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International Environmental Intelligence Brief

DCI Environmental Center

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Climate Change: Argentina Ready to Consider Emissions Target [redacted]

Argentine Environment Minister Alsogaray is keeping voluntary emissions targets for developing countries on the agenda for the November Conference of Parties in Buenos Aires probably as a place-holder for President Menem. [redacted] he may plan a surprise announcement that Argentina will adopt a greenhouse gas emissions growth target.

- The move would be a logical next step in the environmental cooperation he pledged in the Barriloché Declaration with President Clinton last October.
- World media attention would help to differentiate Argentina from less progressive emerging markets. [redacted]

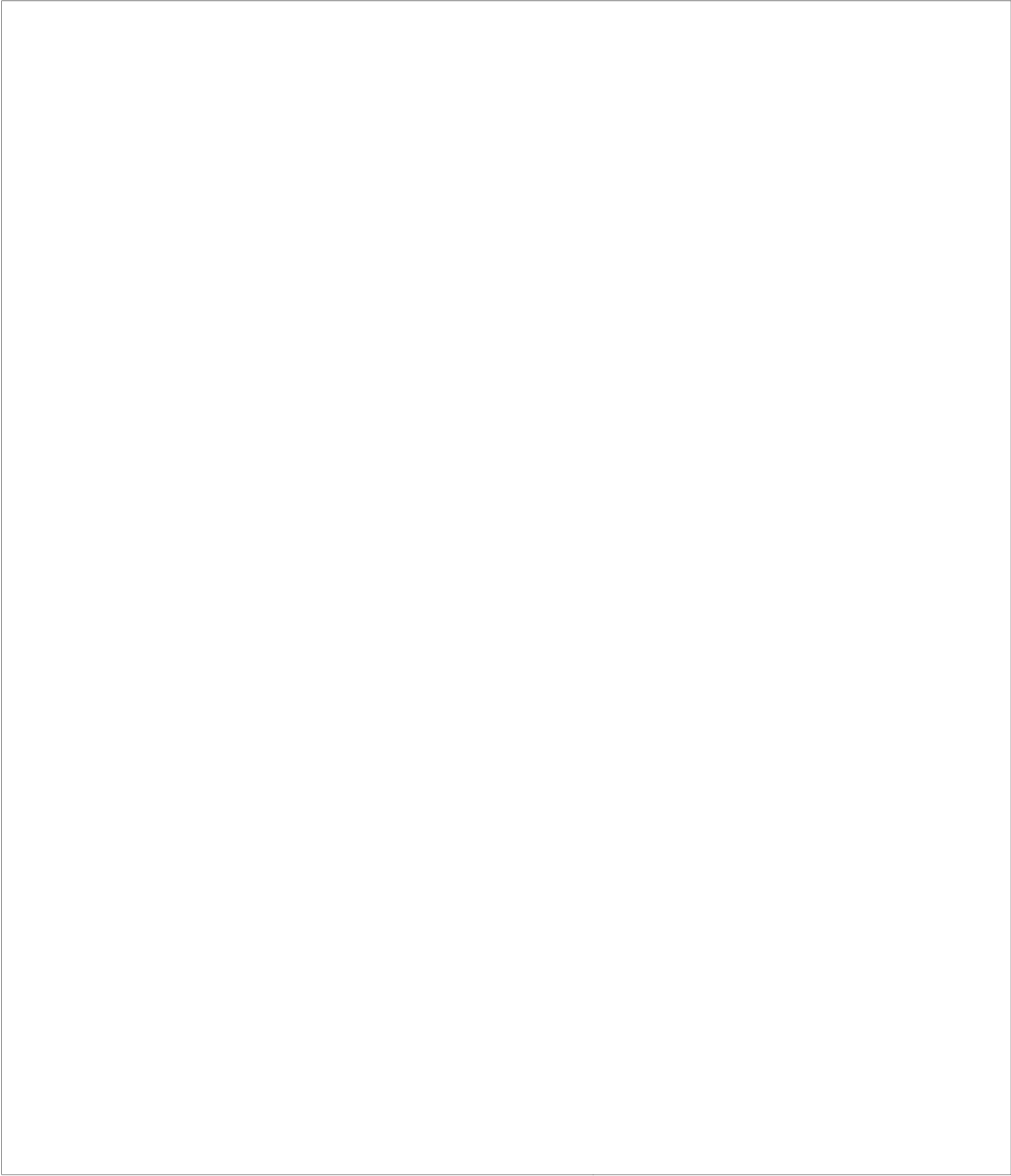
More critically, continuing expansion of natural gas consumption in the power generation and transport sectors has positioned Argentina to move toward a target. Hydroelectricity also has significant room for growth [redacted]

