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EUROPEAN COMMISSION HUMANITARIAN AID OFFICE (ECHO) Its main function is to launch operations designed to meet immediate humanitarian needs. It's in charge of implementing European Community decisions granting humanitarian aid to victims of natural disasters or armed conflict in non-member countries. *Contact: www.ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm*

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR TRADE is responsible for the EU's external trade policy and negotiating EU trade policy on behalf of Europe's 27 member states. Peter Mandelson is the current European Commissioner for Trade. *Contact: 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32 2298 5615 Fax: +32 2299 6087 Web: www.europa.eu.int/comm/commission_barroso/mandelson/index_en.htm*

EUROPEAN COUNCIL brings together the heads of state or government of the European Union and the president of the Commission. It's not legally an institution of the European Union, but it coordinates, arbitrates and disentangles difficult questions and defines the general political guidelines of the EU. Decisions taken at the European Council meetings represent a major impetus in defining the general political guidelines of the EU. *Contact: Web: consilium.europa.eu/european-council*

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT is the only directly elected body of the European Union, the largest multinational and democratically elected international parliament in the world. It has 785 MEPs who exercise democratic control across 27 member states of the EU, on behalf of its 492 million citizens. *Contact: UK Office: Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AA. Tel: 020 7227 4300 Fax: 020 7227 4302/4301 (library) Email: eplondon@europarl.eu.int Web: www.europarl.org.uk*

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY TOWARDS EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE (EUROSTEP) provides information and comment on EU development and cooperation. *Contact: 115 rue Stevin, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32 2 231 1659 Email: admin@eurostep.org Web: www.eurostep.org*

EUROPE'S FORUM ON INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION (EUFORIC) Navigating Europe's international cooperation and development policies and practices. *Contact: Cortenstraat 4, 6211 HT Maastricht, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 43 3285 180 Fax: +31 43 3285 392 Email: info@euforic.org Web: www.euforic.org*

SOUTH WEST UK BRUSSELS OFFICE was established in April 2001 with the aim of providing a unified voice for the south west in Europe. *Contact: 86 Avenue Michel Ange, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium Tel: +32 2 734 4110 Fax: +32 2 734 4434 Email: info@southwestuk.be Web: www.southwestukbrusselsoffice.com*

United Nations

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT Multilateral disarmament-negotiating forum of the international community. *Contact: Jerzy Zaleski, senior political affairs officer, Department for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva Branch, United Nations, Palais des Nations, Room C.119, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Email: jzaleski@unog.ch Web: www.unog.ch/disarmament*

UN ASSOCIATION OF THE UK campaigns for a strong, credible and effective UN. *Contact: UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL. Tel: 020 7766 3444 Email: info@una.org.uk Web: www.una-uk.org*

UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE & DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD) promotes the development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy. *Contact: Palais des Nations, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 917 5809 Fax: +41 22 917 0051 Email: info@unctad.org Web: www.unctad.org*

UN ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) was established under the UN Charter as the principal organ to coordinate economic, social, and related work of the 14 UN specialised agencies, functional commissions and five regional commissions. *Contact: The General Assembly, The Security Council, UN Headquarters, First Avenue at 46th St, New York, NY 10017, USA. Email: ecosocinfo@un.org Web: www.un.org/ecosoc*

UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. *Contact: UNEP/Regional Office for Europe, International Environment House, 6th Floor A & B Blocks, 11-13 Chemin des Anemones, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 917 8279 Fax: +41 22 917 8024 Email: roe@unep.ch Web: www.unep.ch/roe UNEP Climate Change info: www.unep.org/themes/climatechange*

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) has two basic and closely related aims: to protect refugees and seek ways to help them restart their lives in a normal environment. *Contact: UNHCR, Strand Bridge House, 138-142 Strand, London, WC2R 1HH. Tel: 020 7759 8090 Fax: 020 7759 8119 Email: gbrloea@unhcr.org Web: www.unhcr.org.uk*

