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IUCN is the world's largest environmental knowledge network and has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN is a multi-cultural, multilingual organization with 1000 staff located in 62 countries. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland.

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## NEWS RELEASE

### For immediate release

# IUCN Launches First-Ever Academy of Environmental Law

**Shanghai, China, 4 November 2003 (IUCN)** – IUCN – The World Conservation Union today presents the first-ever Academy of Environmental Law, a global network and forum for universities to achieve higher standards in environmental legal education and research worldwide.

The IUCN Academy, which will bring together leading academic institutions in all fields of environmental law, will convene annual colloquia in different parts of the world; promote research on cutting-edge environmental issues; and facilitate cooperation among participating universities. To date, 45 universities from 45 countries have supported the initiative.

“*Agenda 21* recommended strengthening the law on environment and development, and called on universities in particular to cooperate in building capacity in the realm of environmental law... It is therefore most welcome that the IUCN is establishing a new global network of university law departments dedicated to progress in this area,” said United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan in a Message to the Inauguration of the IUCN Academy.

“IUCN is privileged to convene the world's foremost academics in environmental law under this new endeavour, which implements recommendations made in *Agenda 21* and strengthens one of the pillars of sustainable development,” said Professor Nicholas A. Robinson, Chairman of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law.

The inaugural Colloquium is being hosted from 4-6 November by China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University on the topic of “The Law of Energy for Sustainable Development”.

“Energy is rarely a topic of conservation gatherings, yet so much in the world of conservation depends on the developments in the field of energy,” said IUCN Director General Achim Steiner in a video address to the Colloquium delegates.

“What better place to launch the IUCN Academy and its first Colloquium on sustainable energy law than in China, where decisions made today will affect the future of the fastest-growing continent and indeed the whole world,” he added

Close to 100 international experts are attending the Colloquium. Professor Alexandre Ch. Kiss of France, President of the European Council for Environmental Law, will deliver the first three Academy Public International Lectures on Environmental Law on 5-6 November. Professor Kiss is one of the world's most eminent environmental legal specialists and holds the Elizabeth Haub Prize in Environmental Law. Dr Thomas Johansson of Sweden will deliver the keynote address on “The Imperative of Energy for Sustainable Development.”

Other participants in the inaugural ceremonies for the IUCN Academy include Professors Xie Shenwu and Ye Quyuan, President and Vice President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Professor Charles O. Okidi (Kenya), University of Nairobi, Mr John Scanlon, Head of IUCN's Environmental Law Programme, Mr Peter Bradford, former Chairman of the New York Public Service Commission, Professor Richard L. Ottinger, Dean Emeritus of Pace University Law School, and other international figures.

Some areas of research envisaged for the Academy are:

Identifying the legal reforms required to maintain, restore or enhance the robustness of biological systems (including biodiversity) amidst climate change and human population growth;

Environmental Law Management of Mountain Regions;

Defining and Elaborating International Environmental Humanitarian Law applicable in times of armed conflict;

Legal Measures Appropriate for Implementing the Kyoto Protocol; and

Legal Means for Implementation and Application of "Ecosystem Management".

The IUCN Academy is the fruit of eight-year work by IUCN and its Commission on Environmental Law, which brings together close to 900 experts from over 130 countries worldwide.

**For more information contact:**

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*Media representatives are invited to attend the official launch of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law, taking place from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. on 4 November 2003 in Cypress Hotel, Shanghai, People's Republic of China.*

Statement from UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan is available from: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/law/pdfdocuments/UNSC-IUCNAcademy.pdf>

B-roll (Betacam SP, PAL) of the Statement from IUCN Director General, Achim Steiner is available upon request from: xec@iucn.org