Dear GEG,

Spring semester at UMass Boston ended with fireworks as we welcomed back to campus Christiana Figueres, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, who received an honorary degree and delivered the Commencement address. We are also happy to share news about our research and outreach work. Our Environmental Conventions Initiative is developing, the collaboration with Addis Ababa University is growing stronger, and our associates are receiving recognition for their work! Thank you for your continued interest in the Center!

Maria Ivanova and Craig Murphy, Co-Directors

Christiana Figueres Speaks at UMass Boston Commencement

On Friday, May 30th, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres returned to UMass Boston to speak at Commencement and at the John W. McCormack Graduate School for Policy and Global Studies graduation ceremony. At Commencement, Ms. Figueres urged the recent graduates to recognize how our local communities are connected to the rest of the world, and that they have the power to decide what world they and future generations are going to live in. To read the full speech, click [here](#).

The university also celebrated the graduation of William O'Donnell (MSPA Public Policy) and his devout seeing eye dog, Marshall. While O'Donnell received his diploma, Marshall, wearing a graduation cap, received a rolled up bone tied with a ribbon. To read more, click [here](#).

Delegation Visit from Addis Ababa University

In April, a high-level delegation from Addis Ababa University visited UMass Boston to further the collaboration between the two universities and discuss joint programs and projects. The delegation, included the Speaker of the Ethiopian House of Federation and Chair of the Board of Trustees, H.E. Mr. Kassa Tekle-Berhan, three other Board members, the President of AAU, Dr. Admasu Tsegaye, and our long-term partner, Dr. Araya Asfaw, Director of the Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre and Network.

The two universities plan on collaborating in several core research and policy areas, including environment, public policy, public health, conflict resolution, migration, climate change, and library information management and archival studies. For more, click [here](#).

Environmental Conventions Initiative
The Environmental Conventions Initiative is a research and outreach effort that assesses the implementation of global environmental conventions. It seeks to track the implementation of 10 global conventions across the countries parties to the agreements. Prof. Maria Ivanova and PhD student and Research Associate Natalia Escobar-Pemberthy have been presenting the ECI to convention secretariat officials, governments, and international organizations.

In February, they traveled to Switzerland to present to the secretariats of the chemicals and waste conventions and CITES and to the Federal Office for the Environment of Switzerland. In early May, they traveled to Washington DC to present at the Global Environment Facility. They engaged with some of Prof. Ivanova's former students who are now officials at the GEF and the Environmental Protection Agency. A draft of the Environmental Conventions Index will be prepared over the coming year. To read more, click here.

**Maria Ivanova Appointed to United Nations University Board**

Professor Maria Ivanova has been appointed to serve as a member of the Board of the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS). She has been appointed for a three-year term, to begin immediately and last until 2016. In this capacity, Professor Ivanova will use her expertise in global environmental governance to assist the Institute in its mission to build partnerships and to develop interdisciplinary, policy-relevant innovations.

To read more, click here.

**Greening China-Africa Relations**

Center Research Associate and UMass Boston PhD student in Global Governance and Human Security Negusu Aklilu published an article in the most recent edition of the *Journal of China and International Relations*. His piece argues that African states need to vigorously engage with the Chinese government and Chinese businesses to ensure the environmental sustainability of Africa. He also argues that African governments should empower civil society and NGOs to take up the cause of environmental preservation, as doing so is a matter of the continent's survival.

To read the article, click here.

**Professor Benjamin Cashore of Yale Visits UMass Boston**

On Friday, May 9, Professor Benjamin Cashore from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies visited the University of Massachusetts Boston, and participated in an informal lunch conversation on doctoral mentorship organized by the Center for Governance and Sustainability. Professor Cashore was a graduate mentor for Maria Ivanova, Center for Governance and Sustainability Co-Director. Professor Cashore talked about his mentorship experience at different universities and about his work at the Governance, Environment and Markets (GEM) Initiative he founded at Yale. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions regarding his research on global environmental governance, and he shared his latest research findings on forest governance and institutional effectiveness.
Reaching Out

On May 29th, Research Associate and MSPA in International Relations student Daniel Zaleznik will receive this year's International Relations Convocation Award. He is being recognized for his outstanding work on the science-policy interface and his commitment to policy analysis and outreach.

From July 1st-3rd, Natalia Escobar-Pemberthy will travel to Norwich, UK for the 2014 Norwich Conference on Earth Systems Governance: "Access and Allocation in the Anthropocene."

From June 23rd-27th, Maria Ivanova and Natalia Escobar-Pemberthy will be attending the inaugural session of the new executive body of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Assembly will discuss current environmental challenges, with a particular focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as illegal trade in wildlife and timber.

On April 28th and 29th, Research Associate and PhD student in Global Governance and Human Security Wondewossen Sintayehu traveled to Nairobi to participate in the Reforming Fossil Fuel Subsidies for an Inclusive Green Economy workshop hosted by UNEP. To learn more, click here.

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