

For Immediate Release
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**Conference Sets the Stage for Creation of an International
*Academy of Environmental Law***

Environmental law professors from 21 countries representing every region of the world gathered at the Rockefeller Family Fund Pocantico Hills Conference Center in Tarrytown, New York from April 13-16 to set the stage for the creation of a new International Academy of Environmental Law. The precedent setting meeting sponsored by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) for the first time linked universities throughout the world that have significant environmental law programs.

The IUCN Academy of Environmental Law will provide a mechanism for universities to cooperate in order to strengthen the field of environmental law, one of the three pillars of sustainable development. The key functions of the Academy will include improving environmental legal education; conducting research on cutting-edge environmental issues; coordinating research among participating universities; and building capacity for government agencies, the judiciary, the public and others to address environmental problems. Pace University School of Law Professor Nicholas Robinson, Chair of IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) and organizer of the meeting observed: "This collaboration among university environmental law programs is another important step in building the legal infrastructure to support sustainable development. By bringing together environmental law programs from universities around the world we will be able to enhance environmental legal education, better coordinated research on environmental issues and more effectively share ways to strengthen environmental laws and policies needed to address serious environmental threats such as fisheries depletion, climate change, improper waste disposal, deforestation, and desertification."

The Academy will convene an annual colloquium to address critical areas of environmental law. The first of these colloquia will be held at Shanghai Jiaotong University in Shanghai, China in November 2003. The program will focus on law reform needed to support sustainable energy programs, with special emphasis on assisting developing countries build legal systems that support sustainable energy programs. Shanghai Jiaotong University will also host the formal launch of the Academy at the November meeting. Future Academy meeting will alternate among different regions of the World.

Founded in 1948, IUCN brings together States, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations in a unique partnership to protect the World's natural resources and its environment. IUCN's mission is to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law was founded in 1965 to advance IUCN's mission through the development and reform of environmental law.

Participants at the meeting included Professors Nada Al-Duaij from Kuwait University, Antonio Benjamin Herman from Brazil, John Bonine from University of Oregon, Klaus Bosselmann from the University of Auckland, Alan Boyle from the University of Edinburgh, Jutte Brunnée from the University of Toronto, Jorge Caillaux from the Peruvian Society of Environmental Law, Bharat Desai from Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, Myrna Feliciano from National University of the Philippines, Sandy Gaines from the University of Houston Law Center Jose Juan Gonzalez from the Universidad Metropolitana de Mexico, Piet Gilhuis from Tilberg University in the Netherlands, Michael Jeffery from Macquarie University in Australia, Michael Kidd from the Pietermaritzburg Law Faculty in South Africa, Koh Kheng Lian from the National University of Singapore, Irina Krasnova from the Moscow Judicial Academy, Svitlana Kravchenko from L'viv University in the Ukraine, Richard Laster from Hebrew University in Israel, Elvira Mendez Chang from Pontifica Universidad Catolica de Peru, Charles Okidi from Nairobi University, Richard Ottinger and Lee Paddock from Pace Law School, E.K. Quansah from the University of Botswana, Nicholas Robinson from Pace University School of Law, Dinah Shelton from Notre Dame University, David VanderZwaag from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia and Wang Xi from Shanghai Jiaotong University. Lal Kurukulasuriya, Chief of the Environmental Law Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and Berta Pesti from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) also participated in the meeting.