

# ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM BEYOND 2000'

**IFEJ**  
International Federation



SRI LANKA ENVIRONMENTAL  
JOURNALISTS FORUM (SLEJF)



Proceedings of the  
**6<sup>th</sup> World Congress of  
Environmental Journalists**

Colombo-Sri Lanka

October 19-23, 1998

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# *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists*

*Environmental Journalism beyond 2000  
To Work Together For A More Sustainable Future*

*The Blue Water Hotel  
Colombo - Sri Lanka.  
October 19 - 23, 1998*

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***6th World Congress of  
Environmental Journalists***

***JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY***

***Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF),***

***Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ)***

***and***

***International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ)***

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## Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF) Publications and Periodicals

01. Earth Summit - Media Hand book (Sinhala) 48 pgs
02. Environment; Reporting Hand Book (Sinhala) 200 pgs
03. Environmental Monthly News Briefing (English / Sinhala) 75 pgs
04. Diyadama monthly environmental newspaper (Sinhala) 10 pgs
05. The Demon's Wife - population short stories (Sinhala) 96 pgs
06. Siripalapura Mahattaya - population short stories (Tamil) 128 pgs
07. 1993 Citizens' Report on SL Eco and Development (English) 275 pgs
08. Access - monthly environmental wall newspaper (Sinhala)
09. A Green Carpet for Tired Feet - Success Stories (Sinhala) 158 pgs
10. Samanala Wasanthaya - AIDS Pictorial story book (Sinhala) 20 pgs
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14. Generation - Water Resources monthly Newsletter (Sinhala / English)
15. Soba Cineru - bi monthly Newsletter (Sinhala) 4 pgs
16. Your Sri Lanka - Still pictures Catalogue (English) 16 pgs
17. 1997 Citizens' Report on SL Social Development (English) 75 pgs
18. Piyawaren Piyawara - HIV/AIDS hand book (Sinhala) 230 pgs
19. Wetland Reports - translations (Sinhala / Tamil) 86 pgs
20. Audio-Visual Media & Eco Education in Sri Lanka (English) 50 pgs
21. Eco Tourism (Sinhala) 16 pgs
22. Eco News Service - bi monthly (Sinhala/English/Tamil) 50 pgs
23. Soba Cineru Magazine (Sinhala / English) 20 pgs
24. Promotion of Eco Awareness in Rural Communities (English) 40 pgs
25. Journalists Environmental hand book (Sinhala) 128 pgs
26. Sri Lanka Media Catalogue (English) 232 pgs
27. Environment is their vision and mission (English) 198 pgs
28. Media Ethics in Sri Lanka (sinhala) 150 pgs
29. Collection of Environmental Cartoons (English)

*For more details regarding these publications please contact SLEJF.*

# *Background on organizers*

## ● *Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF)*

The Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF) is a professional media NGO interested in environment and development. Established in January 1987, with support from the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), this organization has a membership of over 500. Its Secretariat receives the assistance of 14 full-time staff, five consultants and 38 part-time volunteers.

It functions as the coordinating office for the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) and Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA). It is the only NGO in Sri Lanka to have won the coveted Global 500 Award of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Inclusive of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the SLEJF holds membership in 21 international organizations. It also holds membership in 31 state/community/UN environmental and media committees. At the same time, the SLEJF functions as the coordinator in Sri Lanka of seven active networks of international environmental & media organizations. As much as 820 local NGOs & CBOs, 1099 school environmental clubs, 2973 schools and 2424 public libraries maintain direct contact with the SLEJF. Activities relating to these affiliations are coordinated by the Sri Lanka Federation of School Environmental Clubs, the National Environmental Information Centre, Soba Cineru Television, Sri Lanka Eco Photo Foundation, the Environmental News Service and CSAD Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Community Front for Water Resources, all of which are independent organizations. The Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum functions as the focal point of the network encompassing these organizations.



## ● *Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ)*

The AFEJ (founded in 1988 with support from UN-ESCAP) is the oldest world organization of professional environmental journalists grouping over 5000 members in 23 countries representing the Asia Pacific region. Since then, seven chairmen (one ad hoc), including the present chair have headed the forum. From only 12 National Forums of Environmental Journalists (NFEJs) originally affiliated with AFEJ, this has grown to 23. The countries include the Philippines, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, China, Fiji, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Bhutan, Vietnam, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Mongolia and Tonga.

AFEJ's work programme includes specialized regional training workshops on environmental reporting, publications such as books on environmental reporting, a newsletter and a clipping service, technical assistance for NFEJs, as well as support to selected NFEJ activities, journalist exchange programmes and research and study programmes for excellence in environmental reporting. Many AFEJ and NFEJ members have their own work programme, statute and membership list, which can be obtained by establishing direct contact with them. (for more information, please see page 48).

AFEJ headquarters is based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Dinesh Weerakkody, Evyn Testoni and Anthony Arulenthiran are the Executive Staff of AFEJ. The AFEJ annual conference will be held in Comilla, Bangladesh on September 13 - 17, 1999 and hosted by the Bangladesh Forum of Environmental Journalists. Year 2000 Annual Congress will be held in Fiji 5 - 9 June.

## ● *International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ)*

The International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) was established in October 1993 at a historic meeting in Dresden, Germany.

In November 1994 IFEJ met again in Paris, France and adopted statutes and elected a 19-member administrative council for three-year terms. Since then IFEJ has held annual meetings in Boston in 1995, Cebu City, Philippines in 1996 and Budapest, Hungary in 1997. The 1999 conference will be held in Bogota, Columbia on October 11 - 15 and hosted by the Columbian Environmental Journalists Association. Year 2000 Annual Congress will be held in Egypt.

IFEJ is an umbrella organization representing about 40 national organizations with more than 6,000 members worldwide. IFEJ also has individual members living in more than 60 countries around the world. IFEJ works to improve the accuracy, quality and standards of environmental journalism by publishing newsletters and handbooks; by organizing educational seminars and workshops; and by supporting journalists who have been threatened by censorship or repression. In addition to the annual meetings, IFEJ publishes a quarterly newsletter, "The Planet's Voice"; a tipsheet of international environmental news ideas for journalists that is distributed via the Internet. IFEJ has also published a directory of its members.

IFEJ headquarters is based in Paris, France. Michael Schweres and Louisette Gouverne are the Co-Executive Directors of IFEJ. At the 1997 meeting in Budapest an administrative council was elected for three-year terms.

## **SRI LANKA - FACT FILE**

**Size** : 65,610 sq kms

**Location** : 880 kms north  
of the equator,  
off the southern  
tip of India

**Capital** : Sri Jayawardenepura

**Commercial Capital** :  
Colombo

**Administrative divisions** :  
9 provinces, 24 districts

**Communications** :  
9 TV channels,  
22 Radio channels  
news papers ; 12 dailies &  
84 weeklies

**Population**:(1997) : 18.9 million

**Density** : 260 persons per sq km

**Life expectancy at birth** :  
74.2 female; 69.5 male

**Languages** : Sinhala,  
Tamil, English

**Literacy rate** : 89%

**Currency** :  
67 SL Rupees = US \$ 1

**Annual per capita income** :  
US \$ 709

**Ethnic groups** : Sinhalese 74%  
Tamil 18.1% Muslims 7.1%  
Burghers (descendants of Dutch  
and Portuguese colonists) and  
others 0.8 %

**Religions** : Buddhism 69%  
Hinduism 15%  
Christianity 8%, Islam 8%

**Major exports** : Garments,  
gemstones, tea, rubber,  
coconut, textiles

**Labour force** :  
46%, agriculture:  
29%, industry and commerce;  
19% services

**Climate** : Lowlands : tropical,  
average 27 C; central hills :  
cooler, with temperatures  
dropping to 16 C.

The south west monsoon  
brings rain to the western,  
southern and central regions  
from May to July, while the  
northeastern monsoon occurs  
in the north and east in  
December and January.

## *Sri Lanka's Environmental Issues and Problems*

The Sri Lanka National Report to the UNCED (1992) identified a number of critical environmental problems and issues. The following were the chief among them:

- \* Deforestation caused by shifting cultivation, timber exploitation, fuelwood collection, encroachment of agriculture on forests;
- \* Coastal erosion, and resulting damage to beaches, coastal conservations and communities;
- \* Soil erosion and loss of agricultural productivity of the land;
- \* Pollution of water bodies, coastal ecosystems and beaches caused by the discharge of industrial pollutants and raw sewage;
- \* (Projected) sea level rise, landslides, floods and other natural disasters, the victims of which are predominantly from the poorest segments of society, who are compelled to take the risk of occupying vulnerable areas;
- \* Siltation of reservoirs built for irrigation and or hydropower generation purposes;
- \* Poor natural resource management and land use patterns, resulting in the marginalization of lands, loss of productivity and depletion of non-renewable resources,
- \* Atmospheric pollution from vehicle emissions and industries;
- \* Urban expansion without concomitant infrastructural growth, resulting in the proliferation of slums and shanties, and many other urban problems.

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## **PREFACE**

This report contains the proceedings of the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists, held at the Blue Water Hotel, Wadduwa, Sri Lanka, from 19 to 23 October 1998, organized by Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF), Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) and International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ). The report also contains the texts of most of the addresses delivered at the Inaugural Session including the presentations made by various speakers.

The Congress, well attended throughout, illustrated yet again the strengths of the co-organizers: their organizing power and the capacity to muster the required financial as well as other logistical support. The 6th Congress has made an indelible mark in the annals of environmental journalism by recording some of significant achievements interalia (a) formulation of a Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists, (b) formation of the Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association, and (c) rejuvenation and strengthening of AFEJ including the formulation of a 3-year Strategic Management Plan for its future activities.

It need not be reiterated too strongly that the environmental journalists all over the world have a vision and mission in their hands that no other professional seems to have. It, therefore, behoves on us to live up to the expectations the civil society has placed on us.

On behalf of the co-organizers and my ownself, I feel it is my duty to once again offer a word of thanks to everybody who contributed to the success of this Congress. I must also thank the colleagues who assisted me in compiling this report.

**Dharman Wickremaratne**  
**Chief Organizer**  
**Colombo, Congress**

*(Chairman SLEJF / AFEJ and Deputy Secretary IFEJ)*

## ***OUR THANKS***

The success of the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists held in Colombo is attributable to several factors, the first of which, indisputably, is the generous financial support received from our donors. Without their magnanimous assistance the success achieved in this Congress would have, perhaps, been a far cry.

