

# people

**OKOMBI SALISSA** has been appointed Minister of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of Congo, which also makes him the new president of the African Ministerial Conference for Environment



(AMCEN). As president of AMCEN, he will guide the process for implementing the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

**OPRAH WINFREY**, perhaps America's most influential celebrity, hosted her own green show in honour of Earth Day, 22 April, with tips on how ordinary

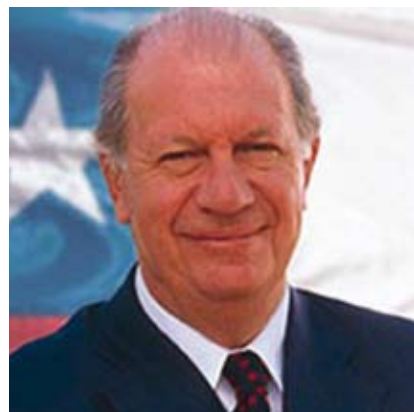


families can reduce their environmental footprint and start making a difference in the world. Oprah hosted a discussion on global warming with movie star and green campaigner Leonardo DiCaprio and Dr. Michael Oppenheimer, a leading authority on climate change. During the show they discussed the consequences of dependence on fossil fuels, the contribution of landfill waste to greenhouse gases and the need for strong policy responses. They also took a tour of the 'ultimate green family home'. The issue has a prominent position Oprah's website, including a 'Global Warming 101' feature providing a clear overview of climate change and what people can do to prevent it getting out of control.

United Nations Secretary-General BAN KI-MOON, who has made the issue one of his top priorities, has named three Special Envoys for Climate Change. All three envoys are prominent in international environmental affairs. Norwegian ex-Prime Minister **GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND** is the former



Chair of the World Commission of Environment and Development, best known for developing the broad political concept of sustainable development and published the landmark report Our Common Future two decades ago. President **RICARDO LAGOS ESCOBAR**



of Chile founded the Foundation for Democracy and Development, while **HAN SEUNG-SOO**, the former General Assembly President, currently heads the Korea Water Forum, which works towards sustainable water management in Asia.



**JUANITA CASTAÑO** has taken up the post of Chief of the UNEP New York Office. Ms. Castaño brings to UNEP strong international relations skills having been the Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Minister in the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the UN from 1989 to 1993. Her many responsibilities at that time included being head of the G77 during negotiations to restructure the Global Environment Facility. Ms. Castaño later



served in senior positions both regionally and nationally, rising to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2001. In 2004, Ms. Castaño was appointed as a member of the UN Secretary-General's advisory board on water and sanitation.

The 'Sadhu Who Clicks', 79-year-old holy man **SWAMI SUNDARANAND**, has, over



50 years, taken more than 100,000 photos of the shrinking Gangotri glacier in the Indian Himalaya. He now travels India raising awareness of the Gangotri's rapid demise. "In 1949, when I first saw the glacier, I felt as if all my sins were washed away and I had truly attained rebirth," the swami says. "But now, it is impossible to experience that Ganga of the past." The Gangotri is shrinking at a rate of more than 30 metres a year. Glaciers in the Himalayas are retreating perhaps faster than in any part of the world, threatening future water security for nearly half the world's population.

**HALIFA DRAMMEH** has been appointed UNEP's Special Advisor for Africa Affairs



in the Office of the Executive Director to strengthen UNEP's presence in Africa and make it more effective. UNEP will help to add momentum to relevant Pan African processes, such as the African Union and its commission, AMCEN and the African Ministers' Council on Water, to promote regional cooperation on environmental matters, including NEPAD. Mr. Drammeh has served in numerous senior capacities within UNEP over the years, including as the Director of the Environmental Management Group and Deputy Director (Division of Policy Development and Law). Prior to joining the United Nations, he served the Government of Gambia as a Senior Officer in the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Represented by Foreign Secretary **MARGARET BECKETT**, the United Kingdom, which held the presidency of the 15-nation UN Security Council in April,



initiated the first-ever Security Council debate on the impact of climate change on security. The day-long meeting aimed to examine the relationship between energy, security and climate, and featured interventions from more than 50 delegations, representing imperilled island nations and industrialized greenhouse gas emitters alike.