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**MESSAGE TO THE SECOND COLLOQUIUM
OF THE IUCN ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
Nairobi, 4 October 2004**

It gives me great pleasure to send my greetings to everyone who has gathered at the University of Nairobi for this timely colloquium of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law on the theme of "land use and environmental Law."

Land use is at the heart of our hopes of achieving truly sustainable development. Yet in urban and rural areas alike, the pressures are immense.

According to the latest projections of UN-Habitat, the world's urban slums will double in population over the next 30 years, meaning that in just one generation, we could see two billion people living in conditions that deny their inhabitants the basic dignities of housing, health care, sanitation, education, transport and employment. Already, nearly half the developing world's urban population lives in unplanned squatter settlements.

The challenges in rural areas are just as formidable. Deforestation and desertification are threatening ecosystems, biodiversity and food security. Nearly two billion hectares of land are affected by human-induced degradation of soils, putting the livelihoods of nearly one billion people at risk. Safeguards must be put in place to ensure that intensification of agricultural production and increased use of agrochemicals, needed to satisfy the growing population in many developing countries, does not lead to further decline in environmental quality. Moreover, there is a need to regularize the tenure of the rural poor so they have the long-term security that comes with living on titled land.

Environmental law has a special role to play in addressing these issues. Law professors and legal experts can help national and local authorities devise legal regimes that enhance sustainable development instead of hindering it. You can help map out realistic and concrete land law reforms. You can share best practices and successful legal models. And through your teaching you can instill in new generations of legal practitioners an appreciation for the rule of law and its essential place in human affairs.

Both the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg recommended strengthening the law for environment and development. I would like to thank you for your support of this cause, and also for timing your meeting to coincide with this year's observance of World Habitat Day. Please accept my best wishes for a successful colloquium.