



# MAnews

The Newsletter of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

## Responses Working Group of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Promoting Informed Decisions

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The Responses Working Group (RWG) has been tasked with assessing a broad array of interventions and strategies intended to promote informed decisions about ecosystem services for human well-being. In the context of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, “responses” are strategies and interventions developed to increase the provision of ecosystem services over the long term, to improve human



well-being, and to promote the alleviation of poverty.

People depend directly on “ecosystem services” to provide food, water, fuel, and fiber, and to satisfy many other basic needs. These services and their provision can be affected by many factors, or *driving forces*, such as changes in institutions and environment, as well as human activities. In addition, interactions among services, driving forces, and human activity are diverse and occur on various scales.

In developing the focus of the Responses Assessment report, the RWG has been guided by input provided by various users, such as international conventions (especially the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertifi-

cation, and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), governments, and the private sector. Based on this input, the RWG addresses questions such as the following:

- Which interventions and strategies help alter driving forces so that benefits are maximized and negative consequences are minimized?
- Which institutional, technological, behavioral, or policy options can help reduce the vulnerability of individuals and communities to various natural and socioeconomic risks?
- Which interventions and strategies concerning ecosystem change help reduce poverty?

*continued on page 2*

*Table 1*  
**STRUCTURE OF THE RWG ASSESSMENT REPORT  
 AND LISTING OF CLA CONTACTS**

Chapter	Name of CLAs	Email ID
<i>Part I: Conceptual Framework for Evaluating Responses</i>		
1. Preface and Roadmap	Kanchan Chopra Rik Leemans	Kc@ieg.emet.in Rik.leemans@rivm.nl
2. Overview of the MA Conceptual Framework	MA Assessment panel	reid@millenniumassessment.org hmooney@jasper.stanford.edu
3. Typology of Responses	Ferenc Toth Bradnee Chambers	Toth@iiasa.ac.at Chambers@ias.unu.edu
4. Assessing Responses	David Simpson Bhaskar Vira John Mugabe	Simpson@rff.org Bv101@cam.ac.uk j.mugabe@cgiar.org
<i>Part II: Assessment of Past and Current Responses</i>		
5. Introduction	Pushpam Kumar Henk Simons	Pk@ieg.emet.in Henk.simons@rivm.nl
6. Biodiversity	Jeffrey McNeely Izabella Koziell Heidi Albers	Jam@hq.iucn.org Izabella.koziell@iied.org Albers@rff.org
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8. Freshwater	Bruce Aylward Jayanta Bandyopadhyay Juan Carlos Belausteguigoitia	Bruce@radel.com Jayanta@iimcal.ac.in Jc.belaus@giwa.net
9. Wood, Woodfuel, and Fiber	Stephen Bass Nigel Sizer	Steve.bass@iied.org nsizer@tnc.org
10. Nutrient Cycling	Bob Howarth Kilapatri Ramakrishna	rwh2@comell.edu kramakrishna@whrc.org
11. Waste Management, Processing, and Detoxification	Nimbe Adedipe	Cassad@infoweb.abs.net
12. Flood and Storm Protection	Anand Patwardhan	Anand@cc.iitb.ac.in
13. Biological Disease and Vector Control	David Molyneux	fahy@liv.ac.uk
14. Climate Regulation	Jyoti Parikh	Jparikh@igidr.ac.in
15. Cultural Services	D.K. Bhattacharya Eduardo Brondizio	Dkb286@yahoo.co.in ebrondiz@indiana.edu
16. Integrated Responses	Kathrina Brown Jens Mackensen Kuperan Viswanathan	k.brown@uea.ac.uk jens.mackensen@unep.org k.viswanathan@cgiar.org
<i>Part III: Synthesis—Ingredients for Successful Responses</i>		
17. Lessons Learned: Consequences for Ecosystems, Human Well-Being, and Poverty Reduction	Anantha Duraiappah Flavio Comim	Akduraiappah@iisd.ca Fvc1001@cam.ac.uk
18. Consequences and Options for Human Health	Carlos Corvalan Alistair Woodward	Corvalanc@who.int Woodward@wnmeds.ac.nz
19. Choosing Responses	Bedrich Moldan Janet Riley Steve Percy	Bedrich.moldan@czp.cuni.cz Janet.riley@bbsrc.ac.uk stevepercy@aol.com
20. Responses in Scenarios	Dale Rothman	Dale.rothman@icis.unimaas.nl
21. Uncertainties in Assessing the Effectiveness of Responses	Gary Yohe	Gyohe@wesleyan.edu
22. Conclusions and Recommendations	Ingrid Hartman John Dixon	Ingridethio@yahoo.com jdixon@worldbank.org