Our co-organizers, IFEJ and AFEJ, gave of their best at all times to ensure the smooth functioning of the Congress, even to the extent of providing guidance where necessary.

The two Sri Lankan Ministers, Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake, Minister of Tourism and Aviation, and Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources extended benign patronage by functioning as the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour respectively at the Inaugural Session. Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake, Minister of Environment and Forestry was present at the Closing Session as the Chief Guest.

Dinners were hosted on all five days of the Congress by these three Ministers as well as by Hon. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Media and Telecommunications. The Ambassador of the European Union in Sri Lanka, H.E. Ilkka Usitalo also hosted a dinner on the second day of the Congress.

Various other organizations, groups and individuals in Sri Lanka, including the media, gave of their best towards the organizational and promotional activities of this Congress. The acumen and the sagacity with which the supporting staff worked, day and night for quite some time, undoubtedly contributed to the success of the Congress in no small measure.

It is my bounden duty, on behalf of the co-organizers and myself, to profusely thank all the aforementioned Ministers, donors, other personalities and organizations whose patronage and support will remain unforgotten for many years to come.

Finally it is a source of pleasure for me to thank all the participants who were, in fact, the most important actors in this drama, the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists.

● **Dharman Wickremaratne**

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

The 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists was held from 19 to 23 October 1998, at the Blue Water Hotel, Wadduwa, Colombo, Sri Lanka. **"Environmental Journalism Beyond 2000: To Work Together for a More Sustainable Future"** was the chosen theme of this Congress which was jointly organized by Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF), Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ), and International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ). Generous financial support for this Congress was extended by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Commonwealth Foundation (TCF), Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Sri Lanka, Lyonnaise des Eaux, HIVOS, US-AEP, and Goethe Institute. There were 76 participants from 34 countries present at the congress.

Two Sri Lankan Ministers, Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake, Minister of Tourism and Aviation, and Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources were present at the Inaugural Session as the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour respectively. Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake, Minister of Environment and Forestry was present at the Closing Session as the Chief Guest.

After the address of welcome by Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, Chairman of SLEJF, on behalf of the host country, Prof. Jim Detjen delivered an address in his capacity as the President of IFEJ. Thereafter the two Ministers addressed the Congress followed by the representatives of the Congress-supporting agencies.

From its planning stage, the Congress aimed to focus on several important areas of concern out of which the following can be considered noteworthy:-

\* Environmental journalism as practised in different parts of the world;



- \* Evaluation of news for its importance and value, investigative reporting and ethical considerations in environmental journalism;
- \* Environmental problem areas in North-South perspective; and
- \* Role and responsibilities of national environmental journalists' organizations.
- \* To bring together, the current and potential 40 environmental journalists organizations from Asia, Pacific, Africa, Europe, Middle-East, Central, North & Latin America, Eastern Europe.
- \* Formulation of a code of ethics for environmental journalists (the first such code in the world).
- \* Establishment of Commonwealth Environmental journalists Association by representatives of National Environmental media NGO's of respective regions.
- \* Formulation of IFEJ 3 year Strategic Management Plan.
- \* To initiate and illustrate the benefits of continuing networking between environmental media and NGO's.
- \* To enable IFEJ & AFEJ to receive feedback on the operational status, achievements and constraints experienced by existing environmental journalists organizations in the world.

In the course of the Congress, the participants were able to address these issues, individually and collectively.

Some of the salient achievements of the Congress, as enumerated below, are indicative of the adequacy of attention the Congress devoted for these issues;

## ***COLOMBO CONGRESS ACHIEVEMENTS***

\* The Congress was able to bring together 76 delegates from 34 countries from Asia-Pacific, Africa, Middle-East, Central, North and Latin America as well as Eastern and Western Europe. The presence of a large number of representatives of environmental journalists' organizations was significant.

\* Throughout the duration of the Congress, the participants evinced a keen interest to establish contacts among environmental journalist's organizations from different parts of the world and thereby promote the exchange of experiences.

\* The role of and conditions for world environmental journalism were stressed in no uncertain terms which were accepted by the participants.

\* Formulation of a 3-year Strategic Management Plan for the AFEJ, after lengthy deliberations, was by no means an achievement which can be easily brushed aside.

\* Formulation and adoption of a Code of Ethics for world Environmental Journalists, the first of its kind in the world, by the Congress was perhaps the greatest achievement.

\* Environmental journalists from the Asia-Pacific Region were able to rejuvenate and strengthen their organization, the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ), in the course of this Congress.

\* Another significant achievement of this Congress was the establishment of a Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) in order to tap and make use of the resources of the Commonwealth. Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne of Sri Lanka mooted the idea of forming an association of this nature.

\* As a result of positive and fruitful discussions, in the course of the Congress, on funding and collaborative possibilities, representatives of funding agencies displayed an accommodative attitude which augurs well for the future.

\* The Recommendations and the Colombo Declaration which emanated from the Congress were the inevitable outcomes of fruitful and lengthy deliberations by the participants.

\* The benefits from networking among the national organizations of environmental journalists were adequately illustrated and the need to create networks as far as possible was accepted at this Congress. The suggestion made by the Founder of IFEJ to regionalize it by establishing regional offices in various regions, including the Arab and Spanish world, can be considered as a positive initiative.

\* The concensus reached by the participants in decrying the harassment of journalists in certain countries in the recent past was conspicuous by the unanimous agreement reached at the Congress to publicise whenever such instances take place.

## COMMENTS

*We give below some randomly selected comments made by the participants about the Congress:*

"The adoption of the Code of Ethics was a historic moment of environmental journalists of the world, which was enshrined in the Colombo Declaration, which also included the other important roles an environmental journalist should play. Discussions on funding possibilities were also an important part of the Congress, reflecting the realities faced by many of our forums.

SLEJF did an excellent job. You could not have been more prepared".

*\* Leong Shen-Li, Malaysia*

*Treasurer, Malaysian Forum of Environmental Journalists (MFEJ)*

"Besides networking with colleagues, we learnt about training and other issues, as well as participated in the discussions on the Code of Ethics.

Very good organisation, well planned and well executed by a dedicated staff of local and loyal professionals, under the leadership of Dharman".

*\* Haroldo Castro, USA*

*Conservation International*

"The training part in the Congress was extremely useful for me as a chance to meet professional colleagues from all over the world and share experiences and ideas with them. I hope in the opposite direction -- from myself to other people, I have been able to give information and ideas to others who don't know much about Eastern Europe.

It was useful in regard to enlarging my knowledge about how environmental journalism is practised in other countries and improving my ability to tackle issues in my work based on the ideas of colleagues as to how they approach the same issues. I wish to express my renewed

thanks for an opportunity to participate in a very well organised IFEJ congress".

*\* Albena Arnaudava, Bulgaria*  
*Chairperson, Union of Bulgarian Environmental Journalists*

"I think that Jim Detjen's workshop on the training of environmental journalists gave me some valuable clues in formulating a similar course in Greece for journalists who want to become environmental journalists.

Personally I intend to start working on some issues with other Balkan journalists and also start an initiative for the creation of a forum of Greek writers on the environment".

*\* Eleni Andrikopoulou*  
*Environmental Journalist, Greece*

"The congress provided an opportunity to make contacts with other professionals in the field. It was extremely useful because it brought together journalists from 41 countries. For the first time a Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists was established and contacts to possible donors were made, who can support future congresses.

We want to thank you again for SLEJF efforts which made this our most successful Congress".

*\* Valentin Thurn, Germany*  
*Founder of the IFEJ*

"It is always useful when people of the same interest meet to discuss issues related to their profession. This opportunity given to share experiences was pretty good and interesting.

We can say the 6th Congress provided the profession with a Code of Ethics and this, I think, is a major step. The establishment of a

Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) is certainly a wise move we should be proud of".

**\* Angele Luh, Cameroon**  
**General Secretary,**  
**Cameroon Mother Earth Communications**

"The discussion on ethics was very relevant because environmental journalists have at certain times exceeded their limits and maligned certain individuals and institutions.

It was a very useful opportunity to share ideas, and for one coming from the Pacific Region it was a really good opportunity to hear of modern and effective reporting strategies from colleagues from the Western countries. To my mind, the most significant feature was the formation of a Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA)".

**\* Dorothy Hatigeva, Solomon Islands**  
**Solomon Islands Environmental Journalists Forum**

"This is the best AFEJ congress we have attended. It was useful to improve the projects of China Forum. I got to know the activities of the national forums around the world.

We hope to spread the information about AFEJ's new plan and about IFEJ among the media in China to improve China's environmental journalism".

**\* Yang Mao, China**  
**Chairman, China Forum of Environmental Journalists (CFEJ)**

"Participation in the Congress was very useful. We learned new methods and new information. I presented my work in Egypt. Most important, I gained experience as Egypt will be hosting the 8th IFEJ Congress".

**\* Randa Fouad, Egypt**  
**Treasurer, Egypt Writers of Environment and Development**

*6th World Congress of  
Environmental Journalists  
Colombo - Sri Lanka, October 19 - 23, 1998*

**PROCEEDINGS**

**Pre - Congress Tour, Sunday - October 18, 1998**

An optional half-day nature tour was organized, after lunch, on this day for the benefit of the participants who had arrived at the hotel by that time. They were taken to Unawatuna, one of the magnificent beach resorts on the South coast of Sri Lanka. Enroute to Unawatuna, they had the opportunity of taking a boat ride in the picturesque Madu River at Balapitiya. The well preserved mangroves and primitive methods of fishing as well as village life in the river surroundings would have no doubt enthralled the visitors. They also made a brief stop in Galle, the capital of the Southern Province of Sri Lanka where the 16th century fortress used both by the Portuguese and the Dutch is located by the side of the natural harbour.



*Pre Congress participants at a scenic spot located in the middle of Madu river a wetland zone in Southern, Sri Lanka.*

The names of the participants who joined the pre Congress tour are: Helena Blomquist - Sweden, Angele Luh - Cameroon, Dorothy Hatigava - Solomon Islands, Hutton Archer - GEF, Lisa Lumbao - USAEP, Wirasak Salayakanod - Thailand, Ziyad Alawneh - Jordan and Hafedh Hentati - Tunisia

## Day 1: Monday - October 19, 1998

After breakfast, the participants visited the national zoo situated at Dhiwala, south of Colombo. This is considered to be one of the best zoological gardens in Asia. The Director of the Zoological Garden briefed the visitors about the animals present in the zoo.

In the afternoon an excursion was arranged for the participants to visit Galle. On the way to Galle, they visited the Buddhist Temple in Kalutara.