UK MISSION TO THE UN (NEW YORK) offers a wide range of information about the UK's activities at the UN and support of its different activities, bodies and agencies. *Contact: Sir John Sawyers, UK Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, 1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 885 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: +1 212 745 9200. Fax: +1 212 745 9316. Email: uk@un.int Web: www.ukun.org*

UN REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTRE FOR WESTERN EUROPE services western Europe and provides information and documentation to the countries of the region. *Contact: Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 155, Block C2, 7th Floor, 1040 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32 2788 8484. Email: info@unric.org Web: www.unric-europe.org*

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) is the largest organisation in the world dedicated to improving the lives of children, their families and communities. *Contact: UK Committee for UNICEF, Africa House, 64-78 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NB. Tel: 0870 606 3377/020 7405 5592 Email: helpdesk@unicef.org.uk Web: www.unicef.org.uk*

International Organisations

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT Main intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth, facilitating consultation and cooperation among member governments and countries. It's responsible to member governments collectively. *Contact: Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX. Tel: 020 7747 6500 Fax: 020 7930 0827 Email: info@commonwealth.int Web: www.thecommonwealth.org*

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO) Tripartite UN agency that brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states in common action to promote decent work throughout the world. *Contact: 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 6111 7828 Fax: +44 (0) 22 798 8685 Email: ilo@ilo.org Web: www.ilo.org*

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) International organisation of 185 member countries that was established to promote international monetary cooperation, exchange stability and orderly exchange arrangements. *Contact: Headquarters, 700 19th St NW, Washington DC 20431, USA. Tel: +1 202 623 7300 Fax: +1 202 623 6278 Email: publicaffairs@imf.org Web: www.imf.org*

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION & DEVELOPMENT (OECD) uses its wealth of information on a broad range of topics to help governments foster prosperity and fight poverty through economic growth and financial stability, helping to ensure that the



Under the weather

Be prepared, says Alex Webb from the South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership

● Recent events like the 2003 summer heatwave, Boscastle floods in 2004 and Gloucestershire floods in 2007 highlight the impact of extreme weather events and how unprepared we are. But events like these are only likely to occur more frequently in the future.

Climate change is happening now. And while most people in the south west have heard of climate change, many people don't know how it will affect their jobs, homes, lifestyles and environment. It's predicted that the south west will experience:

- Hotter summers: by the 2050s, average temperatures may be as much as 3.5° C warmer in summer.
- Wetter winters and drier summers: winters are expected to be 5-20% wetter by the 2050s, with summers 15-30% drier.
- More extreme events: heavy rainfall in winter will become more common, twice as frequent by 2080.
- Warmer winters: snowfalls will decrease significantly.
- Rising sea levels - by as much as 80cm by the 2080s. And extreme sea levels could occur 20 times more frequently than at present.
- Warmer sea temperatures.

Yet climate change doesn't need to be an overwhelming prospect - it presents us with both opportunities and challenges. Here are some things you can do to adapt to climate change:

- Use water more efficiently: install a water hippo in all toilet cisterns and, with increasing pressure on water resources expected in summer, a water butt in the garden to collect rainwater (www.swwater.co.uk).
- Plant your garden with climate change in mind: select varieties that are drought tolerant, plant trees in your garden for shade, and avoid paving over lawns - they help to slow water run-off in heavy rain (www.rhs.org.uk/research/climate_change).
- Grow your own fruit and veg (or buy locally grown, seasonal produce). As the climate warms, try growing Mediterranean crops like peaches, bell peppers and olives.
- Protect yourself from exposure to the sun, especially with increased opportunities for an outdoor lifestyle, by wearing sunscreen to protect against skin cancer.
- Prepare for the possibility of extreme weather events. Call the Environment Agency's Flood Line (0845 988 1188) to see if you're at risk and how to prepare. (www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

Efi: The South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP) was established in 2001 to 'investigate, inform and advise on the impacts of climate change'. Web: www.oursouthwest.com/climate, email: swccip@environment-agency.gov.uk