

meridianews

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Please direct inquiries or comments to Shawn Walker at shawnwalker@merid.org.

To learn more about the work we do and how we can add value to your organization, please visit the Meridian website, www.merid.org.

Welcome to *meridianews*

This Meridian Institute online newsletter highlights some major activities culminating in Winter 2006-07. The past few weeks resulted in a number of exciting announcements on work with which we have been involved. We would like to share the outcomes achieved on a broad range of issues of domestic and global significance.

In this issue of *meridianews*, we highlight the launch of the U.S. Climate Action Partnership; the historic agreement of the Health Coverage Coalition for the Uninsured; and the second annual report card by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. We also provide an update on Meridian work with the Global Dialogue on Nanotechnology and the Poor and activities with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security around the revision of the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System. As these projects illustrate, Meridian continues to convene and facilitate results-oriented dialogues on a broad array of critical issues.

As Meridian Institute looks forward into the New Year, we are happy to remind ourselves and our friends that we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the organization in October 1997. We would like to thank all of those who worked with us over the last 10 years, and we look forward to continuing our mission of bringing collaborative problem solving to the challenging issues of the day.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions about our projects and activities.

The Meridian Team

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In the Spotlight



Amid increased Congressional and public interest in the issue of climate change, a new coalition of major leading businesses and non-governmental organizations has called on Congress to recommend the prompt enactment of national legislation to slow, stop, and reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions over the shortest period of time reasonably achievable.

Meridian Institute helped to convene the group and facilitated discussions between ten utility, energy, manufacturing, consumer products, and financial services companies, and four leading non-governmental organizations. These discussions, held between March and December of 2006, led to the creation and launch of the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) on January 22, 2007.

USCAP is calling on the Congress and the Administration to enact legislation requiring significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. The group developed *A Call for Action*, which includes a consensus set of principles and policy recommendations that establish limits on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and permits businesses to buy and sell GHG credits as part of a cap and trade system.

The release of the USCAP report serves as the beginning of a significant effort by the USCAP members to build a broader consensus among other companies and non-governmental organizations to support enactment of legislation. Meridian Institute will continue to support USCAP efforts to grow its coalition, further refine its policy



General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt (left) and World Resources Institute President Jonathan Lash discuss the US Climate Action Partnership during a January 22 press conference in Washington, DC.

recommendations, and encourage action by policy makers.

The full membership of USCAP includes Alcoa, BP America, Caterpillar Inc., Duke Energy, DuPont, Environmental Defense, FPL Group, General Electric, Lehman Brothers, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pew Center on Global Climate Change, PNM Resources, World Resources Institute.

For more information on the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, visit the USCAP website at www.us-cap.org. Contact Tim Mealey (tmealey@merid.org) to learn more about Meridian's role in this effort.



The Meridian Institute, in partnership with Search for Common Ground, has assisted a diverse coalition of sixteen leading, national health care organizations – the Health Coverage Coalition for the Uninsured (HCCU) – to come together to forge a historic agreement that would significantly expand health coverage for America's nearly forty-seven million uninsured.

The members of the Coalition represent consumers, the business community, insurers, hospitals, physicians, and pharmaceutical companies. These influential organizations have played leading roles in every federal health policy debate of the last thirty years, often on opposing sides, are now committed to pressing lawmakers to act on their historic, two-phased proposal that could cut the number of America's uninsured in half.

With so many different views expressed with equal passion, finding solutions for the uninsured has become a political hot potato, and even finding a common starting point for discussions became elusive. The HCCU's signatory organizations, most of which developed their own proposals for how health coverage could and should be expanded, recognized the importance of finding common solutions that are both effective and politically feasible. Meridian facilitators assisted these diverse groups to forge a consensus on an agreement that sets aside political and ideological differences to expand coverage for America's uninsured. At a time when the American public wants bipartisan, responsive government, the agreement represents a fully balanced public and private approach to help cover the country's uninsured.

HCCU members will now encourage legislative action by Congress to implement key elements of the proposal. The HCCU website can be viewed at: www.coalitionfortheuninsured.org. Contact Tim Mealey (tmealey@merid.org) to learn more about Meridian's role in the HCCU.



Since late 2004, Meridian Institute has worked with former Commissioners from the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission to form the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a collaborative effort established to catalyze ocean policy reform in the United States. Over the past two years, the Joint Initiative has become a respected national voice for promoting change that results in accelerated, meaningful ocean policy reform.

The Joint Initiative released its second annual U.S. Ocean Policy Report Card on January 30. The report card provides a retrospective assessment of the nation's collective progress toward implementing the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. For 2006, the nation's overall grade on ocean policy reform rose to a "C-," up slightly from the "D+" average received in 2005. The report card recognizes some improvements and achievements made during 2006, while also highlighting continuing failures to act on critical ocean policy reforms and the lack of funding that prevent the nation from making significant progress to address the well-documented crises facing the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. The 2006 report card can be viewed at www.jointoceancommission.org.

To promote the 2006 U.S. Ocean Policy Report Card, Joint Initiative Co-Chairs Admiral James D. Watkins (U.S. Navy, Ret.) and the Honorable Leon E. Panetta conducted radio interviews in eighteen markets around the nation, including Seattle, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, Boston, New York, and others. In addition, they conducted a press conference call with twenty-five news outlets covering markets from Miami to Alaska. The day

concluded with a Congressional briefing at which Senator Barbara Mikulski, House Natural Resources Committee Chair Nick Rahall, and House Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs Jim Saxton, Sam Farr, and Wayne Gilchrest made remarks.