*The wonders of nature - Enjoy!*

located by one of the largest rivers in Sri Lanka. They also had the opportunity of visiting the turtle hatchery at Kosgoda and thereafter the beach resort at Hikkaduwa where a ride in glass-bottomed boats in order to see the colourful corals is an opportunity no tourist would like to miss.



After spending time to enjoy the beauty of the Galle harbour and the fortress, the visitors returned to the hotel in time for *the dinner hosted by the Hon. Minister of Tourism and Aviation.*

## Day 2 : Tuesday - October 20, 1998

### Inaugural Session

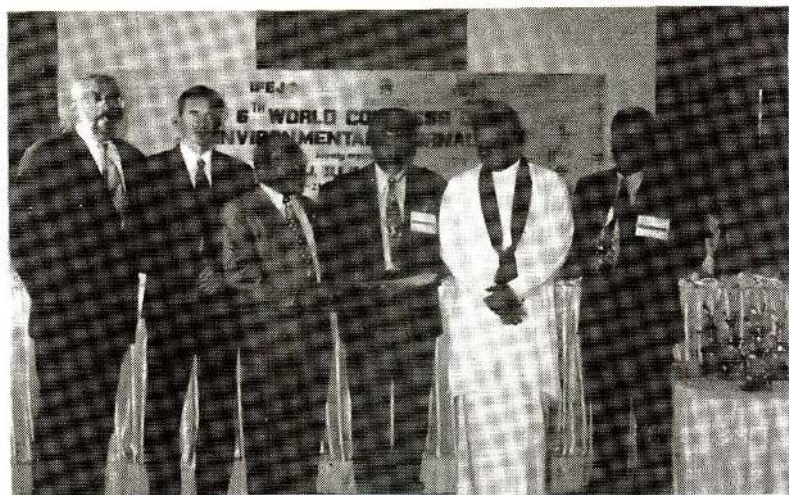


*Lighting of the traditional oil lamp at the inauguration of the Congress.*

"**Environmental Journalism Beyond 2000: To Work Together for a More Sustainable Future**" was the chosen theme of the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists. Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake, Minister of Tourism and Aviation was the Chief Guest at the Inaugural Session while Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources functioned as the Guest of Honour.

The delegates were welcomed to the meeting by Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, Chairman of Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF). This Congress, he said, has drawn 76 delegates from

nearly 40 countries. He pointed out that this meeting would provide an opportunity for journalists and media professionals from different parts of the world to meet and discuss different aspects of their work and experiences as professionals in their regions. Also it would provide them an opportunity to discuss environmental news with a global, regional and local perspective akin to richer reporting.



*Declaring the opening of the congress.*

He said the Congress would also try to formulate a broad Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists worldwide. This, he said, would be the first such Code in the world. The important roles played by and the responsibilities of national and regional forums will also be discussed. He pointed out that in a fast developing country like Sri Lanka, which had opened its doors to foreign investment, it was the duty of environmental journalists to undertake their work with a sense of responsibility. Environmental journalists continue to have a very important role to play.

Prof. Jim Detjen, President of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ), in his address said that according to several recent studies, mass media is in fact the way people learn about the state of their environment. Television, radio, newspapers and magazines

continue to play a vital role in informing people about the environment. In 1997 the Canada based Environment Monitor carried out a survey covering 24,000 people in 27 countries. This survey found that the interest in environmental issues continued to be high, and had increased over the last five years. In the US, another survey found that the overwhelming concern was about the state of the environment and this was even more than the interest in crime, scandals and other news reports. Climate, deforestation, fisheries and population growth were some of the issues people continue to express concern about. However, despite this interest in the environment, the job for the environmental journalist is not an easy one. Several journalists have been attacked, threatened and intimidated for doing their job and some have even been killed. Meetings like the IFEJ, Prof. Detjen pointed out, provide opportunities for journalists to meet, build contacts and friendships with those in other countries and also to express solidarity with their partners in other parts of the world.



*Hon. Minister of Tourism and Aviation there address*

The role of environmental journalists in taking the message of the environment to the people in developing countries like Sri Lanka was stressed by the Minister of Tourism and Aviation, Hon. Dharmasiri

Senanayake. He pointed out that developing countries have a need to develop economically, but this need should not be fulfilled at the cost of the environment. Development has to be sustainable, he said. The environment, he said, was globally and locally challenged by development. He stressed that there is a protective need to secure the environment from our own hands.

As he has a special interest in tourism, he said that in this area of human endeavour the protection of the environment is particularly important. Tourism in Sri Lanka is a special thrust area in the National Economic Programme. He said that while every effort would be made to make tourists welcome in Sri Lanka, they would rather encourage tourists who have an interest in the culture, traditions and natural environment of Sri Lanka. The idea was to encourage the eco-conscious tourist instead of the mass tourist. It was also essential for a country to determine its tourism capacity, as the resources were limited and make an effort not to overcarry that capacity. There was an enormous and deep responsibility for journalists in this connection, he said. They have to report responsibly and restrain themselves from being too boisterous. They should approach their jobs with maturity and restraint. The need for balanced reporting was stressed by him. Journalists, he said, should have the ability to present news and avoid distorting the facts. The freedom and independence of the press, he said, should be maintained and law-givers and politicians should understand the role of the journalist. The need for greater transparency in access to information for journalists was stressed by the Minister.

The Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse in his address stated that it was fitting that the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists was being held in Sri Lanka in the Year of the Ocean.

In Sri Lanka, he said, the water-linked resources were many, including estuaries, mangroves, and lagoons. He said over a third of the population lives in the coastal belt and this area comprises almost 20 percent of the



*Hon. Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources delivering his address.*

land. Environmental journalists present here today, he hoped, would get an opportunity to see the environmental resources of the country. Sri Lanka, he explained, is a major biodiversity area and the biodiversity per unit of land was amongst the highest in South Asia. He said though Sri



*A section representative of the media organizations, NGO's and donors.*

Lanka had extensive documentation and a large collection of well preserved plant species, there was a need for a similar system for animal resources as well. This, he said, was particularly important in international debates about the country of origin of different biological material.

He said journalists had an important and broad role to play. They were not only responsible for the collection and dissemination of information, but must also highlight areas of new knowledge. Journalists, he said, should not hesitate to investigate and criticise, but they must also subject themselves and members of their profession to self-criticism.

A message from Dr. Klaus Topfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which was read by his special representative, pointed out that though the future was unpredictable, the options were not unknown. There was a need to share perspectives on different options and the Congress in Colombo was an opportunity to do so. The media, he pointed out, had an important role to play in alerting the public of the threats to the environment and in clarifying the options available. He said that the environmental crisis is far from having been resolved. He said that fossil fuel consumption was rising dangerously, creating a severe impact on the environment. The ozone hole is the largest ever, and the rate of plant and animal extinction is alarming. *Journalists and the media have a natural attraction to stories about conflicts and catastrophes rather than reports on long term trends. Often the need for hard news, tight deadlines and the inordinate lack of sources, hamper environmental journalists from educated reporting on the environment. However, in-depth reports which set the context of environmental information could play a vital role in leading people to make refined choices and influence the destiny of the earth's environment.* If the choices that lay before individuals, for instance, between pollution and health and the environment were clearly articulated, appropriate and informed choices would be possible. The responsibility of a journalist, he pointed out, was to make all elements of a certain issue clear to the public as it is their "job to help us see".

David Lazarus, Chief of UN Information Service, ESCAP, read a brief message from ESCAP's Executive Secretary, Adrianus Mooy and from Dr. R. Karim, Chief of the Environment Division in ESCAP. He said that it was encouraging to note the success with which AFEJ was performing as an independent body without any assistance from ESCAP. "No assistance does not mean no interest", he said. ESCAP knew the influence journalists can have on the world and always attached considerable importance to the activities of AFEJ. He said ESCAP looks forward to working together in the future, particularly in the organization of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in the year 2000. Finally he said that ESCAP would like to congratulate all the forums and the SLEJF for hosting this Congress.



*The introduction to the congress session in progress.*

The US-Asia Environment Partnership (US-AEP) Communications Specialist, Lisa Lumbao stated that her organization is currently working with governments and industries, in the area of environment, in ten countries in Asia, and a wealth of information on environment was available to journalists in the region. More than 1.5 million Asians die each year from the ill-effects of air pollution, she said. In addition, rapid

population growth and the faster pace of industrialization in the Asian countries have had serious environmental consequences, she further said. According to the US-AEP experts, the key to reducing these environmental effects, while maintaining industrial growth, lies in reducing the intensity of pollution in the production and use of goods and services.

Olv Herner, Senior Adviser of the Royal Norwegian Embassy (NORAD) in Colombo said that sound management of natural resources was dependent on closing the communication gap between the different stakeholders. This is the job of media professionals, he said, and groups like the SLEJF could build up public opinion in civil society.

A message from Dr. Humayun Khan, Director of the Commonwealth Foundation (TCF) also outlined the role of journalists in the protection of the environment and the importance of sharing experiences with journalists from other parts of the world. The environment is a subject uppermost in everybody's mind the world over. In this regard, the goals set by the IFEJ and AFEJ for the year 2000 are praiseworthy. As such, the role that enlightened and informed journalism has to play is vital.

Stan van Wichelen, Head of Bureau Asia and the former Soviet Union, HIVOS, in his message stated that HIVOS strongly believes that supporting local initiatives of NGOs and CBOs in the field of economics, culture, human rights, gender and the environment can help make a better world for us and for future generations. This Congress justifies two HIVOS policy spearheads, the environment and human rights. People throughout the world have a basic right to live and work in a safe and sustainable environment and to be informed on these issues. Colombo Congress is so important because environmental journalists are a crucial element in making civil society and state actors take their respective responsibilities in promoting a better environment.

Environmental debates and issues are ultimately also about culture and cultural choices, and as a result, the Goethe Institute in Colombo is interested in the work of environmental journalists, explained Dr. Stefen



Dreyer who is the Director in Colombo. He said that everyone had a right to growth and development which was sustainable. The media, he stressed, plays a vital role in this regard.



*Prof. Jim Detjen receiving the international green pen award from Hon. Minister of Tourism and Aviation.*

The penultimate item in the Inaugural Session was the presentation of the Sri Lanka Green Award 1998 to thirteen individuals and organizations in Sri Lanka, in recognition of their outstanding practical achievements in the protection and improvement of the environment. This was followed by the presentation of SLEJF's International Green Pen Award to nine foreign participants who have made significant contributions in promoting environmental journalism. These awards were distributed by the two Ministers present at the ceremony, Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake and Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse.

