Jeff Sachs focuses on the ground-breaking work of Earth Institute scientists related to climate change. Jeff talks in-depth about last week's visit of Vice Admiral Lautenbacher, Ph.D., USN (Ret.), Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of NOAA, to the Earth Institute and the Lamont-Doherty campus. Lautenbacher announced a major new initiative between NOAA and LDEO called CICAR, which funds activities in climate sciences, up to \$50 million over 5 years.

In addition, Jeff announces Steve Zebiak's appointment as director of IRI, recognizing him as the most "powerful" candidate out of a worldwide search.

Also highlighted is an important fisheries conference hosted by the Earth Institute that brought together leading marine ecologists, fisheries economists, oceanographers, and nutritionists to discuss "the dangerous state of the world's fisheries." President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson of Iceland was the keynote speaker.

Jeff emphasizes the importance of the waste-to-energy conference put on by Nick Themelis, director of the Earth and Engineering Center. Last month, Nick and a representative from the Mailman School of Public Health discussed the pros and cons of waste-to-energy as a way to deal with urban refuse.

Jeff mentions a major award to CEISIN from NASA of \$20 million over 5 years to support remote sensing research.

Lastly, he talks about the new M.A. in Climate and Society, with the first class of students targeted to begin September 2004, pending approval from the faculty. He invites everyone to get a preview of this program by

In the News

[International Herald Tribune -- November 12, 2003](#)

[The New York Times -- November 11, 2003](#)

In an article describing the growing interest at colleges and universities in Africa, Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute, was quoted.

[The Columbia Spectator, NY -- November 12, 2003](#)

An article describing a new M.A. in Climate and Society at Columbia University, now being considered for approval by the faculty senate, quotes several climate faculty and researchers on this unique educational program.

[The New York Times -- November 11, 2003](#)

In an article on the debate surrounding the timing of the next ice age, James A. Hansen, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, was quoted on the human population's impact on climate change.

[Geotimes -- November 7, 2003](#)

Researchers at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory recently published findings on synthetic aperture radar (SAR) polarimetry.

[more recently in the media](#)



Columbia Researchers Discover Currents Connecting Pacific and Indian Oceans Are Colder and Deeper Than Expected
Findings could change the way scientists understand inter-ocean and ocean-atmosphere dynamics that give rise to the annual Asian monsoon and El Niño



Iceland's President Cites Sustainability as Secret of Success
Speech at Fisheries Workshop Emphasizes Responsible Use of Ocean Resources

At an Earth Institute workshop on Sustainable Fisheries on November 12, 2003, President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson of Iceland constructed an inspiring case study of his country's success. Fishing is sometimes seen as a backwards, regional type of industry, but in Iceland it is the foundation of what has become an economy with one of the highest per capita income and life expectancy rates in the world. [more](#)

NOAA/Columbia University Establish Cooperative Institute For Climate Applications And Research

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Columbia University in Palisades, N.Y., have established a cooperative institute to study climate applications and research. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Columbia University recently was awarded a research grant for the [Cooperative Institute for Climate Applications and Research \(CICAR\)](#), to be headquartered at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. This five-year grant carries a funding ceiling of \$50 million from NOAA under a cooperative agreement for interdisciplinary climate modeling and applications activities. [more](#)

attending a lecture by Mark Cane, G. Unger Vetlesen Professor of Earth and Climate Science, on Wednesday, December 3, at Davis Auditorium at 4pm. Cane is a co-founder of IRI and the first scientist to accurately predict the weather phenomenon known as El Niño.



Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Visits the Earth Institute

Vice Admiral Lautenbacher, Ph.D., USN (Ret.), Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), met with members of the Earth Institute to discuss global observation research and development of new academic programs in Earth and environmental policy. [more](#)



Urban Sustainability Gets a Boost at CUBES Conference

Public policy for environmental conservation can be constructed explicitly to alleviate poverty, according to presenters from the CUBES-Capetown Urban Biosphere Group at the recent conference Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities. The October 29-30 conference was sponsored by the Columbia-UNESCO Joint Program on Biosphere and Society (CUBES), in partnership with the New York Academy of Sciences and UN-Habitat. Pictured above are two participants in the conference: His Worship, Mayor Kleist Sykes of Dar es Salaam, and Joseph Mokhoele, Acting Regional Environmental Health Practitioner, Khayelitsha Environmental Health Office, City of Cape Town Health Department. [more](#)

NASA Awards \$20 million to Columbia University to Support Use of Remote Sensing

The Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University's Earth Institute has received a five-year, \$20 million contract from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to operate the NASA

Scientists at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory uncover new information about currents connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This discovery may one day help climate modelers predict the intensity of the Asian monsoon or El Niño with greater accuracy and with more lead-time than is currently possible. [more](#)

Mark Cane to Lecture on Climate and Society December 3rd lecture provides opportunity to hear pioneer of climate forecasting

In the 1980s Mark Cane was the first scientist to accurately predict the weather phenomenon known as El Niño. Since then, his research has turned increasingly to climate's impact on human society in areas such as agriculture, air pollution, water management and health. On Wednesday, December 3, Cane will lecture on the lessons humans can learn from El Niño about adapting to climate variability, and how these might be applied to broader climate change trends. Cane's lecture is part of the Fall 2003 Earth Institute Science Lecture series. [more](#)

Upcoming Earth Institute Events

December 3, 2003: Dr. Mark Cane, G. Unger Vetlesen Professor of Earth and Climate Sciences, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, gives a lecture entitled: "Climate and Society," at Davis Auditorium, Morningside Heights, 4pm. [more](#)

December 9, 2003: Dr. Pedro Sanchez, Director, Tropical Agriculture, The Earth Institute at Columbia University, gives a lecture entitled: "Ending Hunger in Africa and the UN Millennium Goals," at the New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd Street, 6pm (please note this location is off campus). [more](#)



Conference on Dominican-American Relations Addresses Topics of Trade, Poverty, and Education

With more than 300 participants, including former Dominican Republic President Leonel Fernández (above, left), and Dr. Joaquin Vial from the Center on Globalization and Sustainable Development (above, right), the conference's presentations and discussions sparked fruitful and provocative interchange about development challenges both in the Dominican Republic and in the Dominican community overseas. [more](#)



Dr. Steve Zebiak Named Director General of IRI

Dr. Steve Zebiak has been named Director General of the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction (IRI), it was announced last week. Dr. Zebiak has been serving as Interim Director of the IRI for the past two years. He continues to serve as director of climate modeling and predictions research. [more](#)



Dr. Shahid Naeem, Expert in Biodiversity Research, Joins CERC and E3B

Dr. Shahid Naeem, an expert in biodiversity research, has joined the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation, and the Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology department. [more](#)

Two Students Report from Montreal CIESIN Meeting by Geoffrey Hockett and Zach Baker

"Taking Stock and Moving Forward" was the theme of last month's Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Research Community in Montreal, a conference principally sponsored and organized by the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), a unit of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. [more](#)

Comments and Suggestions

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Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC) in support of the application of remote sensing data in research and decision-making. [more](#)

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