Responses are defined in the broadest sense as the whole range of policies, strategies, measures, and interventions, as well as behavioral actions that affect the condition and functioning of ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human well-being. The assessment will cover not only possible options but also the decision-making process leading to formulation and implementation of responses.

The RWG recognizes the many different approaches that can be used to assess responses. The current scope and structure of the Responses Assessment is directly attributed to the active debates of participants from many different disciplines, nationalities, and organizations at the MA Technical Design Workshops (Bilthoven April 2001, Cape Town October 2001). Initially, the Responses report was built on the idea that a single framework could be developed to comprehensively integrate all possible responses. However, participants quickly realized that a more flexible approach was needed to consider the diversity of responses and the distinctive perspectives of experts in different disciplines. In addition, it became clear that the effectiveness of each response was dependent on environmental and socioeconomic contexts, as well as scales. Further, the incorporation of different disciplinary perspectives (e.g., legal, economic, institutional, and ecological) and levels of scale was seen as necessary to review all instruments used to assess efficiency of responses. The framework that eventually emerged was flexible enough to incorporate heterogeneous, and even conflicting, approaches.

Participants of the MA design meetings determined that a robust assessment of responses must include three distinct components: (1) the skeleton, (2) a classification of responses in relation to services, and (3) a synthesis of the assessment outcome. These components are described below:

(1) To develop the skeleton used for assessing responses, responses will be categorized and described by type, and instruments for assessing their effectiveness will be introduced and explained.

- (2) The assessment of responses in relation to specific ecosystem services closely follows the MA classification of services, such as the creation of tangible goods (provisioning services, such as food, water, and wood), regulating services (e.g., flood protection and climate regulation), and cultural services (e.g., spiritual activities and recreation). These chapters of the report critically assess the literature, review the findings of the MA subglobal assessments, and discuss the apparent diversity of responses by contexts and scales. This section will include a chapter on integrated responses that focuses on the various suite of responses applied to specific systems, such as forests and coasts. Each chapter in this portion will provide a “lessons-learned” section.
- (3) The last part of the report will provide the overall synthesis. Each of the “lessons-learned” sections will be brought together to indicate the clear link between responses and changes in ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human well-being. This part of the report tries to answer the questions “What succeeded where, how, and why?” One of the most important chapters examines “choosing responses,” providing guidance for the selection of adequate responses based on potential success or failure, trade-offs, or synergies. This synthesis will not be prescriptive, but will present a “tool kit” of possible responses that may be successful under different sets of circumstances: biophysical, political, legal, economic, and/or cultural.

The RWG outline was approved by the MA Board in January 2002. Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) were identified, and met in New Delhi (May 2002) to elaborate the individual chapters and identify cross-cutting issues. Since this meeting, most of the CLAs have developed high-standard annotated outlines, planned separate chapter meetings, and assembled writing teams. The first drafts of all chapters will be written during the next six months. These drafts will be reviewed internally and discussed at the next full meeting of the RWG, scheduled for May 13–18, 2003, in Nairobi.

Opportunities remain for contributions to most chapters. While CLAs are working with the Working Group co-chairs and Technical Support Units (TSUs) to assemble their writing teams, all of them will appreciate suggestions for additional contributions. To contribute to a specific chapter, you may contact the TSU or the contact CLA directly via e-mail addresses listed in Table 1. We are looking forward to your responses!