- Natural gas, hydro, and nuclear power comprised half of power generation feedstock in 1995.
- Compressed natural gas has become the fuel of choice for 75 percent of the taxi fleet as YPF Gas offers incentives for more private vehicle conversions, [redacted]

In addition, deregulation and privatization of state-owned energy companies—such as YPF—have introduced energy efficiencies into the industrial sector that have, in turn, helped to limit emissions growth. Per capita carbon dioxide emissions fell from 3.5 metric tons in 1970 to 3.2 metric tons in 1994. [redacted]

However, the downside to an Argentine target is serious as China has already warned the US that it will not accept an agenda at Buenos Aires that includes targets for developing countries, [redacted]

- Menem's move probably would increase domestic criticism of Argentina's pro-US foreign policy in the run-up to the presidential election next year.
- Argentina's economic capacity to deliver a long term emissions target is vulnerable to spillover from the global financial crisis and more serious financial problems in Brazil. [redacted]



**Prognosis Mixed for Joint Commission
Environmental Working Group**

[redacted] Russian cooperation on existing EWG projects is expected to continue, but progress on new initiatives is doubtful in light of the current political and economic crisis. Confusion over the status of Danilov-Danil'yan, who chairs the Russian side of the EWG as well as the State Committee for Environmental Protection (Goskompriroda), will complicate Russian EWG decisionmaking.

- Yel'tsin's request late last month for the resignation of all ministers probably includes state committee heads, but he asked the officials to stay on for an indefinite period.

Danilov-Danil'yan's bureaucratic rival Bedriskiy—chief of the Hydrometeorological Service (Ros-Hydromet), who has many Duma supporters—may use the uncertain political environment to force Danilov-Danil'yan out or to block the planned merger of Ros-Hydromet with Goskompriroda. Ros-Hydromet controls Russia's environmental satellites and parts of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute that are involved in current and planned EWG arctic research projects.

Continued involvement in the EWG by the Defense Ministry and its space-based reconnaissance systems also is uncertain with the recent departure of GRU General Polishchuk

[redacted] Polishchuk's replacement will be GRU Lieutenant General Letyago, but formal confirmation of Letyago's appointment has not been announced.

- The Defense Ministry has not attended the two most recent EWG technical meetings because of a GRU reorganization

[redacted] do not expect current climate change projects, such as the Arctic Sea Ice and Meteorology CD-ROM Atlases,

[redacted], and the Carbon-Boreal Forest Study, to be significantly affected by current bureaucratic uncertainties

- The new North Atlantic Oscillation project and expanded environmental disaster cooperation, however, have not progressed and may be seriously delayed,

- The Russian economic crisis will put a greater premium on US funding for EWG environmental projects.

Banking Crisis Affects EWG

[redacted] the freezing of foreign currency accounts at Russian banks is complicating our ability to compensate Russian collaborators for their work on EWG projects and could delay final products. The US side has suspended transfers to Russian banks until it is confident they will reach the intended institutes.

- Other Joint Commission committees are experiencing similar problems.

Russian banks have frozen a \$15,000 payment for past work by Russia's Forestry Institute on the Boreal Carbon Assessment project. The transaction difficulties soon may affect more than \$200,000 in contracts for other forestry studies, the Sea Ice Atlas, and the Meteorology Atlas.

