

awards and events



Earth Day

Earth Day is celebrated every year – primarily in the United States – to ‘create new visions to accelerate environmental progress’. The event was first celebrated by 20 million people in 1970. More than half a billion people participate in Earth Day Network campaigns every year, with thousands of schools and local communities organising educational events, tree planting, clean-ups and recycling drives, among many other events.

www.earthday.net

UN Forum on Forests



Nearly 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihood, and forests provide subsistence and income for about 350 million people. The 8th session of the UN Forum on Forests – a global meeting to discuss ways to best manage forests – will take place in New York from 20 April to 1 May. The Forum’s goal is to promote “... the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.” The meeting will be the opportunity to enhance international cooperation and policy coordination on forest-related issues. The issue is particularly topical in 2009 as UN REDD Programme – Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation – moves into higher gear.

www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html

The World Future Energy Summit, which takes place in Abu Dhabi from 19 to 21 January, brings together 15,000 people for what organisers claim as “the largest meeting of influential figures within the renewable energy industry.” The conference will be attended by influential players, including former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, British economist Nicholas Stern, environment ministers from France, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland, and chief executives of major energy companies. The agenda covers a range of themes including energy policy, green buildings, ocean power and carbon management. The programme also includes the Zayed Future Energy Prize award ceremony, a \$2.2 million annual prize rewarding individuals, companies and organisations that have made significant contributions to the global response to the future of energy.

www.worldfutureenergysummit.com



World Future Energy Summit

5th WORLD WATER FORUM
ISTANBUL 2009



5th World Water Forum

The 5th World Water Forum – the world’s biggest international meeting on water issues – will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 16 to 22 March. The event, which takes place every three years, brings together leaders, policy makers and water specialists from around the globe to discuss water issues and water security. ‘Bridging Divides for Water’ is the overarching theme of this meeting. Other topics will include ‘Adapting to Climate Change’, ‘Water-related Migration’, ‘Preserving Natural Ecosystems’, and ‘Sustainable Financing for the Water Sector’. During the meeting, prizes will also be presented to organisations and individuals who have done exceptional work to address critical water issues.

www.worldwaterforum5.org

IRENA, the International Renewable Energy Agency, created on 26 January, is an initiative of the Government of Germany. The agency aims to “become the main driving force in promoting a rapid transition towards the widespread and sustainable use of renewable energy on a global scale.” Acting as the global voice for renewable energies, IRENA will provide practical advice and support for both industrialised and developing countries. The agency will facilitate access to all relevant information, including reliable data on the potential of renewable energy, best practices, effective financial mechanisms and state-of-the-art technological expertise. The work programme for IRENA will be developed between February and June 2009, and the Director-General and the location of the agency should be decided in June.

www.irena.org



INITIATIVE FOR AN
INTERNATIONAL
RENEWABLE
ENERGY AGENCY **IRENA**



UNEP Sasakawa Awards

The winners of the 2008 UNEP Sasakawa Prize will receive their awards at a ceremony during the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi on 18 February. The Prize for 2008 went to two projects, Sunlabob Rural Energy Ltd, in Lao PDR, and Practical Action, in Peru, which are bringing solar and hydro power to remote rural communities that lack access to grid electricity, on the eastern slopes of the Andes and in the farthest-flung regions of Lao PDR. The UNEP Sasakawa Prize, worth \$200,000, is awarded yearly to individuals or institutions that have made a substantial contribution to the protection and management of the environment. The winners, who will each receive \$100,000, were chosen by a five-member jury from a shortlist of six projects.

www.unep.org/sasakawa