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*The Responses Working Group is cochaired by KANCHAN CHOPRA, Professor of Environmental and Natural Resources Economics at the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), Delhi, and RIK LEEMANS, Senior Researcher at the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), Bilthoven, The Netherlands, and Professor of Land-use Modeling at Wageningen University.*

*The Technical Support Unit (TSU) is staffed by HENK SIMONS (Ecologist), RIVM, and PUSHPAM KUMAR (Ecological Economist) at IEG.*

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# Activities Report

## MA AND THE WSSD: SUBGLOBAL ASSESSMENTS HIGHLIGHTED

“Nature serving people” was the theme for the MA side event at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg on August 26, 2002. The event featured a report on the progress in the Southern Africa (SAfMA), India, and China subglobal assessments and was designed to encourage other regions to launch subglobal assessments and to raise awareness about the MA.

Even though the WSSD side event coincided with the plenary session on biodiversity, the three-hour event drew approximately 200 delegates to Ubuntu Village on Monday, August 26. The session was chaired by MA Board Co-Chair A.H. Zakri, with presentations by Walter Reid, Mark Collins, Klaus Topfer Robert Watson, Yogesh Gohkale (India Assessment), Bob Scholes (SAfMA), and Masatake Watanabe and (Western China Assessment). In

addition to this event posters describing the Sub-Global Assessments in Norway, Sweden, small Islands of Papua New Guinea, Alternatives to Slash and Burn sites, India, Southern Africa, and China were displayed at the MA booth in the IUCN Environment Centre.

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*For more information on the preliminary results of the SAfMA and Norway assessments, please visit: General Sub-global URL = <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/assessments/index.htm>*

*SAfMA URL = <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/assessments/safma/SAfMA.pilot.brochure.lores.pdf>*

*Norway URL = <http://english.dirnat.no/wbch3.exe?ce=10948>*

### *SAfMA asks...*

SAfMA set out to answer the following three questions in the pilot assessment and came to a series of conclusions:

**1. Do the techniques exist to conduct an assessment of ecosystem services on several scales?**

**Yes,** but many of the techniques are still experimental. Although many groups have stressed the need for regional and multiscale environmental assessments, there are virtually no examples of such assessments to act as guides. The pilot SAfMA has played a leading role in developing and testing ideas on how to conduct multiscale assessments.

**2. Do the technical resources exist in southern Africa to conduct a full-scale Millennium Assessment?**

**Yes.** In a period of four months (April–July), it was possible to do an assessment at a variety of scales for three important ecosystem services. A full southern African assessment, taking place between August 2002 and December 2003, will be able to cover additional services. Sufficient information is available to perform a useful assessment.

**3. Is there a need and demand for a regional ecosystem services assessment?**

**Yes.** A successful MA process must be user driven. Based on the southern African pilot assessment, the SAfMA team is convinced that a full-scale assessment is needed in the region, that the demand already exists, and that it can be strengthened significantly as additional users see the results of the pilot assessment.

### MOVING FORWARD FROM THE WSSD

Both the focus and timing of the MA are excellent for WSSD follow-up. The WSSD Plan of Implementation provides ample endorsement for the role of assessments like the MA. The MA is already assessing the science undergirding progress toward a number of the targets and goals agreed on at the WSSD, including, for example, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; increasing access to safe drinking water, and restoring fisheries. The MA findings will be released soon enough after WSSD that they can help guide follow-up actions and priorities. Indeed, it would have been difficult to design a better-timed and better-focused mechanism to provide an assessment of the science underling WSSD targets related to environment-development interlinkages.

## USER FORUM INITIATION

The MA continues to place a high priority on engaging stakeholders, and has developed opportunities for national-level dialogues. Over the last three months, introductory workshops have been held in 17 countries in an effort to start User Forums for the MA. Through these forums the MA seeks to:

1. Share the MA process, results, and benefits with users mainly at the national level.
2. Share input coming from users at the national level with the global assessment.

