

## **A Testament to a Visionary**

### **A message from John Scanlon, Head, IUCN Environmental Law Programme and Director, IUCN Environmental Law Centre in Bonn, Germany on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Dr Parvez Hassan Environmental Law Centre in Lahore, Pakistan**

Eight years ago, Dr. Parvez Hassan approached the Asian Development Bank to sell a novel idea: extend technical assistance to a group of law professors who wished to train others to teach environmental law in the Asia and Pacific region. This was something that the Bank had never done before, but believing in Parvez' vision, they granted IUCN a US\$600,000 technical assistance grant. What followed next was a phenomenal collaboration among over 200 environmental law experts and numerous environmental organizations whose in-kind contributions topped the financial contributions of the Bank. Two courses for over 63 law professors from 15 countries were held in Singapore in 1997 and 1998 and "Capacity Building for Environmental Law in the Asian and Pacific Region: Approaches and Resources," the first comparative environmental law book based primarily on materials from the Asian and Pacific Region, was published last year. The book has now been successfully launched in Washington, D.C., Singapore, Bonn, Tokyo, and, most importantly, in Lahore.

This is only one of many success stories that can be associated with Parvez, a man of vision who sees the gem behind the uncut stone, the opportunity behind every challenge. Parvez is well known for his contribution to the development of environmental law, most notably through his commitment to the Draft International Covenant on Environment and Development. Others will, no doubt, speak about this, along with the enormous contribution he has made to IUCN through his role as Councillor, Legal Adviser and Commission Chair. We at the IUCN Environmental Law Programme would like to use this occasion to publicly express our thanks to Parvez for his untiring support for, and commitment to, our capacity building programme. This can be seen through his efforts to obtain the ADB Technical Assistance Grant, the leadership and guidance he has given to the Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law, the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law's first and most productive centre of excellence, and now today, through the inauguration of the Dr Parvez Hassan Environmental Law Centre. This Centre is a very tangible reflection of the personal commitment of Parvez to capacity building and of his outstanding generosity.

The Centre at the Punjab University Law College will, no doubt, be an important venue for promoting the teaching and study of environmental law in Lahore, the country, and the region. We take pride in the contribution that alumni from the Singapore course, and the IUCN Pakistan Country Office have made to the development of the first environmental law syllabus to be approved at University level. No doubt these movements were inspired by Parvez' vision and drive to bring environmental law to more people in his own country.

To commemorate this joyous occasion we have arranged for a set of the IUCN Environmental Law and Policy series of publications to be sent to your library and we are also delighted to present you today (through Dr Wolfgang Burhenne) with a commemorative plaque from the IUCN Environmental Law Centre in Bonn, Germany.

With warmest regards and our heartfelt congratulations

**John Scanlon**, for the IUCN Environmental Law Centre and Programme