[Redacted]

— US EWG officials are working with the State Committee for Environmental Protection to resolve the funding problems. [Redacted]

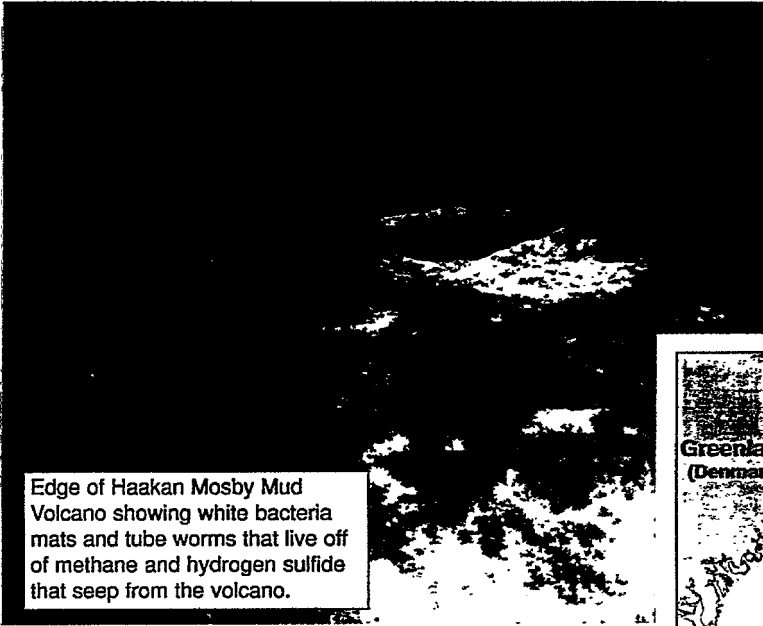
EWG Meetings Last Month Show Progress [Redacted]

Arctic Sea Ice CD-ROM Atlas. After a one-year hiatus attributed to Russian Navy security concerns, this third Arctic atlas has been restarted and substantial progress made. The project now is on track to meet the scheduled completion date next May. [Redacted]

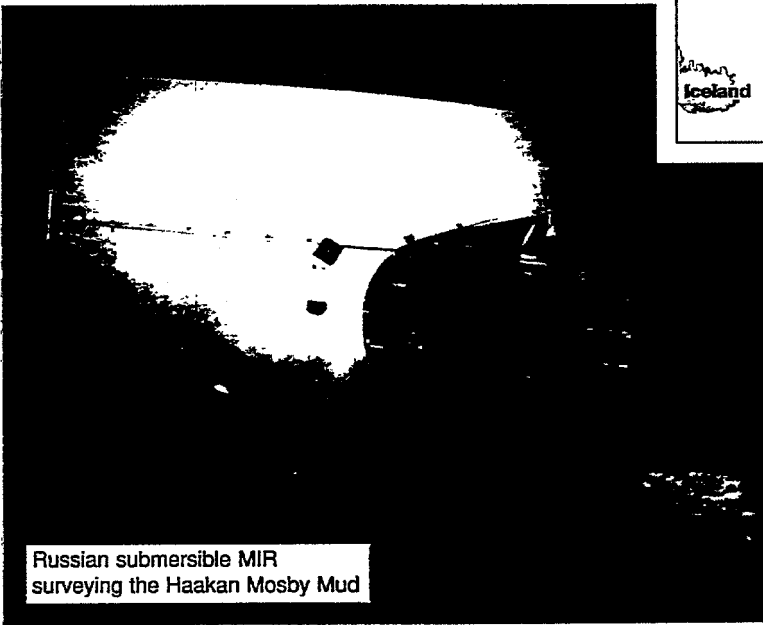
Arctic Meteorology CD-ROM Atlas. The final Arctic atlas was begun. The EWG expanded its scope to address new questions about the "Arctic Climate Oscillation," such as the influence of the North Atlantic Oscillation. [Redacted]

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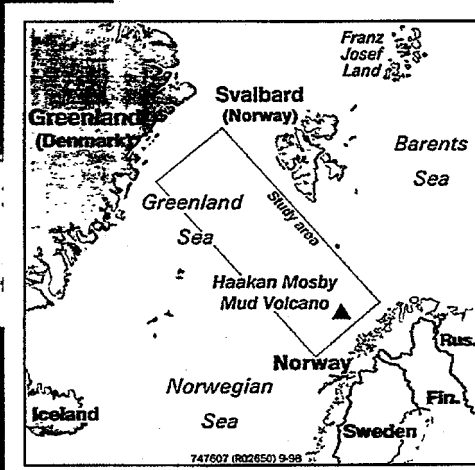
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Edge of Haakan Mosby Mud Volcano showing white bacteria mats and tube worms that live off of methane and hydrogen sulfide that seep from the volcano.