A vote of thanks formally proposed by Nadaraja Pillai, General Secretary of SLEJF brought the Inaugural Session to a close.

## **Session 1: AFEJ / IFEJ Vision and Mission**

In this session, new individual and association members of the

International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) and Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) presented themselves. The AFEJ has been involved in several different initiatives and these were briefly outlined by Manuel Satorre, Former Chairman of the AFEJ. He said that the membership of AFEJ had increased from 12 to 23 countries. There are plans to strengthen the secretariat and the communication systems between members. A new book "Reporting on the Environment" -- a handbook for environmental journalists -- has been produced by AFEJ.

Om Khadka, Chairman of Nepal Forum, read a message from Aditya Man Shrestha, Founder-Chairman of AFEJ. He explained how the association was formed in 1988, in the midst of an environmental breakdown, when problems with the ozone layer, global warming, and deforestation were increasingly becoming apparent. An office for the AFEJ was established and funds for its activities became available. However, now the resources are drying up. Most of the resources are now being directed to gender issues, human rights and democracy. He pointed out



*Dambane Gunawardena Representative of the Indigenous Community delivering his address to the Congress.*

that there is a need to reorient the activities of AFEJ. It was no longer enough to focus on issues of global warming and climate change, but it was essential to understand the reality that cutting of fossil fuel consumption in the North could also lead to losses in jobs there. Though the nations of the North are concerned about the environment, he said, safeguarding jobs in their own countries was also a priority.

Valentin Thurn, founder of IFEJ, talked about the direction in which the organization would develop in the future. He said he felt that such an association would not only create a network of journalists working in the field of environment, but would also help journalists learn of the working and cultural context for journalists in other parts of the world. He explained that he has discovered in certain parts of the developing world, the journalist is also seen as an educator, a role that he as a journalist from Germany would be reluctant to adopt. He said that these cultural exchanges were useful, as one gained from one another. Further he said that it was essential that environmental journalists develop a professional view of the problems faced by the planet, but should be careful of not being seen as eco-fundamentalists. The IFEJ, he said, has been accused in the past of being very Euro-centric and now there was a need to regionalise it more. He suggested that a regional office in the Arab or Spanish world may become necessary in the future. The listserve of the IFEJ is not being used enough by members of the Federation and he suggested that there was a need to improve it. The inability to obtain information from countries in Africa was also pointed out as a problem and with the introduction of members from these regions, it was hoped that the situation would improve.

Darryl D'Monte, Chairman, Forum of Environmental Journalists of India (FEJI) and one of the Tipsheet Editors, pointed out that it has been difficult to obtain contributions from countries in Africa. Mike Anane, Chairman of the League of Environmental Journalists, Ghana, explained that practising as a journalist was not easy in his country. Threats from officials who made access to information difficult were common. Because people from so many countries are involved in the IFEJ as environmental journalists, Michael Schweres, Co-Executive Director of

the IFEJ, pointed out that language barriers exist. Especially where the IFEJ newsletter, Planet's Voice, is concerned it has been difficult to receive assistance with translation of articles. Journalists from Egypt, Pakistan and the Solomon Islands spoke about environmental journalism in their countries. Zaigham Khan of Pakistan pointed out that the Pakistan Forum of Environmental Journalists (PFEJ) had only been revived two years ago. He said that they have five Chapters in four Provinces of Pakistan. The forum has been actively involved in a campaign to prevent unwanted development in a national park in Pakistan. It has also organized workshops for journalists in the North-West Frontier Province and in Sindh and Quetta. Zaffarullah Khan from the Green Press in Pakistan also pointed out that they had been involved in grading the issues the media in Pakistan covered. He also said that the electoral manifestos of political parties in Pakistan were also examined for environmental concerns expressed in them. Dorothy Hatigeva from the Solomon Islands said that the forum in her country contained few members and it was extremely hard to work on environmental issues in her country. She said that if she personally was not in a position to do a story for her radio station, she would pass it on to others to follow up. She said it was important to try and live according to what one wrote or spoke about. This, she said, was difficult.

## **Session 2: Eco-Tourism and Biodiversity**

Manuel Satorre, Chairman of Philippine Environmental Journalists Inc. (PEJI), presented an overview of his forum. The impact of tourism on the world's environment, he said, is a very important debate. Though with the economic slow-down the world's tourism industry has suffered a reduction in numbers, it is an enormous industry. Some 900 million people move around the world as tourists. As much as 20 percent of the international tourists travel to developing countries. They are an extremely attractive source of foreign exchange, and there are needs to build infrastructure and roads to service the tourists. However, such development is often in conflict with the environment. There is a need to educate journalists about these issues and make efforts to ensure that they can clearly

articulate the linkages between sustainable development, the cultural, social and environmental impacts of the industry.



*Sinharaja world heritage : A wonder site for Eco tourists.*

Chandra de Silva, Finance Director of Ranweli Hotel in Sri Lanka gave the industry perspective on eco-development. He said there is a need to attract the discerning tourists who are sensitive to the environment, the culture of the region and are interested in learning about the places they visit. He said that the term 'ecotourism' has been terribly misused. Singapore has a zoo, he said, and as a result, advertises itself as an ecotourism destination. This is clearly not ecotourism. Sri Lanka has so far been sold as a beach destination and cheap round trip tickets are offered from Europe for holidays by the beach. He said that such tourists have no interest in the wildlife parks, archaeological and other cultural sites in Sri Lanka. He also said that mass tourism hardly brings in any revenue for a developing country as all the profits are made by the tour operators in Europe.

Dambane Gunawardena, a member of the oldest indigenous community in Sri Lanka, then spoke to the participants of the Congress about his views on the environmental crisis. He said he belonged to *Yaksha Gothrica* tribe. He said that his tribe is said to have a 30,000-year old history in Sri Lanka.

How long the tribals have been living in Sri Lanka is not as important as the closeness of their relationship with nature, he said. The tribals were happy provided they had enough food, received protection in the forest and had the possibility of expanding their tribes. He said the forests amply met their needs in the past. As these needs are met by the forests, they do not have the right to ask for more from nature. Man has violated the laws of nature, he said, and it is a sorry situation that the problems of nature have been created by man. Nature has set limits, but man has ignored those limits and exceeded them, to his own detriment. He said that man thinks that he is the most advanced creature, but his actions prove otherwise. "We have broken the bridge for the next generation and we are only interested in environmental issues that have a direct implication on human beings. What about the animals and the environment as a whole? We tend to ignore those", he said.

He suggested that all people should be in touch with the lifestyle of tribals, and even become tribals to save the environment. He pointed out that a simple way of living was very important and that there was a need to curb consumption and control our desires. He said that this generation may not feel the consequences of their actions, but the next generation will surely feel it. "We are responsible for this destruction", he said. In the old days when a tribal was hungry, he could go into the jungle and satisfy his hunger, but then cultivation of crops became an imperative and then the forests were reduced to scrub. In addition to growing coconuts, which is a cash crop, jungles were cleared by the government. This they called development. It has led to the creation of scrub and grasslands and a consequent decrease in rainfall. He said that after this destruction, the government now turns around and tells the tribals "when you cut the jungle, there will be no rain".

Michael Schweres pointed out that members of industrial societies had a lot to learn from tribals. Zaffarullah Khan wanted to know if tribal people have special privileges in Sri Lanka, in terms of reservation in educational institutions and for jobs. Gunawardena stressed that the education that the tribals receive is divorced from the realities of their lives. He said that there is some conflict now, as the modern value system dictates to them what values they should hold. He said it is important that the tribals continue to live simply and make an effort not to lose their identity. He was also scathing about tourism. He said that tourists are a big nuisance and that tribals have become objects of curiosity.

According to Haroldo Castro, Senior Communications Director of Conservation International, the world's efforts should be concentrated on 24 areas of hotspots. These hotspots, he said, have been identified by Conservation International. He said that 2 percent of the world's land area contains as much as 50 percent of the world's animal and plant species. So if this area is protected, at least 50 percent of the world's species can be saved from extinction. He said that international funding efforts should be directed to these hotspots. Initially 17 hotspots had been identified, he said, but since then seven more have been added to the list. The basis on which these hotspots have been chosen, he explained, is that they should have lost as much as 75 percent of their vegetation, and should contain at least 0.5 percent of the world's biodiversity as endemic species. The hotspot would also be one which is in imminent threat of destruction. Some of the hotspots isolated by Conservation International include the Tropical Andes, which have 20,000 endemic plant species. The Western Ghats in India and Sri Lanka, he said, were also identified as a hotspot. He said that Sri Lanka had about 270 species of vertebrates of which some 65 are endemic. He said this hotspot identification was an indication of areas of emphasis. Conservation International does not work in these areas, but had tried to create an appropriate scientific database to facilitate action in these areas. Any conservation effort, he said, had four aspects. These are a science base, on which policy is drawn up, and then the economic imperatives that dictate the conservation choices that are made, and finally the efforts to

raise awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity. These decades, he said, have been called the "the last chance decades" and it is up to us to act now. Finally, he emphasised the need to raise the level of awareness of the society including politicians, children and commercial people.

H. E. Ilkka Usitalo, Ambassador of the European Union in Sri Lanka said that the European Union is deeply concerned about environmental issues. He said that the first EU environmental directives were drawn up in the 1970s. These dealt with air pollution, dangerous chemicals and protection of drinking water sources. Subsequently, he said, three priority areas have been identified by the EU. These include health, environment and the sustainable use of natural resources. In 1997, he said, the Amsterdam Treaty of the EU declared that the overriding objective of the European Union is sustainable development. All future development efforts, he said, must be based on sustainable development. The environment, he said, must be integrated into all EU policies including those dealing with trade, economics and culture.

