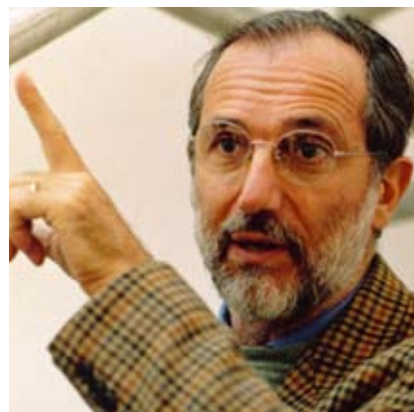


A few weeks before his Inauguration as President of the United States, Barack Obama won the approval of the environmental world by appointing what is being hailed as an unprecedentedly 'green' U.S. Cabinet. Most notably, he created the post of Energy and Environment Coordinator for **CAROL BROWNER**, who was head of the Environmental Protection Agency under former President Bill Clinton. As Obama's 'Climate Czar', Browner's job will be to coordinate the White House's work on climate change across all the different energy, climate and environment entities. Browner



is the longest-serving head of the EPA, with a reputation for toughness that should prove invaluable as she spearheads the new Administration's policy on climate change. The President-elect's other notable green appointments include Steven Chu as Secretary of Energy and John Holdren as Science Adviser. Nobel Prize-winning physicist Chu — who is one of the world's top researchers on alternative and renewable energy — was an early advocate for finding scientific solutions to climate change. Holdren, a professor of environmental policy at Harvard University, has focused on the causes and consequences of climate change and advocates a strong and rapid global effort to address it. Browner, Chu and Holdren will be the cornerstone of Obama's plan to create jobs, achieve energy security and combat climate change. The new team's task will include enrolling the support of Congress for any legislation to cap the U.S.'s carbon emissions, while a new international post-2012 climate treaty will have to gain a two-thirds majority in Senate.

Italian architect **RENZO PIANO** is no stranger to accolades: his buildings — encompassing the iconic George Pompidou Centre in Paris — earned him the Pritzker Prize, considered the 'Nobel of Architecture', in 1998, and he has also won the AIA Gold Medal, the Kyoto Prize and the Sonning Prize. His latest work, the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, did not just open to rave reviews, it also received top marks from the Green Building Council, which encourages environmentally friendly architecture. The structure's insulation is made of old blue jeans, solar panels provide up to 10 per cent of its energy needs, and it has a 'living roof' that gives off oxygen instead of absorbing heat. "The San Francisco museum is an interpretation of the green revolution on the march," Piano says. "Environmental constraints should not be seen as an assault on freedom. You find that the planet is vulnerable. Does this have to be a crisis?" Piano argues that "architects should be able to interpret the changes of their times and



live with their times" — and indeed, his own workshop in Genoa has a glass roof that lets in the sun for natural heat and light.

DESMOND TUTU — activist, anti-Apartheid hero and Nobel Peace laureate — has always been vocal in his defence of the most vulnerable. Over the last few decades, the South African cleric has used his high profile to fight for the oppressed and to campaign against HIV/AIDS, poverty and racism. His latest cause is the environment: during the UN climate talks in Poznan, Poland, in December, Tutu led a group of singers, writers, actors and campaigners in urging rich nations to



take the lead on climate change. In a letter to the London Times, Tutu and 18 other famous signatories, including broadcaster David Attenborough, actress Scarlett Johansson and singer Angelique Kidjo, said developed nations must "show leadership" in Poznan. The letter, organised by Oxfam, notes that the effects of global warming are hitting the poor the hardest. "Wealthy nations, who are in their advantaged position because of heavy industrialisation, are the most responsible and most able to lead the world in tackling climate change," it says.

European Commission Vice President **MARGOT WALLSTRÖM** is a long-time environmentalist, having left her mark as the EU's Environment Commissioner from 1999 to 2004. The Swede is now leading the 'Road to Copenhagen' initiative alongside Gro



Harlem Brundtland, the UN Special Envoy on climate change, and Mary Robinson, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The aim of the interactive project is to ensure that business, parliamentarians,

NGOs and individual citizens "have a direct input" into the climate change negotiations leading up to the Copenhagen meeting in December, when governments must agree on a post-2012 climate deal. The website — www.roadtocopenhagen.org — invites open debate and opinion on key issues, including adaptation, technology, finance and mitigation. In June, the organisers will submit "detailed policy inputs" to the negotiators based on all the feedback submitted to the website. A communiqué and issue papers will be submitted to the negotiators in December, just before the meeting.

ABIOLA OLANIPEKUN, a Chief Environmental Scientist in Nigeria's Environment Ministry, was awarded the 2008 Special Recognition



Award from the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) for her "work and leadership in the African region in many of the most important international chemicals management negotiations and processes of the last decade." Over the last few years, she has become widely recognised as a leading voice in many international chemicals management negotiations, serving twice as chairperson of the G77 and China during the intergovernmental negotiations for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. She is also the African Regional Focal Point for the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. In 2007, at the 24th session of UNEP's Governing Council, Olanipekun secured a breakthrough decision on the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic substances.