



January 17, 2011

Kilaparti Ramakrishna Returns to Woods Hole Research Center from UNEP

Kilaparti Ramakrishna, an internationally-known climate policy leader and environmental lawyer, is returning to the staff of the Woods Hole Research Center, following a 4-year leave-of-absence with the United Nations Environment Programme. Rama, as he prefers to be called, formally rejoined WHRC on January 13, 2011.

Rama began his leave from WHRC in 2006, when he accepted the position as Policy Advisor to the Executive Director for the United Nations Environment Programme. He is departing from the position of Senior Advisor on Environmental Laws and Conventions. While there, his responsibilities included advising the overall policy direction and framework of UNEP; directing the development of global environmental policy; assisting the Executive Director with the direction of UNEP strategic plan, policies, programme evaluation, and project approvals; and serving as the principal advisor on UNEP's environmental policy and collaboration with other United Nations agencies on global environmental strategy and policy.

Of his return to the Center, Rama said, "Though UNEP and WHRC are quite different institutions, there is a shared focus and a sense of urgency that the world community address critical environmental issues through meaningful policy solutions based on rigorous science. My time away from the Center afforded me an added perspective on, and further increased my respect for, what the Center stands for and the opportunities it affords in defining and defending public interest in maintaining a habitable earth for the present and future generations. I am grateful to John Holdren and the Board of Trustees of the Woods Hole Research Center for granting me this extraordinary opportunity."

Rama returns to a 3-fold position: Holder of Sara Shallenberger Brown Chair in Environmental Law and Policy; Director, WHRC Policy Program, and Vice President.

R. A Houghton, Acting Director of WHRC, commented, "Rama's return couldn't happen at a more opportune time for the Center, and for the world. Rama will bring an expertise in international policy that will rejuvenate the Center's program and help guide preparations for next year's climate convention and the following year's 20th anniversary of the Rio Convention --- both focused on sustainable habitation of the planet."

Rama received his academic training in sciences and law in India and came to Harvard University Law School as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar in 1985. His research interests focused on how developing countries cope with emerging environmental problems and the role, if any, that laws, regulations, judiciary and civil society might play in it.

J. G. Speth, currently a Professor of Law at the Vermont School of Law and former dean of the School of Forestry and Environmental Science at Yale University, has worked with Rama for many years. He said, “Rama’s knowledge of the environmental policy world is an incomparable asset for the Center. His strong relationships not only among the staff but also with partners and collaborators around the world uniquely position him to advance the integration of science with climate change negotiations and initiatives. I am so pleased he has rejoined the institution.”

Rama’s experience in working with the United Nations system will be a unique asset for WHRC, given the institutional commitment to science, education, and policy. Even prior to his recent roles, Rama served as Special Advisor to the United Nations in drafting the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. He also assisted with work on Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and subsequently worked for a while as the Principal Officer for Implementation in CBD secretariat, Montreal.

Lawrence Huntington, Chairman of the Woods Hole Research Center Board of Directors, said, “On behalf of the Board of Directors, I welcome Rama back to the Center. His experience as a global leader in environmental policy is an unparalleled resource for us, and I am pleased to have him rejoin our staff.”

The Woods Hole Research Center addresses the great issues for a healthy planet through science, education, and policy. Center staff combine remote sensing with field research to study, model, map and monitor Earth’s land surface, and advance the knowledge gained to define solutions for sustainable well being. Current core areas for the Center include climate change, land use, and water.

For more information, please contact:

Elizabeth Braun
Director of Communications
Woods Hole Research Center
508 444 1509