The EU has had a good record with regard to the environment. It has provided resources to Eastern Europe to improve environmental conditions and standards there. He said that areas of concern include nuclear safety and support has been provided to improve legislation and implementation in the countries of Eastern Europe. The EU, he said, is happy to collaborate with NGOs, scientists and other members of civil society. In Kyoto the EU was in the forefront of the negotiations on climate change. The EU has also given 1.3 billion ECU as development aid, especially for environmental projects in the developing world. He said at present 8.5 percent of development aid is available for environmental projects, but they are interested in raising this to 10 percent. Most of this aid is directed to Latin America, Asia and Africa. However, he said, despite the availability of resources only 30 percent of the amount was actually disbursed. This was because there was a low demand for environmental projects from recipient countries. The areas in which resources are available, he said, include projects related to land resources, biodiversity, urban infrastructure issues and institutional strengthening. He further



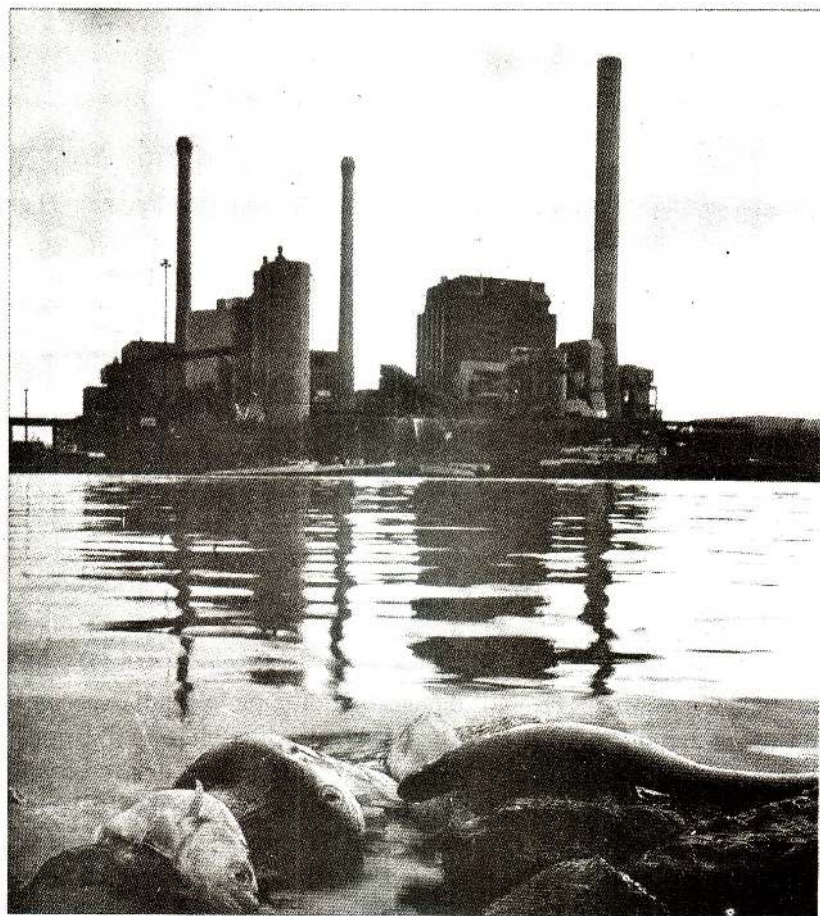
said that partner countries were more interested in industrial projects and there was a limited environmental awareness in these countries. He stressed that journalists in these countries could play an important role in ensuring that partner countries start taking the environment seriously and begin to formulate appropriate projects in the field of environment. He said that funds were available, but good projects were required. These projects, he said, should have clear targets. *The dinner hosted by the H.E. Mr. Ilkka Usitalo, Ambassador, European Union Delegation of the European Commission.*

### Day 3: Wednesday - October 21, 1998

### Session 3: Climate Change, Eco-education and Voluntaryism

Prof. Mohan Munasinghe, Vice Chairman of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), set the scientific context of the forthcoming conference of parties of the Climate Change Convention, which will be held in Buenos Aires. He said that carbon dioxide levels have been increasing with industrialization. The level had increased from 275 ppm to 375 ppm, and was still rising. The last IPCC report said that there was a serious risk of global warming. Scientists have predicted that the temperature of the globe will increase by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius by the year 2100. Sea level rise was also predicted, and though the average temperature changes are likely to be small, the variability of the earth's climate, and extreme climatic events are likely to increase. The poor, as a result, would suffer the most.

The need for global co-operation and a global strategy was essential, he said. He said historic emissions have ensured a 3 to 4 degree rise in temperature, but emissions of the present time were also likely to have an impact. However, it was to be worked out on a global level as to who should reduce emissions and by how much. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was a first step in the effort



*Industrial pollution is the biggest problems.*

to control emissions. He said that an one of equity perspective to the reduction of emissions was essential. The burden to reduce emissions would have to be shared by industrial and developing countries. He said it was important to bear in mind that on a per capita basis, the industrial countries on an average produced 15 times more carbon dioxide than developing countries. He added that industrial countries are responsible for 80 percent of the emissions presently accumulated in the atmosphere. He said that "the polluter pays" principle has been accepted nationally by

most industrial countries and this principle should be extended globally. The victims of global warming, he said, must be recompensed. The maximum losses due to global warming will also be felt by developing countries, which by the year 2100 stand to lose between 4 to 9 percent of their GNP. The industrialized countries, on the other hand, will lose only 1 to 3 percent of GNP, he said. The Kyoto agreement was only possible after some hard bargaining, he pointed out. The EU has agreed to reduce emissions of green house gases by 8 percent by the year 2010, the US by 7 percent and Japan by 6 percent. The industrialized countries, he stressed, are the largest polluters on a per capita and on absolute basis. He said that emissions trading and joint implementation were other methods to reduce emissions that the negotiators were exploring. He said that the effects of global warming could be mitigated by two primary means: by planting more trees which would act as sinks and by using better technologies which would reduce the amount of green house gases emitted. He said the costs of reducing carbon dioxide emissions were high in the developed world, and lower in developing countries. He said 'tradable emissions' was a strategy being explored by certain countries. He said the global strategy was now to stabilize emissions at double the carbon dioxide level, but there still was a need to allocate responsibility for emissions.

Prithi Nambiar, Programme Co-ordinator of the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) in Ahmadabad, India, spoke of efforts to make the population aware of environmental issues through non-formal education. She showed a film made on the proposed denotification of the Narayan Sarovar Wild Life Sanctuary by the Gujarat Government and the efforts of her team to prevent this. She said that through the local media they were able to reach out to the community and build up a strong public opinion against the denotification of the sanctuary. She said that as a result of the media campaign, policy makers were forced to sit across the table from NGOs and discuss the future of the region with them, before taking any action. She said that the CEE's non-exclusive feature service to which some 600 papers subscribe also helps to spread the message of the environment to different groups.

Sue Allen, Programme Officer of Australian Volunteers International (AVI) explained about their efforts to place Australian volunteers in different developing countries to enhance and promote eco-voluntarism, cross cultural relationships, understanding and partnerships. She said some 670 Australians are at present working in developing countries in Asia, the Pacific and Africa. They are administrators, agricultur experts, skilled in particular trades or social and natural scientists.

Shiranee Yasaratne, Country Representative, IUCN Sri Lanka, explained IUCN's role in relation to environment and the media. In order to address this challenge a Communication Coordinators Network (CCN) has been established within IUCN and each country office has a representative in the network. She pointed out that the primary aim of IUCN's Communication Division is not the promotion of IUCN per se; rather it is to promote conservation and sustainable development. The underlying rationale is that awareness leads to action.

She said that up to now IUCN's role in Sri Lanka spans a decade. There is an Education Unit within the Sri Lanka office which has successfully implemented several programmes aimed at training of teachers, professionals and law enforcement officers. In addition, community awareness programmes using the mass media have also been undertaken. She said that the capacity of the Sri Lanka office is enhanced by the media links it has with the SLEJF, which is a member organization of IUCN.

#### **Session 4: Water Crisis, Eco-Management and Funding Possibilities**

Scarcity of water is likely to cause many environmental and social problems in the next millennium, explained Dr. Jacques Manen, Director, Asia-Pacific Technical and Research Network of Lyonnaise de Eaux. He screened a film and explained that appropriate management and use of water will be the big challenge for the next century. The use of water is not equitably distributed the world over. Developed countries use much

more water than developing countries. In low income countries, most of the water is used in agriculture, whereas in high income countries industry draws most of the water. By the year 2020 the urban population is likely to double and waste water treatment facilities will need to be built at the rate of one per day, to meet the demand. We need to plan now to ensure that adequate water will be available for our children, he said. He stressed the need for a holistic approach to water management and said that all players -- international, national, regional and local -- must be involved. A basin approach to water management is essential. All agencies in the catchment area should be involved in water management. The entire watershed should be properly managed and the complex ecosystem completely understood, prior to making interventions. Complete inventories are essential to enable countries to manage their resources carefully. The quantity of water available and its quality should be ascertained.

He also said that distribution losses of water should be minimised. As much as 40 to 50 percent of water is lost in this way. Reusing water is another effective way of meeting the community's water needs. In the UK and California, for instance, 70 percent of the water is reused. There are few technical barriers to water reuse. It is mostly a political issue. The Thames water, for instance, is used several times. Industrial waste water is also a big source of water, he said. Ziyad Alawneh, Regional Coordinator of Med-Eco Media Network of Jordan, pointed out that high investment water management technologies promoted by large corporations are not always the most appropriate. He said that in arid countries like Jordan, for instance, water harvesting, drip irrigation systems, desalination plants and efforts to conserve water by reducing evaporation losses may be more appropriate. Elizabeth Roxas of the Environmental Broadcast Circle of the Philippines pointed out that the privatisation of water management in Metro Manila had not necessarily improved the situation there. She said that the water quality had not improved and people were still using bottled water to avoid water-borne diseases. She said that the magnesium in the water was also a problem and that the poor in the city were still not getting adequate water.



*Life giving water ; the subject of the 1999 AFEJ / CEJA Congress.*

Erick Boerset, an Environmental Adviser from the Netherlands, then spoke to the Congress on the theme of environmental and human resources management. He emphasised the importance of the role environmental journalists can play in this connection. In the context of the rapid pace of

industrialization and development, particularly in the developing countries, proper environmental management becomes a *sine-qua-non*, he said. From the point of view of human resources management, he pointed out that it is imperative to implement suitable programmes in order to upgrade the quality of human resources.

A panel discussion on funding and collaborative possibilities was the next item on the agenda.

David Lazarus, Chief of UNIS / ESCAP, said that UNIS provides information and public awareness support for ESCAP's sub-programmes. He said that his organization has worked with UNDP in several Asian countries in order to set up information services. ESCAP always attached considerable importance to environmental issues and would be willing to consider project proposals for funding. "Our relations with academic institutions and NGOs have been always quite strong and we hope to maintain this situation in the future as well", he said. He assured that there will be continuity of ESCAP's policy of cooperation and collaboration.

