



ECOLEX: WORLD'S LARGEST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW DATABASE LAUNCHED ON THE WEB

Rome, Italy, 2 December 2003 (IUCN) – A new gateway to information about environmental law is now available on the Internet at www.ecolex.org. The world's largest environmental law database has been developed by combining the legal libraries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IUCN – The World Conservation Union, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

ECOLEX provides online access to over 100,000 legal references and is an essential resource for developing the necessary tools to promote environmental management. The information in the system covers treaties, national legislation, soft law and other non-binding policy and technical guidance documents, judicial decisions, and law and policy literature.

One of the unique aspects of the information coverage is the inclusion of a significant number of legal references from developing countries. Currently, over 120 developing countries have provided input to ECOLEX. Ensuring adequate information coverage from developing countries will remain an important goal for the ECOLEX partner organizations.

Ever since the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment there has been a rapid growth in the number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) negotiated by Governments. Users of ECOLEX can now examine any one of approximately 450 MEAs and see which governments have signed or ratifies that MEA. Conversely, it is also possible to see all the MEAs signed or ratified by any one Government.

The development of ECOLEX has brought together two UN organizations, FAO and UNEP, in a unique partnership with the world's largest conservation organisation, IUCN – all sharing a common vision to provide better electronic access to information on environmental law to build capacity worldwide.

The partners are committed to the further development and enhancement of the ECOLEX gateway in order to respond to the ever-increasing demand for information about environmental law from a wide user base ranging from decision makers, policy advisors and lawyers to NGOs, advocacy groups, students and the general public.

For further information on ECOLEX please contact:

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