Meridian will continue to coordinate the Joint Initiative's efforts in the coming months, including a national workshop on regional ocean governance co-convened with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Center for the Future of the Oceans. For more information on Meridian's work with the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, please contact Laura Cantral at lcantrol@merid.org.

Project Updates

Meridian Assists in Revision of the National Response Plan

Through our ongoing assistance to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Meridian has been facilitating external stakeholder meetings as well internal writing teams in the formal U.S. government review and revision process for the National Response Plan and National Incident Management System (NRP/NIMS). In October, Meridian worked with the government's Task Force co-chairs and staff from the DHS Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the DHS Preparedness Directorate to design and facilitate a stakeholder meeting to collect input on critical issues identified in the key "after action reviews" by the White House, both houses of Congress, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and others to assess lessons learned after the Katrina and Wilma disasters. The DHS FEMA Under-Secretary and Director and the DHS Under-Secretary for Preparedness co-hosted the meeting on behalf of the NRP/NIMS Task Force. Over ninety participants from state governors' offices; state

offices of homeland security and emergency management; state, local, and tribal associations; private sector organizations; and non-governmental organizations with significant interest in disaster preparedness and response joined the discussion. Staff members from DHS, the White House, and other NRP signatory agencies also participated in the meeting.

Meridian is continuing its involvement in the review process. In partnership with the Homeland Security Institute, Meridian is facilitating and supporting several workgroups that have been tasked with revising key components of the NRP. These include work groups addressing Catastrophic Incidents; Special Needs Populations; Companion Animals; and Volunteer and Donations Management. Members of those work groups, which include DHS and other federal officials as well as state local, tribal, and representatives from the NGO and private sector communities, are currently discussing areas for improvement in the current plan. The result of these discussions will be a set of revisions that will be incorporated into a new draft NRP available for public comment and finalized in June 2007. Meridian will be involved with subsequent stakeholder meetings as well ongoing work group activities. For more information on Meridian's activities associated with the NRP/NIMS process, please contact Michael Lesnick by email at mlesnick@merid.org

Meridian Convenes Global Dialogue on Nanotechnology and the Poor

With support from The Rockefeller Foundation (United States), International Development Research Centre (Canada), and Department for International Development (United Kingdom), Meridian Institute has convened the Global Dialogue on Nanotechnology and the Poor: Opportunities and Risks (GDNP) in order to raise awareness about the implications of

nanotechnology for the poor; close the gaps within and between sectors of society to catalyze actions that address specific opportunities and risks; and, identify ways that science and technology can play an appropriate role in the development process.

GDNP recently convened a multi-stakeholder International Workshop on Nanotechnology, Water, and Development in Chennai, India to develop recommendations and identify activities that will inform decisions and catalyze actions by stakeholders (e.g., water experts, development experts, governments, NGOs, companies, universities, international institutions, donors) involved with (a) nanotechnology research and development efforts relevant to providing clean water in developing countries and (b) activities to address potential environmental, health, safety, socio-economic, and other issues related to the use of nanotechnology in water treatment devices. Meridian released three background papers on nanotechnology and water purification in preparation for this workshop: “Nanotechnology, Water, and Development”; “Overview and Comparison of Conventional and Nano-Based Water Treatment Technologies”; and “Examples of Enabling Technologies for the Development of Nano-Based Water Treatment Technologies”. A summary document of this workshop will also be released in early February. The meeting summary, the background papers, and more information on the GDNP and Meridian’s other nanotechnology projects can be viewed on our Nanotechnology Portal, <http://www.merid.org/nano>.

Meridian’s Nanotechnology and Development News (NDN) – another component of the GDNP – is a free, daily electronic news service covering the most important developments related to nanotechnology, poverty alleviation, and the role of science and technology in development, has completed its first full year of operation. NDN provides succinct summaries of the most pertinent news related to the opportunities and risks of

nanotechnology for developing countries drawn from a range of sources such as peer-reviewed journals, international news wires, and industry, government, and NGO publications. Nanotechnology & Development News (NDN) currently has more than 600 subscribers from over fifty-four countries, including thirty developing countries. More information about Nanotechnology and Development News is available at <http://www.merid.org/NDN>. You may subscribe to the news service at: <http://www.merid.org/NDN/subscribe.php>.

Food Security and Ag-Biotech News Now Available in French

Meridian Institute launched a French-language version of Food Security and Ag-Biotech (FS-AgBiotech) News on Monday, February 5. The same news summaries currently read by thousands of people each month in English are now available in French. FS-AgBiotech News is a free daily news service that provides summarized news and analysis of global developments related to agricultural biotechnology and genetically modified crops, with a special focus on implications for food security in the developing world. Daily news summaries are available by email, on the web, or through a RSS news feed.

Government officials, scientists, NGOs, and industry representatives from more than fifty countries currently subscribe to the English version of the news service. They report that FS-AgBiotech News keeps them up-to-date on key developments and emerging global issues. By making FS-AgBiotech News available in French, Meridian Institute aims to provide the same timely and high-quality news coverage to French speakers around the world, especially those from developing countries. Funding for the French and English versions is provided by The Rockefeller Foundation

and the International Development Research Centre of Canada.

Also on February 5, Meridian launched a new Agriculture Portal website. The Portal allows easy access to Meridian Institute's broad range of projects in the area of agriculture and food security. To access the Agriculture Portal, please visit <http://www.merid.org/ag>.

To access FS-AgBiotech News online or subscribe to the email list, please visit <http://www.merid.org/fs-agbiotech/fr>. The English version of FS-AgBiotech News is available at <http://www.merid.org/fs-agbiotech>.

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