Inside The Earth Institute a monthly e-newsletter

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Message from Jeff Sachs

Over the past three years the Millennium Project, which focuses research on identifying the operational priorities, organizational means of implementation, and financing structures necessary to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, has worked to devise a plan of implementation that will allow all developing countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals and thereby substantially improve the human condition by 2015. Several Earth Institute experts have been contributing their expertise to the Millennium Project as task force co-chairs, and in this video EI Director Jeffrey D. Sachs, who is special adviser to Kofi Annan and director of the Millennium Project, talks about the work of this project and the upcoming launch of the action plan in January, 2005.

Columbia to Launch Global Roundtable on Climate Change in 2005

High level stakeholders to work towards consensus on policies

Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Earth Institute, has announced the establishment of the Global Roundtable on Climate Change (GROCC), supported by a generous multi-million dollar gift from the Lenfest Foundation. GROCC will bring together over 100 high-level, critical stakeholders from all regions of the world in an attempt to fashion a new global consensus on core scientific, technological, and economic issues critical to shaping public policies on long-term climate change. more

The Anslope Expedition: Cruising the Antarctic

A Report From Gerd Krahmann, aboard the R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer: “For the first half of our cruise we headed to the Mertz Glacier region, several hundred miles to the west of our original work area, the northwestern Ross Sea. That diversion was due to heavy sea ice concentrations north of that area. This time we went along the original plan and after six days of crossing, we steamed into thick and dense sea ice. It took us another four days of breaking ice to reach the northern fringes of our work area. Unfortunately that was not all. A storm hit us shortly after we reached the region north of Cape Adare where satellite images had shown a “Polynya,” a region of open water within the sea ice.” more

In the News

The Al Franken Show — Air America Radio, December 8, 2004

Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Earth Institute, talks about the UN Millennium Project and its aim of ending poverty in 2015. Said Sachs, “About 3 million children will

Joel E. Cohen, Head of the Laboratory of Populations, Sings the Population Blues

The connection between warmer climate and more people is not accidental, and causation goes in both directions. What will the next 50 years bring for the human population? Joel E. Cohen, professor and Head of the Laboratory of Populations at the Earth Institute and Rockefeller University, brought his startling statistics to a packed house at the Cornelia Street Cafe in the West Village on November 7, 2004, where he also premiered some satirical songs and read from his book of scientific and mathematical jokes. This science/cabaret night was hosted by Roald Hoffmann, who won the 1981 Nobel Prize in chemistry.

Columbia Team Shows How Stratospheric Conditions Affect Weather

Three members of Columbia’s Department of Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics have used a simple climate model to demonstrate how the weather systems and storms we experience may be influenced by
Revolutionary Scientific Achievement Medal Awarded to Shackleton, Peltier

The Vetlesen Prize, considered among the most prestigious of earth sciences awards, was given this year to Professors Sir Nicholas Shackleton and W. Richard Peltier. The Vetlesen Prize is administered by Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and is granted by the G. Unger Vetlesen Foundation for revolutionary scientific achievements resulting in a clearer understanding of the Earth, its history, or its relationship to the universe. more

Ford Award Honors Carbon Cycle Pioneer Taro Takahashi

Ford Motor Company presented the Ford Award to Taro Takahashi, a geochemist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. Takahashi's research focuses on understanding what happens to industrial CO₂ released in the air and how it is affected by the complex interactions between ocean circulation, marine ecosystems, and land-sea-air processes. download pdf

Columbia University Scientists Named “Leaders In Environmental Studies” For Global Warming Research

Drew Shindell and Gavin Schmidt, both of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), have been named by Scientific American magazine as Research Leaders of the Year. Shindell and Schmidt have been instrumental in defining the human impact on climate change, and assessing the dangers of global warming. more

The SubSaharan Informer, December 3, 2004

An ambitious five-year accelerated health care program put forth by the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Health in Ethiopia is being supported by the newly formed Center for National Health Development in Ethiopia, part of the Earth Institute. download pdf of article

MSNBC, December 5, 2004

"We're learning fast, but part of what we're learning is the climate system is really complicated ... I don't think we'll ever make the kind of prediction [President George W.] Bush would want," said Wallace S. Broecker, a geochemist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. James Hansen, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, was also quoted.