An initial set of user forum meetings took place on August 29 and 30, linking by video-conference MA representatives attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg with meetings in 10 countries throughout Latin America. Each meeting involved 20 to 60 participants (and one meeting, in Ecuador, was rebroadcast to 20 additional sites in that country), and some 300 people participated in the two conferences. Each of the user forum meetings followed the same agenda:

- Prior to the videoconference connection, participants viewed a CD-ROM presentation (in Spanish) prepared by the MA Secretariat. In some cases, MA Coordinating Lead Authors attending the meetings also gave additional presentations.
- Once the video connection was established, participants were able to pose questions to Johannesburg and listen to additional presentations by the MA panel (which included Walt Reid, Bob Watson, Bob Scholes, Jonathan Lash, Gustavo Fonseca, and Nicolas Lucas).
- After the video link was ended, workshop participants continued to discuss the assessment and its links to ongoing sustainability initiatives in each country with the goal of deciding upon the feasibility of establishing an official user forum with the MA.

On October 10, during the second meeting of the Scenarios Working Group, MA panelists in Bangkok, Thailand, were linked with MA workshops in India,

Indonesia, and Egypt. Similarly, on November 14, during the second Conditions Working Group meeting, panelists in Sao Carlos, Brazil, were linked to workshops in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The final workshops of 2002 will take place on December 16, from the San Francisco, USA meeting of the Assessment Panel and Conceptual Framework Authors. This panel of MA experts will link to workshops in Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Additional workshops (including some combination of Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Slovenia, Jordan and Uganda) are in development for early 2003, which will complete the introductory phase of the User Forum activities<sup>1</sup>.

Based on these workshops, it is clear that the MA does raise interest and expectations, that participants recognize its relevance and see how it might have significant benefits within the countries, and that they want to establish a link to the MA. The MA Outreach and Engagement Support Unit, based at World Resources Institute and Meridian Institute, is working with groups in several participating countries to develop an ongoing workplan to cultivate links with the MA. The workshop participants view the MA to be a vehicle to catalyze and support national policy dialogues on ecosystem management, both by strengthening existing processes and by triggering new ones. In addition, strong interest was expressed in receiving additional information from the MA that could be used in national discussions and in becoming more directly involved in the MA processes, either through the sub-global assessments or through the global working groups.

The MA is currently seeking additional funding to expand the introductory activities into more formal partnerships. Individuals interested in establishing connection with the MA User Forums in their own countries should contact Nicolas Lucas at [lucas@millenniumassessment.org](mailto:lucas@millenniumassessment.org)

<sup>1</sup> The Global Development Learning Network of the World Bank has assisted in the coordination of each videoconference thus far. Their network of Distance Learning Centers and World Bank country offices have provided invaluable technical and logistic support in this effort.

### MA News

The newsletter of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Please direct questions or comments regarding the contents of this newsletter to Valerie Thompson ([Thompson@millenniumassessment.org](mailto:Thompson@millenniumassessment.org), Tel: +1 202 729 7600).

You have received this information because of a request submitted via the MA website. If you do not wish to continue receiving updates on the MA, please send an e-mail to [postmaster@millenniumassessment.org](mailto:postmaster@millenniumassessment.org), including "remove from list" as the subject of the message.

## NATIONAL ACADEMIES JOIN THE MA

The world's National Academies of Sciences represent a unique body of expertise with a unique stature in national policy making. To help ensure that the MA taps into the best experts in all countries and to help facilitate the dissemination of MA findings within countries, the MA, with the support of the Third World Academy of Sciences and the InterAcademy Panel, has established a group of *Affiliated Scientific Organizations and Academies of Sciences (ASO)*. The MA ASO list now includes more than 20 national academies and other international organizations, with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) the newest member following recent decisions taken by the CMS Conference of Parties to establish more formal linkages with the MA. The ASOs received review drafts of the MA Conceptual Framework document, and will be integral to the distribution of the final report in early 2003.