Russian submersible MIR surveying the Haakan Mosby Mud

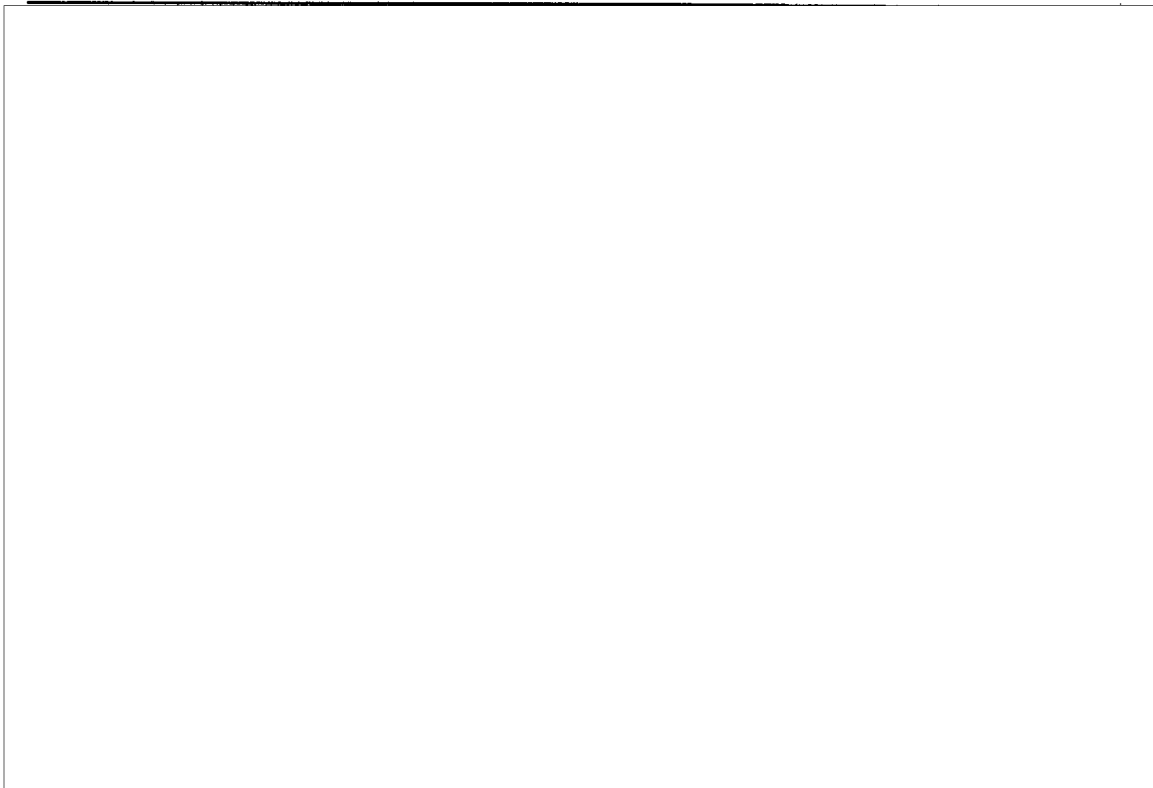
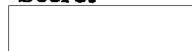