Hutton Archer of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) then spoke to the Congress about the work of the GEF. He said 'conservation without money is only conversation'. He explained that the GEF was the financial mechanism for the FCCC and the Biodiversity Convention. It was not a development agency, but a mechanism set up to disburse funds to meet the incremental costs developing countries would have to bear to preserve the global environment. He said that the GEF was a partnership between developed and developing countries, both of which had contributed to the GEF. He said that 36 donors had committed \$2.75 billion for the next four years. He also said that NGOs and other members of civil society fell within the ambit of the GEF and they could play an important role. Their contacts, influence, information and expertise could be valuable, he said. They had the expertise to act as consultants and could play a constructive role in the GEF's effort to increase the involvement of various stakeholders in GEF-funded projects.

Prabath Gunathunge, Technical Representative in Sri Lanka of the United States Asia-Pacific Environment Partnership (US-AEP), extended the greetings of his organization to the Congress. He briefly explained the role of US-AEP and said that it is an inter-agency programme, established in 1992, led by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). He stressed the importance US-AEP has placed on promoting a "clean revolution" in Asia by mobilizing US environmental experience, technology and services. US-AEP has extended support for activities aimed at environmental protection and sustainable development, and will continue to do so in the future.

## **Session 5: Environmental Journalists Code of Ethics**

This session was devoted entirely for the formulation of a Code of Ethics for World Environmental Journalists. The draft Code of Ethics had been prepared by a Committee consisting of Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, Sri Lanka, Darryl D'Monte - India and Dr. Bob Thomas, USA and coordinated by Dr. Dharman Wickramaratne of Sri Lanka. In the course of lengthy and fruitful deliberations some amendments were suggested both by the panelists and the participants. The Congress then adopted the Code in the form given below:-

### **CODE OF ETHICS FOR WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISTS**

- 1. The right to a clean environment and sustainable development is fundamental and is closely connected to the right to life and good health and well being. The environmental journalist should inform the public about the threats to the environment – whether it is at the global, regional, national or local level.**
- 2. Often, the media is the only source of information on the environment. The journalist's duty is to heighten the awareness of**



the public on environmental issues. The journalist should strive to report a plurality of views on the environment.

3. By informing the public, the journalist plays a vital role in enabling people to resort to action in protecting their environment. The journalist's duty is not only in alerting people about their endangered environment at the outset, but also in following up such threats and keeping them posted about developments. Journalists should also attempt to write on possible solutions to environmental problems.

4. The journalist should not be influenced on these issues by vested interests – whether they are commercial, political, and governmental or non-governmental. The journalist ought to keep a distance from such interests and not ally with them. As a rule journalists should report all sides in any environmental controversy.

5. The journalist should as far as possible cite sources of information and avoid alarmist or speculative reportage and tendentious comment. He or she should cross-check the authenticity of a source, whether commercial, official or non-governmental.

6. The environmental journalist should foster equity in access to such information and help organizations and individuals in the South to gain it. Electronic retrieval of data can prove a useful and egalitarian tool in this regard.

7. The journalist should respect the right of privacy of individuals who have been affected by environmental catastrophes, natural disasters and the like.

8. The environmental journalist should not hesitate to correct information that he or she previously believed was correct, or to tilt the balance of public opinion by analysis in the light of subsequent developments.

## **Session 6: Formulation of AFEJ 3 -Year Strategic Management Plan**

In this session, the participants formed themselves into three groups for three different purposes. Group 1 was involved in the formulation of a Strategic Management Plan (covering the period 1999 to 2001) for the AFEJ. The Plan thus formulated is reproduced below:-

### ***THE STRATEGY OF AFEJ, 1999 - 2001 AS ADOPTED AT THE 10TH AFEJ GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HELD IN COLOMBO***

Formulation Committee:

Chairperson Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, Sri Lanka.

Coordinator: Mohan Mainali, Nepal.

The AFEJ was founded in 1988 in Bangkok, Thailand, as an umbrella organisation of national associations of environmental journalists. AFEJ has today 23 national member associations in Asia-Pacific region, counting altogether over 5000 members.

**Values of AFEJ :** Professionalism, Freedom of expression, Social responsibility, Commitment, Networking , Co-operation

#### **Vision:**

\*To build AFEJ into a strong, independent and committed apex organisation to promote excellence in environmental journalism

#### **Mission :**

\*To motivate and assist national forums and related bodies to form a strong and efficient network to promote and protect sustainable development through environmental journalism



*The SLEJF building where AFEJ's secretariat is based.*

## Objectives

- \* To create and promote awareness on environmental issues among the public.
- \* To provide journalists with information / resources in order to encourage them to write on environment,
- \* To provide journalists with comprehensive information on environmental issues to journalists,
- \* To make AFEJ a financially stable, effective, efficient networking organisation,
- \* To educate journalists on environmental reporting to enhance their professionalism and credibility,

- \* To co-operate with other NGOs and improve the cause of protecting national environment,
- \* To bring environmental journalism into the mainstream media,
- \* To promote greater awareness of environmental issues among journalists in the Asia-Pacific Region,
- \* To organize dialogues with decision-makers in the media with a view to having greater emphasis on environmental issues
- \* To encourage greater exchange of ideas and information on environmental issues in the region among journalists
- \* To promote the activities of its members.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **Secretariat of AFEJ**

Chair

Hosting the Annual Congress

(a) implement activities and policies formulated by the Executive Committee as directed by the general body meeting

(b) establish and run a secretariat

Managing Editor / Documentation Manager / Accountant and three Regional Directors

Secretary General and

Vice Secretary

(Managing the secretariat and implementing activities)

(Vice Chair)

(Assists Chair and the secretariat in implementing activities and policies in their respective regions)

## PLAN OF OPERATION FOR 1999-2001

Activities	Indicators	M.O.V.	Time frame	Responsibility
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1. Publications on specific issues and weekly E-mail tipsheet, secretariat; wide ranging coverage :	Regional Directors and Secretariat			
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2. Set up web site : 1999 - June.	Continuous news Documentation Manager			
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3. Raise funds : Endowment fund US\$ one million for 3 years (Project funds+Meetings funds)	Auditor's statement	Continuous		Chair + Regional Directors + Secretary General
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4. Assist national forums by providing environmental documents, materials information etc.				
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Three Manuals 5000 copies each. Printer's invoice	Annually for 3 years	Managing Editor + National Forums		
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5. Expansion of AFEJ members - Vice Chairmen				
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Five forums per year : Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Central Asia and Middle East				
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Acceptance letter 1999 - 2001 Secretary General + Vice Chairs

6. Establish a permanent secretariat, Sri Lanka - March 1999.

Inauguration Ceremony Invitation 1999 Chair+ Managing Editor

7. Compile success stories on environment and sustainable development. At least one success story per network forum annually by publications received by member 2000 - 2001 NFEJ's Co-ordinators

8. Environmental Journalists reporting study tours. Two programmes annually. Vice- Chair's and participants' report 1999- 2001.

Regional Directors + Secretariat

9. Annual environmental journalists awards. One per year. News in media (press releases). Continuous National forums and Secretariat

10. Sub regional training courses for national forum members and journalists. One per year in member countries (Rotate). List of Attendance 1999 - 2001 Vice chair and NFEJ Chair

11. To assist national forums to generate resources to undertake different activities to achieve the goals, Agreement 1999 - 2001. Chairman and Exco

12. Amend constitution. Appoint committee for formulating of amendments and submission (July 1999). AGM Attendance September 1999. Vice-Chair South Asia

13. General Assemblies. One assembly each in Bangladesh (September 1999), Fiji (June 2000), Malaysia (June 2000) Congress Proceedings, Continuous National chapters. Chair/Secretariat

14. Asia-Pacific Green TV film competition and Travelling ECO-film festival (minimum 10 countries)
15. Environmental Photo Competition and Tour (minimum 10 countries)

## **List of AFEJ Workshop Participants**

1. Dharman Wickramaratne-Sri Lanka Forum
2. S. N. Pillai-Sri Lanka Forum
3. Mohan Mainali - AFEJ
4. Om Khadka - Nepal Forum
5. Damandeep Singh - India Forum
6. Darryl D' Monte-India Forum
7. Yang Mao - China Forum
8. (Ms) Zhang Xiaoqing-China Forum
9. Zaigham Khan - Pakistan Forum
10. Zaffurulla Khan- Green Press, Pakistan
11. Kenichi Mizuno - Japan Forum
12. Farauq Ahmed - Maldives Forum
13. Vijay Menon - AMIC
14. Sodhakar Ramlallah - Mauritius Forum
15. Manuel Satorre - Philippines Forum
16. Wirasak Salayakanond - Thailand Forum
17. (Ms) Nguyen Diep Hoa- Vietnam Forum
18. Leong Shen-li-Malaysia Forum
19. (Ms) Tata Elisabeth Kusujayanthi-Indonesia Eco Media
20. Quamrul Chowdhury- Bangladesh Forum
21. (Ms) Dorothy Hatigeva- Solomon Islands Forum
22. (Ms) Karen Kirby - Bhutan Forum, C/o WWF Bhutan
23. Tindoong Soong - Taiwan Forum

## **Observers**

24. David Lazarus - UN-ESCAP / Thailand
25. (Ms) Sue Allan - AVI / Australia

## **Group 2 held an IFEJ meeting chaired by Michael Schweres.**

The main activity of Group 3, however, took the form of screening of a few selected environmental films, coordinated by Helena Blomquist of Swedish Television. Films produced by IFEJ, AFEJ member organizations and SLEJF were screened. A list of the films screened is given below:-

- i . Green Sri Lanka Eco-Video Magazine, Sri Lanka
- ii . A Mirage for a Future, India
- iii . Global Biodiversity Hotspots, USA
- iv . Keeping the Promise, GEF
- v . An Introduction of Aankhilyal, Nepal

*The dinner hosted by the Minister of Media and Telecommunications, Hon. Mangala Samaraweera*

## **Day 4: Thursday - October 22, 1998**

This was a day-long excursion to Kandy, the hill capital of Sri Lanka, situated 116 km away from Colombo. In fact this was the last kingdom



*Jumbos at the  
worlds 1st  
elephant orphanage,  
visited by the  
participants.*



of the Sinhala Kings. Located 488 ft above sea level and surrounded by misty hills and valleys, Kandy is still considered to be the most beautiful city in Sri Lanka. At present it is the main cultural capital with a rich heritage of living monuments and still is the home for fine arts and crafts, traditional music, dances and songs. The Kandy Lake and the historic Temple of the Tooth Relic no doubt add beauty and value to the city.