## MA AFFILIATED SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE

### NATIONAL ACADEMIES

**Argentine National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences**  
**Academy of Sciences and Art of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ANUBiH)**  
**Cameroon Academy of Sciences**  
**Chinese Academy of Sciences**  
**Academia Sinica (Chinese Taipei/Taiwan)**  
**Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences**  
**Academia de Ciencias Medicas, Fisicas y Naturales de Guatemala**  
**Indonesian Academy of Sciences (AIPI)**  
**Kenya National Academy of Sciences (KNAS)**  
**Academy of Sciences Malaysia**  
**Philippine National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)**  
**Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA)**  
**Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)**  
**Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (RSAS)**  
**The Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS)**  
**The Royal Society (United Kingdom)**  
**African Academy of Sciences (AAS)**

### SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

**Asia Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategies (APEIS), Japan**  
**Fundacion Instituto Latinamericano de Politicas Sociales (ILaPS), Argentina**  
**Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), Brazil**  
**Central Asia Regional Environment Centre (CAREC), Kazakhstan**  
**Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)**

## MA AND RAMSAR COP-8

An important user of the findings of the MA will be the Ramsar Wetlands Convention. During the Eighth Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention (November 18–26, 2002), Angela Cropper, co-chair of the Assessment Panel, made a plenary presentation on the MA (November 19), highlighting the synergetic relationship that has been established between the two groups, particularly through the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). Several delegates posed questions after the intervention, mainly concerned with modes of participation in the MA. In addition, a side event was held that same day, with presentations from Max Finlayson, Habiba Gitay, and Carmen Revenga. Panelists discussed further the contributions of the MA to Ramsar, highlighting the application of the MA Conceptual Framework to wetlands assessments; capacity building activities of the MA; and indicators being developed by the MA particularly relevant to wetlands. Information on the MA was displayed at the conference center, and MA experts and staff were in Valencia throughout the meeting to answer questions and meet with delegates. Decisions taken at Ramsar strengthen the relationship between the convention and the MA, with identified contributions and avenues of cooperation, including an invitation for the MA to participate in meetings of STRP as an official observer.

## SCENARIOS AND CONDITIONS WORKING GROUP MEETINGS: VALUE-ADDED OUTREACH AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Meetings of Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) have been convened for each of the working groups, with the Scenarios and Conditions Working Groups recently holding their second CLA meetings of 2002. In addition to a primary function as opportunities for the CLAs to meet and move forward with writing the assessment reports, these meetings were used to expand external participation in the MA with video conferences and capacity building activities. The Scenarios CLAs met October 7-11 in Bangkok, Thailand and developed further the drivers and storylines that will be used for the scenarios. As part of the group's ongoing efforts to obtain stakeholder input for the development of the scenarios, a survey was created to gauge users perspectives on the future (box, page 8).

*continued on page 8*

## BRIDGING SCALES CONFERENCE

We invite you to submit proposals for papers, panels, workshops and other activities as contributions to an international conference, "Bridging Scales and Epistemologies: Linking Local Knowledge with Global Science in Multi-Scale Assessments," to be held June 23 – June 26, 2003 in Kunming, China.

The conference is being organized as part of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). The MA is an international scientific assessment on the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being. Two pioneering aspects distinguish the MA from past global assessments. First, it is being conducted as a 'multi-scale' assessment with integral sub-global assessment components being undertaken at local community, watershed, national and regional scales, in addition to the global scale. Second, it will incorporate both traditional knowledge and scientific information in the assessment process. These two attributes of the MA are fundamentally interrelated. An effective local assessment must rely on traditional knowledge of local ecological and social systems. A global assessment, in turn, must rely on data and information gathered through remote sensing and scientific research. If local and global assessments are to be effectively linked into a multi-scale assessment, then mechanisms must be created that enable these different 'ways of knowing the world' (or epistemologies) to be either integrated or coordinated. Actually doing so, however, raises major theoretical and methodological challenges. Exploring those challenges in an interactive and creative manner is the goal of this conference.

We are accepting abstracts for papers and proposals for panels, workshops, and other activities addressing these major themes. The conference structure will include both academic paper presentations as well as other innovative conference activities. We especially welcome creative approaches that engage conference participants in discussion and/or active problem solving. Criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals include relevance to the meeting themes, scientific merit, applicability to the MA process, and the incorporation of different viewpoints and experiences.