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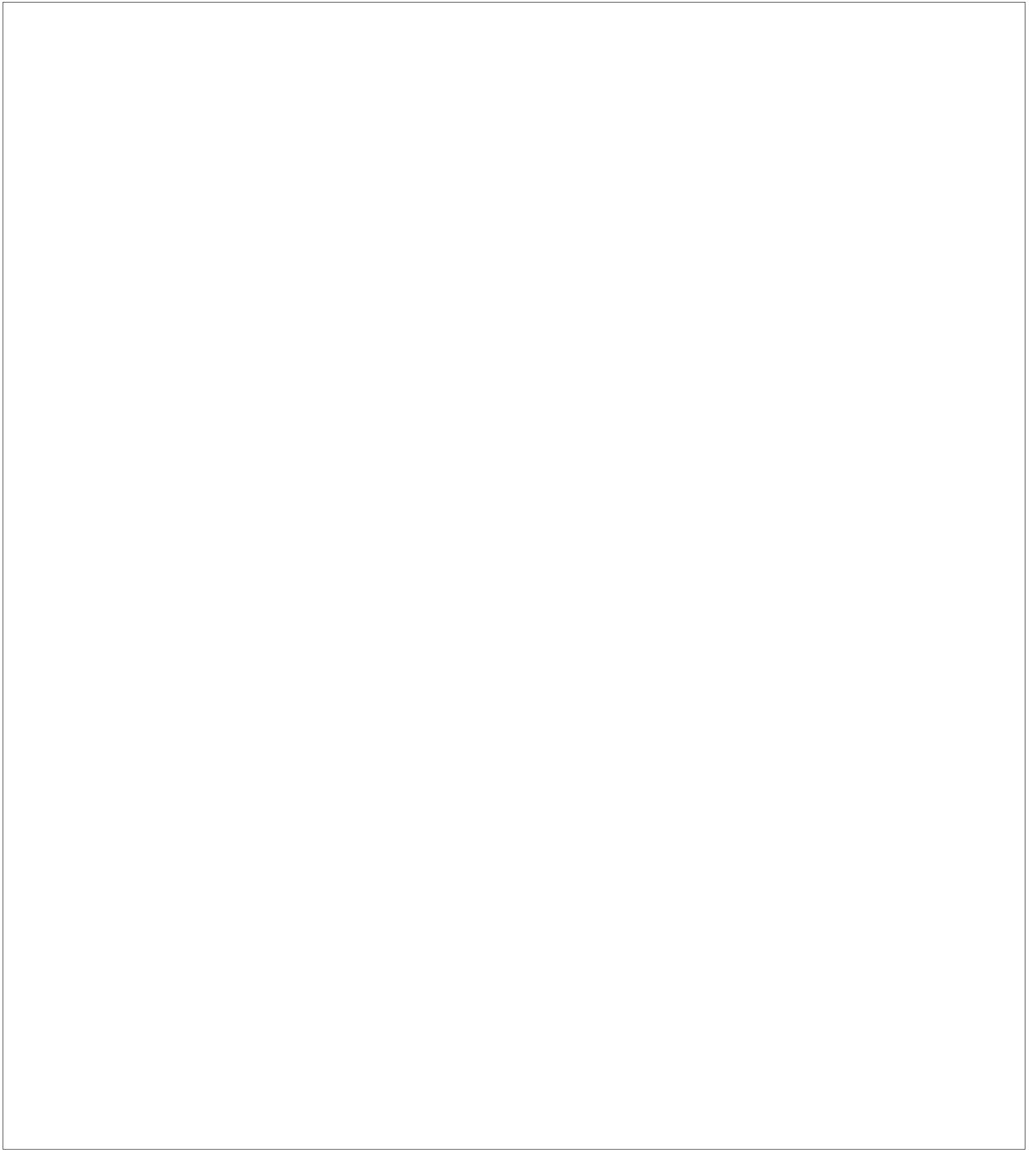