The visitors had the rare opportunity of visiting the elephant orphanage at Pinnawala enroute to Kandy, the only one of its kind in Asia, and the well known and beautiful Botanical Garden at Peradeniya. This is considered to be one of the best botanical gardens in the world. *The dinner hosted by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse.*

## **Day 5: Friday - October 23, 1998**

### **Session 7: Plenary Session for Media Workshop Organizers and Infrastructure Issues**

This was a plenary session where international and regional environmental media workshop organizers made presentations regarding their activities.

Vijay Menon, Secretary-General of AMIC spoke about his organization's contribution to environmental efforts as a regional institution. AMIC, he said, is actively involved in mass communication, documentation, research, training, publishing and mass media project consultancy. He pointed out that in this age of rapid multi-media developments, there is a need to train communicators and journalists in the use of new technologies including E-mail and websites to deliver environmental information and to undertake meaningful reporting and repackaging of information for dissemination.

Emmanuel D'Silva of the Economic Development Institute (EDI), World

Bank, explained the role and activities of the EDI including EDI's interest in environmental issues. He also made reference to a training workshop for media personnel held in Goa, India, in June 1997. This workshop he said, was sponsored by the EDI. While offering clarifications to several questions raised by participants, he invited suggestions and ideas in regard to areas in which the EDI could get involved in the future.

Bitte Lyden from FOJO (Institute for Further Education of Journalists) at Kalmar University, Sweden then spoke about the courses and training programmes conducted by her institute. She said that FOJO mainly offers courses to Swedish journalists, but since 1991, courses have been arranged regularly for journalists from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and East and Central Europe.

FOJO has a regular Environmental Journalism Seminar, she said, which is of three weeks' duration and focuses on media and environmental journalism in different parts of the world with the overall objective of enhancing qualified media coverage of environmental issues. It is also aimed at establishing contacts between journalists from countries in different stages of democratic development and to analyse and discuss the situation for environmental journalists within the newsrooms. A fundamental principle of the programme's content and structure is an active contribution by the participants who are themselves important resource persons in the seminar. Time to share individual experiences and different ways of working is mixed with lectures and field trips. She said that the seminars are not announced widely as the interest seems to be without limits and the Institute is too small to handle too many applications. Therefore it is generally restricted to journalists from the press, radio and the television.

Lisa Lumbao, Communication Specialist, and Jeremy Hagger, Managing Director, both of US-AEP, made a presentation on urban and industrial environment improvement. Their presentation pointed out that in megacities in Asia, with 10 million or more people, environmental problems are extremely serious. Despite dirty water, filthy air and lack of proper sewage systems, slums attract poor people from rural areas. More



*Water crisis : A key problem for the next millennium.*

than 1.5 million Asians die each year from the effects of air pollution alone. According to the World Bank and the WHO, as much as 500,000 more people in this region die annually due to dirty water and lack of sanitation.

Because of Asia's larger population and faster pace of industrialization, there will be a severe impact on the environment. They pointed out that US-AEP's technology transfer and cooperation activities help Asian industries to apply pollution control and remediation technologies, and encourage industries to build in pollution prevention and cleaner production technologies from the on set.

## **Session 8: Workshop for Training of Trainers on Environmental Journalism**

Prof. Jim Detjen, Director and Knight Chair in Environmental Journalism, MSU School of Journalism, USA, shared his experiences first as a journalist in environment and science spanning for more than 21 years and then as a teacher and trainer in environmental journalism and several other disciplines. He discussed how he conducts courses, workshops and training programmes including the methodologies. His

training encompasses not only students in journalism, at undergraduate level, but also trainers at Masters and Ph.D. levels. During the last three years or so, more than 200 students have gone through these programmes, he said. He suggested that it would be worthwhile for everybody to share their experiences with others wherever possible.

Prof. Detjen highlighted several important points journalists should strive to follow when reporting. The following major points are noteworthy:-

- (a) Gather as many facts as you can before reporting a story;
- (b) Develop "front-line people" such as Sanitary Inspectors, Secretaries and neighbours of factories and so on in order to obtain first-hand information;
- (c) Go to the field and observe with your own eyes, ears and nose;
- (d) Strive for clarity and accuracy; and
- (e) Do not quote extreme views.

His presentation was supplemented with a slide show.

## **Session 9: Group Discussions**

In this session three groups held discussions separately on different topics:-

*Group 1 - Use of television and video for environmental education and awareness*

*Group 2 - Using E-mail for environmental information gathering*

*Group 3 - Using broadcast media in environmental journalism.*

At the conclusion of the group discussions, the participants met in a plenary session and the moderators of the three groups presented resumes of the discussions of their respective groups.



*Important meet : IFEJ / AFEJ gathering in Colombo proved most productive.*

## **Session 10 : Conclusions and Recommendations**

In the course of making the group presentations, the Congress unanimously decided to make the following two recommendations:-

- (a) Harassment of journalists should be publicised whenever such instances take place, and
- (b) Steps should be taken to publish twelve censored environmental stories.

Thereafter the Congress unanimously adopted the Colombo Declaration the text of which is as follows:-

### **Colombo Declaration -- 23 October, 1998.**

6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists calls for:

\* The expansion of access and of environmental information available to journalists and citizens worldwide. Increase inexpensive access to the Internet worldwide.

\* The halt to censorship of environmental information worldwide. It also calls for the end to harassment and imprisonment of journalists who write about the environment.

\* Increased educational and training opportunities for environmental journalists worldwide. Environmental stories are complex and journalists need advanced training about environmental science and other issues.

\* Increased coverage of environmental issues by the mass media worldwide.

Journalists to follow the Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists that was adopted by the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Chair then informed the participants that the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) has been rejuvenated and strengthened in the course of the group discussions. He also broke the happy news that Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne has been elected as the new Chairman of the AFEJ. As anticipated, he said, the establishment of a Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) has also been achieved in the course of this Congress.

## Conclusion

Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake, Minister of Environment and Forestry was present as the Chief Guest at the Concluding Session. In his address to the Congress, he congratulated the SLEJF for the excellent arrangements. He also thanked the organizers for inviting him.

Environmental journalists, he said, have a very important role to play.

With the wealth of knowledge gained in the course of this Congress, he hoped, they would be able to fulfil their role better than before. He said that the Government of Sri Lanka has given due recognition to the subject of environment and he was extremely happy to be associated with it.

Finally, he thanked the delegates for their participation in the Colombo Congress in such large numbers thus making it a successful event. He extended a special word of thanks to all the donors for their generous financial support without which such a successful Congress would not have been at all possible.

Prof. Jim Detjen in his capacity as the President of the IFEJ made some closing remarks and thanked the joint organizers as well as the host country for a very successful Congress. He congratulated the SLEJF for the excellent organizational work. Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, on behalf of the SLEJF and AFEJ, thanked all the co-organizers, the participants and the donors for making it possible to hold a very successful Congress.

The Chair then declared the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists officially closed. Thereafter screening of a video film on the Inaugural Session held everybody's attention and it was a pleasant finale to the Congress.

It was announced, prior to the conclusion of the Congress, that the forthcoming IFEJ/AFEJ and CEJA congresses have been scheduled as follows:-

### **IFEJ Next Congresses**

1999 (October 11 - 15)	....	Bogota, Colombia
2000 (October)	....	Cairo, Egypt
2001 (October)	....	Oslo, Norway
2002 (October)	....	Beijing, China

## AFEJ Next Congresses

1999 (September 13 - 17)	.... Dhaka, Bangladesh
2000 (June 5 - 9)	.... Suva, Fiji
2001 (June)	.... Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2002 (June)	.... Almaty, Kazakhstan

## CEJA Next Congresses

1999 (September 13 - 17)	.... Dhaka, Bangladesh
2000 (June 5 - 9)	.... Suva, Fiji
2001 (June)	.... Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2002 (June)	.... Nairobi, Kenya

**AFEJ Congresses of 1999, 2000 and 2001 will coincide with the General Assemblies of Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) .**

*The dinner hosted by the Minister Environment and Forestry Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake.*

## Post-Congress Tour

A post-congress tour involving four days (24-27 October 1998) was the highlight of the tour programme. On the first day the visitors had the opportunity of visiting the Sinharaja Rain Forest in Ratnapura District, perhaps the best of its kind in Sri Lanka. Incidentally Ratnapura is known as the "Gem City" of Sri Lanka. One has to pass through beautifully landscaped tea and rubber plantations in addition to lush green vegetation-capped mountainous terrain to reach Ratnapura.

The visitors reached Nuwara Eliya on the second day, located at the highest elevation in the island. Incidentally, Nuwara Eliya is known locally as "Little England". The highest mountain in Sri Lanka, named



Pidurutalagala is also situated in Nuwara Eliya. The next place of visit was Horton Plains, a famous hunting range during the British period and, at present, a well protected wildlife sanctuary and a nature reserve.



*People & nature - that's the spirit*

On the fourth day, the tour party reached Sigiriya fortress, situated within the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka in the North Central Province. This fortress is expected to be declared as the eighth wonder of the world by the World Heritage Council. Before concluding the four-day tour, the participants took the opportunity to visit Ranweli Holiday Resort in Negombo, a hotel claimed to be one of the best environment-friendly hotels in Sri Lanka.

The participants who joined the post-congress tour are: Bitte Lyden and Helena Blomquist- Sweden, Eleni Andrikopoulou - Greece, Jinah Mohamed - Maldives, Haroldo Castro - USA, Dip Hoa - Vietnam, Tindoong Soong - Taiwan, Marta Sarvari - Hungary, Lngun Lnarsen and Inger Marit Kolstabbraten - Norway, Sonia Edith and Dario Salazar-

Colombia. All tours were coordinated by Palitha Gurusinghe, professional Eco-Tourist Guide who is a member of SLEJF. He is also the President of Sri Lanka Eco-Tourism Foundation.



*Post congress guests meet the beast at Udwalawe National Park.*

## **Post-Congress Workshop**

A two-day post-congress workshop on the theme "*Environmental Awareness Programmes in Electronic Media*" was held on 24 and 25 October 1998 at the German Cultural Institute (GCI) Colombo, under the chairmanship of its Director, Dr. Stefen Dreyer. This workshop was conducted by Valentin Thurn, Founder-General Secretary of German Environmental Journalists Association and Michael Schweres, Co-Executive Director of IFEJ. About 30 Sri Lankans participated in this workshop.