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2002–2003

### DECEMBER 13–17

#### **MA Assessment Panel and Conceptual Framework Meeting**

*MA Cross-cut Meeting: Drivers*

### DECEMBER 16

#### **User Forum Videoconference**

*(Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal)*  
**San Francisco, USA**

### JANUARY 29–31

#### **MA Cross-Cut Meeting: Health and Well-Being** **Manila, Philippines**

### FEBRUARY 11–14

#### **MA Board Meeting** **Geneva, Switzerland**

*Assessment Panel will meet in conjunction*

*MA Cross-Cut Meeting: Biodiversity*

*MA-WBCSD Private Sector Workshop, February 13*

### MARCH 10–14

#### **CBD SBSTTA-8**

**MA Report to Plenary and Side Event TBD**

### APRIL 1

#### **Scenarios Civil Society Workshop** **New Haven, USA**

### APRIL 4–11

#### **MA Cross-Cut Meeting: Marine-Coastal** **Vancouver, Canada**

### APRIL 27 - MAY 1

#### **Conditions Working Group Meeting #3** **Washington, DC, USA**

### MAY 19 - 23

#### **Responses Working Group Meeting #2** **Nairobi, Kenya**

### JUNE 23–26

#### **Conference: "Bridging Scales and Epistemologies"** **Kunming, China**

### JUNE 27–30

#### **Subglobal Assessments Working Group Meeting** **Kunming, China**

# — SURVEY —

## *Survey for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Scenarios Group*

The Scenarios Working Group is working closely with stakeholders to shape the “storylines” of the scenarios that will be explored in the Assessment. Each storyline will describe a plausible future that could unfold given certain policy decisions. Those storylines will then provide input into global and regional models that can be used to examine their consequences for ecosystems, their services, and human well-being. The Working Group is interviewing a wide range of people as part of the process of developing these storylines. If you are interested in providing input, please send reactions to the following questions along with your name, affiliation, and contact address to [info@millenniumassessment.org](mailto:info@millenniumassessment.org).

1. What words would you use to describe the current state of the Earth’s natural and human systems?
2. What words would you use to describe the ideal state of the Earth’s natural and human systems in 2050?
3. What obstacles do you envision to achieving this ideal world?
4. If you could talk to someone who visited the world in 2050, what would you need to know to be able to describe what the world really looks like in 2050?
5. Who or what will be most influential in determining the pathway of change into the future?

*continued from page 6 “Expanded Outreach”*

The Conditions CLAs met November 11-15 in Sao Carlos, Brazil. This meeting, hosted by the International Institute of Ecology and Dr. Jose Tundisi resulted in an expanded outline for the Conditions Assessment Report, and allowed CLAs to discuss indicator development; identify various issues that cut across different chapters and working groups; and identify data needs and datasets to be used by the MA.

Aside from the accomplishments furthering the development of the Assessment itself, both meetings were taken as opportunities to expand and explore activities for Outreach and Engagement, and Capacity Building. Each meeting provided the originating site for an introductory “User Forum” workshop and videoconference with countries that included Egypt, Indonesia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In each instance, the videoconference was received with a great deal of enthusiasm from MA panelists and local participants. With the two activities, more than 160 individuals were officially introduced to the MA process. Linkages with the Working Group meetings not only proved convenient for organization of the videoconferences, but allowed for more in-depth discussion of some aspect of the Assessment through specific questions raised and posed. More details about these User Forums and videoconferences are provided on page 5 of this newsletter.

In addition, the Condition Working Group meeting also welcomed participation of the first “MA Fellows.” Nominations for MA Fellows were solicited via the website and other avenues in late September. In keeping with the Capacity Building goal of the MA, the MA Fellows are brought into working groups as contributing or lead authors, so that a younger generation of scientists and policy practitioners might gain hands-on experience in international assessment activities. The MA Fellows for the Conditions Working Group were brought to Sao Carlos several days in advance of the start of the meeting for a crash-introduction to the MA and the process of assessment. The inclusion of fellows in the meeting was incredibly successful. Many of them had a great deal of responsibility during the meeting - especially those for which the chapter authors were absent. The MA Fellows contributed significantly to the development of the outlines and drafts for the Conditions Assessment Report, and it seemed by all accounts, this capacity building effort was well implemented and received. For more information on the capacity building strategy of the MA, please contact Dr. Habiba Gitay, Capacity Building Coordinator. [gitay@millenniumassessment.org](mailto:gitay@millenniumassessment.org)