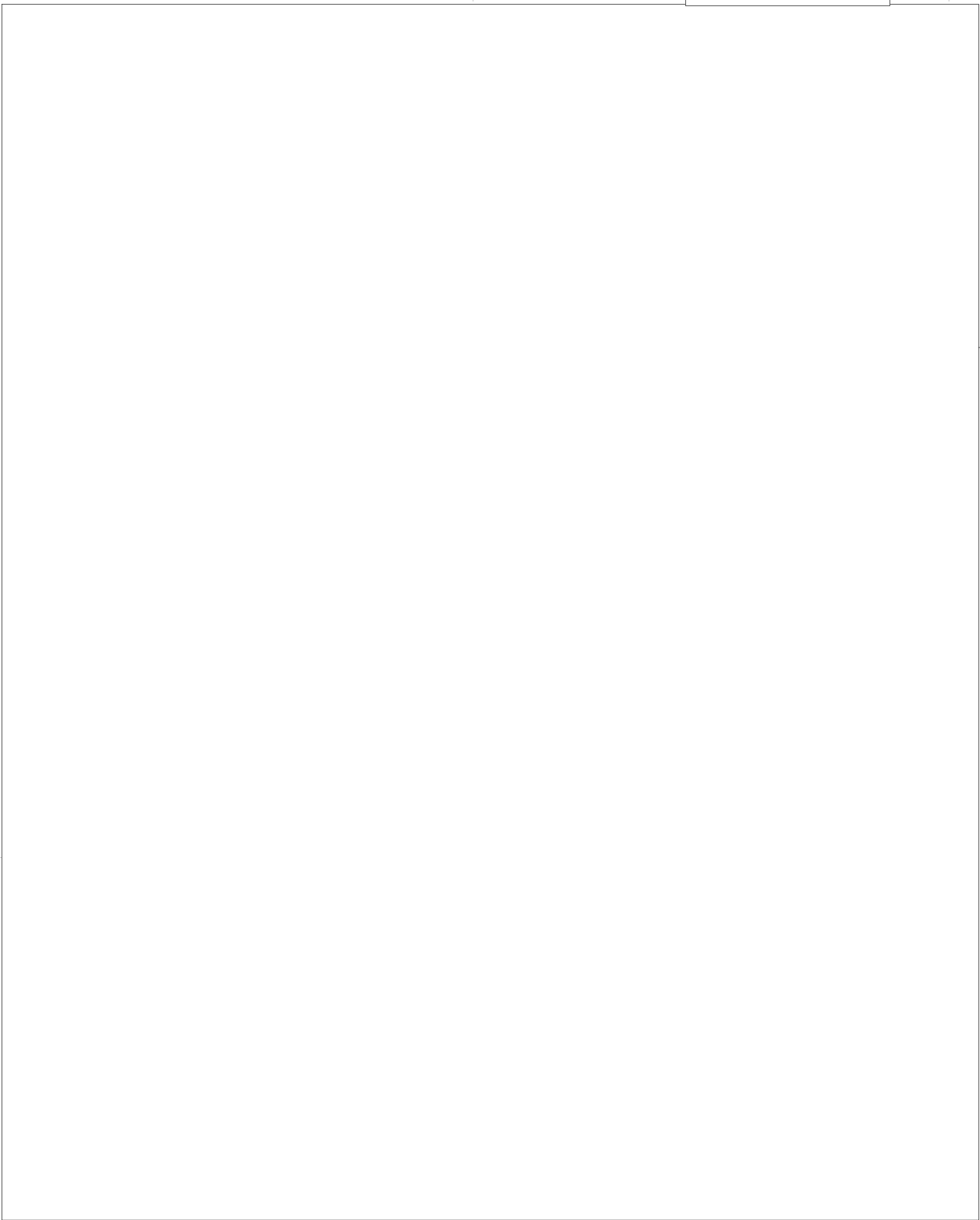
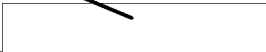
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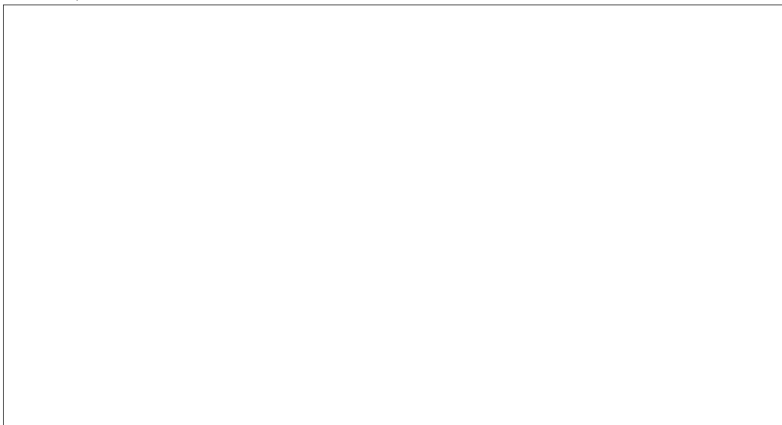
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In Brief





Selected International Environment-Related Meetings

22 May-30 September	1998 Lisbon World Exposition (EXPO '98) Theme: The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future	Lisbon
12 October	APEC Oceans Conference	Honolulu
21-22 October	EU-US High-Level Environment Bilateral Meeting	Brussels
26-28 October	OECD Conference on Eco-Labeling	Berlin
26-30 October	FAO Meeting on Sustainable Fisheries	Rome
2-13 November	Fourth Conference of Parties to the Climate Change Convention	Buenos Aires
4-6 November	Global Environment Facility Council Meeting	Washington
12-18 November	APEC Ministerial and Heads of State Meeting	Kuala Lumpur
17-24 November	Tenth Conference of Parties to the Montreal Protocol	Cairo
30 November-3 December	Third Defense Ministerial of the Americas	Cartagena

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