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MESSAGE TO THE INAUGURATION OF THE IUCN
ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
Shanghai, 4 November 2003

Environmental law, both national and international, establishes the principles and rules that states have adopted in order to protect the precious ecosystems and resources upon which all life and progress depend. *Agenda 21* recommended strengthening the law for environment and development, and called on universities in particular to cooperate in building capacity in the realm of environmental law. That call was repeated last year in the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

It is therefore most welcome that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is establishing a new global network of university law departments dedicated to progress in this area. I would like to congratulate all academic leaders assembled at Shanghai Jiao Tong University for their role in making possible the launch of the *IUCN Academy of Environmental Law*. IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law has rendered an important service in implementing *Agenda 21*'s recommendations that academic institutions cooperate in the areas of curriculum planning, course development, and the dissemination of information on legal and regulatory innovations in the field of environment and development. It is heartening indeed to see the successful realization of the planning decisions taken at the Academy's Preparatory Meeting, which were reported to the Legal Counsel of the United Nations and others at UN headquarters on 16 April this year.

The United Nations looks forward to the teaching and research that the Academy will now undertake. And we welcome the academic contributions that law professors worldwide will make towards our common goal of sustainable development on our one and only planet.

Kofi A. Annan