Hard Beat News, November 24, 2004

Earth Institute Director Jeffrey D. Sachs underscored the importance of deploying technology to lower the costs of international money transfers and increase poor families' access to a wide variety of financial services.

Science Daily, November 23, 2004

Drs. James Hansen and Makiko Sato of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) suggest that avoidance of large climate change requires the global community to consider aggressive reductions in the emissions of both carbon dioxide and non-carbon dioxide gases called trace gases.

The New York Times, November 22, 2004

Steve Cohen, Director of the MPA Program in Environmental Science and Policy, comments on the Jets stadium dispute between Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and James Dolan, the head of Cablevision.

BBC Radio, November 17, 2004

Earth Institute scientists showed that dust from the Taklamakan Desert in China had been deposited in the French Alps, more than 20,000 kilometers away. Unpredictable dust events makes it extremely difficult to determine their impact on the Earth's natural systems.

The Economist, November 11, 2004

"Climate change, like the weather, can be patchy and you can get fooled unless you look at the whole picture," said Robin Bell, Doherty Senior Research Scientist at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

more recently in the media

Commentary: Our Energy Future: Learning on the Job

By Professors David Walker, Klaus Lackner and Roger Anderson

If China's increasing demand for oil to fuel its industrialization is the reason we are getting beaten up at the gas pumps now, get ready for a pummeling in the next few decades. The scope of the disaster will be inversely proportional to the quality and number of options we have in place when gasoline hits $10 a gallon at the pumps. The rate at which oil use tails off depends on the level of price pain and the speed at which we develop alternatives, but world oil production has peaked. Oil will not be the centerpiece it is today. The time for an action plan is now, and long overdue. more

Congress Spares NOAA's Budget From Deep Cuts in Some Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Lines

On December 8, 2004, a collection of nine spending bills covering virtually all of the Federal Government's domestic programs was finally signed into law. Funding for the Department of Commerce, including NOAA, is part of this package. The Bush Administration's budget request had called for deep cuts in some Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) research lines. In the final
International Council for Science (ICSU) at its 19th General Assembly, which took place in Berlin, Germany on November 11-12. more

Missed Opportunities for Economic and Community Development in the Dominican Republic

Lenora Suki, Associate Director at the Earth Institute at Columbia University's Center for Globalization and Sustainable Development, has completed an evaluation of financial institutions that channel remittances between immigrants in the United States to their friends and family in the Dominican Republic. Suki found that this poorly served population, who receives over $2 billion a year in remittances, pays higher service fees and receives fewer services than most of Latin America, resulting in missed opportunities for economic and community development. more

IGERT Program Funds Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Study of Globalization and International Development

Columbia University has received major funding of close to $4 million from the National Science Foundation IGERT program for the creation of an interdisciplinary graduate program in the study of globalization and international development. On November 12-13, the NSF-IGERT Program in Development and Globalization sponsored its Annual Development Symposium at Columbia University, which featured panel discussions on human development, aid and remittances, trade and development, democracy and social movements, and current issues in development.

New Study Reveals Hidden Pattern in Genetics of Indian Elephant Populations

The first population genetic study of free-ranging Asian elephant populations has unexpectedly revealed that elephants in Southern India evolved into two genetically distinct groups thousands of years ago. The discovery has important implications for elephant conservation strategies in India.

Reducing Trace Gases is Key to Halting Dangerous Human-induced Contributions to Global Warming

Researchers suggest that reductions of trace gases may allow stabilization of climate so that additional global warming would be less than 1°C, a level needed to maintain global coastlines. Although carbon dioxide emissions, an inherent product of fossil fuel use, must also be slowed, the required carbon dioxide reduction is much more feasible if trace gases decrease.