## List of Recipients of Sri Lanka Green Award

- \* Sirasa TV (*Soba Dasun*)
- \* Sirasa FM Radio (*Vinadiyak Pamanai*)
- \* Intermediate Technology, Sri Lanka (*ITG*)
- \* Prof. Mohan Munasinghe
- \* Tharuka Dissanayake
- \* Ranweli Holiday Village, Hotel
- \* Krishna Wijebandara
- \* Rev. Wanawasi Rahula
- \* TEC Vision Lanka
- \* Dallas Alahapperuma, *MP*
- \* Dr. Jayalath Jayawardena, *MP*
- \* Sunil Sarath Perera
- \* A. K. Gnanadasa

## International Green Pen Award 1998 List of Recipients

- \* Aditya Man Shrestha, Nepal
- \* Jim Detjen, USA
- \* Valentin Thurn, Germany
- \* Quamrul Chowdhury, Bangladesh
- \* Vijay Menon, Singapore
- \* Yang Mao, China
- \* Manuel Satorre, Philippines
- \* Darryl D'Monte, India
- \* Marta Sarvari, Hungary



*Mr. Vijay Menon, Secretary General of AMIC receiving his Green Pen Award from Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake, Minister of Tourism and Aviation.*

## ***MINUTES OF THE AFEJ EXCO MEETING SRI LANKA, 21 OCTOBER 1998***

The meeting elected the new Executive Board comprising of :

Chairman : Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, Sri Lanka

Vice -Chairman : Quamrul Chowdhury, Bangladesh (South Asia)  
Wirasak Salaykanond, Thailand (South East Asia )  
Yang Mao, China (East Asia )  
Nina Rtylele, Fiji (The Pacific )

Secretary : Damandeep Singh, India

Joint Secretary : Om Khadka, Nepal

Auditors : Nguyen Diep Hoa, Vietnam

Soodhakur Ramlallah, Mauritius

Ex-Officers: Ivan Sing Chin, Singapore

Philip Mathews, Malaysia

AFEJ Exco Welcomes new members, Papua New Guinea, Mauritius, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Bhutan and Vietnam into the AFEJ body. At the meeting, Green Press of Pakistan, CEE India, Environment Broadcast circle of Philippines, Voice of maldives and Eco-Media of Indonesia were approved.

The meeting of the AFEJ Executive Committee endorsed the efforts by the AFEJ members to draw up a work programme for the coming three years (1999 to 2001).

New AFEJ Chairperson appointed Manual Satorre as Programme Director. At the Exco meeting the chairman was given the power to appoint and change in case of necessity a Managing Editor, Documentation Manager and Accountant. At the AFEJ meeting was also decided to authorize the chairman to open Bank Accounts in Sri Lanka.

The work programme is a detailed one listing 15 activities to be undertaken in three years including raising funds to make them possible. A unique feature of the programme is that responsibilities have been assigned to designated members.

The activities include setting up a website and starting a E-mail list-server (AFEJ Tipsheet) covering the other activities of the AFEJ. A target of US \$ one million for the next three years was set to be raised as an endowment fund. Nearly US \$ 75,000 per year are to be spent for the AFEJ annual congress.

To expand AFEJ activities, the Board decided to expand the membership to include countries like Laos, Cambodia, Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), Pacific and the Middle East. One of the key activities decided included the establishment of a secretariat by March 1999. The Chairman was given the power to amend the AFEJ constitution.

AFEJ will also assist each national forum in generating resources to undertake different activities in order to achieve their goals. Exchange of Journalists, study tours and compiling success stories on environmental and developmental issues will also be facilitated.

Bangladesh Forum agreed to host the next AFEJ and CEJA general assembly in September 13 - 17, 1999.

*"... Attendees adopted an international ethics code for environmental journalists. The AFEJ adopted an ambitious three year plan for Asia - Pacific countries. A new international organization for environmental journalists living in countries of the British Commonwealth was created ...."*

*SEJournal - USA / Fall 1998*

## *Constitution of Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA)*

### **Preamble**

The Environmental Journalists of Commonwealth countries feel the necessity for forming the Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) for creating awareness about environmental concerns among the peoples of the countries within the Commonwealth.

### **Objectives**

The broad objectives of CEJA are :

- \* To sensitize the people on environmental issues of the Commonwealth countries.
- \* To create a network of environmental journalists of the Commonwealth countries through whom public awareness could be enhanced on the state of the environment.
- \* To provide environmental journalists of Commonwealth countries with comprehensive information/resources in order to raise their capacities for writing more on environment professionally and with credibility.
- \* To provide environmental journalists with training.
- \* To provide young media personnel with environmental journalism training.
- \* To undertake environmental journalism courses.

\* To undertake exchange programmes for environmental journalists of the Commonwealth countries.

\* To organize regular annual meetings and conferences of CEJA and seminars, workshops on environmental issues.

## **Membership**

National forums of environmental journalists or media NGOs within the Commonwealth countries can become institutional members and environmental journalists of these countries can be individual members of CEJA by paying US\$ 40 as entrance fee and US\$ 10 as annual membership fee. CEJA can also have associate members with the same entrance and annual fees.

## **Annual Congress**

Every year there shall be an annual general meeting of CEJA. All members and representatives of member institutions who have paid their dues can participate in the annual general meeting and will be eligible to be elected to office for a one-year term.

The 2nd General Assembly of CEJA will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in September 13 - 17, 1999 in conjunction with AFEJ General Assembly. A decision was reached at the inaugural meeting to hold a networking workshop of the members of CEJA in Kenya in March 2000 in order to formulate a five-year Strategic Management Plan. New office bearers will also be elected at the proposed meeting.

1. One Chairman
2. Three Vice Chairmen
3. One General Secretary
4. One vice Secretary
5. Five Exco members



Functions of the office bearers:-

**Chairman :** The Chairman will preside at all AGMs and he / she will represent CEJA. He will also manage the Secretariat of CEJA.

**Vice Chairman :** The Vice Chairmen will assist the Chairman in conducting the AGMs and affairs of CEJA. One Vice Chairman will preside in the absence of the Chairman.

**General Secretary :** The General Secretary will assist the Secretariat of CEJA.

**Vice Secretary :** The Vice Secretary will assist the General Secretary.

### **Founding Member Organizations of The Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA):-**

1. Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF), Sri Lanka
2. Centre for Society and Development (CSAD), Sri Lanka
3. Forum of Environmental Journalists, Bangladesh
4. League of Environmental Journalists, Ghana
5. Green Press, Pakistan
6. Forum of Environmental Journalists, Pakistan
7. Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), Singapore
8. Mother Earth Communicators, Cameroon
9. Mauritius Union of Environmental Journalists (MUEJ), Mauritius

10. Forum of Writers on Environment , Maldives
11. Solomon Islands Environmental Journalists Association ,  
Soloman Islands
12. Forum of Environmental Journalists of India (FEJI), Mumbai, India
13. Centre for Environmental Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, India
14. C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre, Chennai, India
15. Malaysian Forum of Environmental Journalists (MFEJ), Malaysia.
16. Voice of Maldives, Maldives
17. Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists, Fiji

Names of representatives of the founding member organizations.

Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne - Sri Lanka (**Founder of CEJA**), S.N.Pillai - Sri Lanka, Daya Lankapura - Sri Lanka, Dinesh Weerakkody - Sri Lanka, Wilfred Ranasinghe - Sri Lanka, Lilanthi Samaraweera - Sri Lanka, Quamrul Chowdhury - Bangladesh, Mike Anane - Ghana , Zaffarullah Khana - Pakistan, Zaigham Khan - Pakistan , Vijay Menon - Singapore , Angele Luh - Cameroon , Soodhakur Ramlallah - Mauritius, Farouq Ahmed - Maldives, Mohamed Jinah - Maldives, Dorothy Hatigeva - Solomon Islands , Darryl D' Monte - India, Prithi Nambiar - India, Damandeep Singh - India, Anjani Khana - India, Drs. Nanditha Krishna - India, Nina Ratulele - Fiji.

**"In the words of Colombo Congress participant Zaigham Khan from Pakistan said; The chance of a life time : so much learning under one roof" - Commonpath Magazine, UK.**

***6th World Congress of  
Environmental Journalists  
Colombo, Sri Lanka, October 19 - 23, 1998***

***Venue : The Blue Water Hotel, Talpitiya, Wadduwa.***

***DETAILED PROGRAMME***

*October 17 and 19 : Arrival of Delegates and Registration*

***OPTIONAL HALF-DAY NATURE TOUR  
October 18, 1998***

- 14.00 hrs : After lunch, proceed to Unawatuna, one of the magnificent Beach Resorts of Sri Lanka on the South coast. Enroute stop at Balapitiya for a boat safari at the picturesque Madu River. See well preserved mangroves and primitive fishing, village life in the river surroundings. Continue the journey to Unawatuna via Galle, the Capital of Southern Province of Sri Lanka. You will pass the 16th Century Portuguese and Dutch Fort and the Natural Harbour in Galle.
- 16.30 hrs: Reach Unawatuna Beach for a sea bath and snorkeling (one out of the best eight beaches in the world for diving. Return to the hotel.
- 20.00 hrs : Dinner hosted by SLEJF Exco

**Day 1: Monday, October 19, 1998**

**Eco-Tourism Study Tour**

- Facilitator :** Lalith Kandenaarachchi, Seylan Bank, Nawala
- 8.00 hrs : Leave the hotel after breakfast
- 9.00 hrs : Proceed to Zoological Gardens at Dehiwala and visit the Dehiwala Zoo
- 12.00 hrs : Return to the hotel for lunch
- 13.00 hrs : Commence half-day excursion to Southern Capital of Sri Lanka, Galle
- 13.30 hrs : Enroute visit Buddhist Temple at Kalutara located by one of the largest rivers of Sri Lanka
- 14.00 hrs : Continue excursion along the South coast and stop at Kosgoda to see the Turtle Hatchery
- 15.00 hrs : Reach Hikkaduwa Beach Resort; see colourful corals through glass-bottomed boats
- 16.00 hrs : Proceed to Galle, Southern Capital of Sri Lanka  
Visit 16th Century Dutch fortification and see the Natural Harbour of Galle
- 18.30 hrs : Return to the Blue Water Hotel
- 19.00 hrs : AFEJ meeting (members only)
- 21.00 hrs : Dinner hosted by the Minister of Tourism and Aviation, Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayke

**DAY 2 : Tuesday , October 20, 1998**

**Inaugural Session**

- Facilitator :** Ariya Rubasinghe  
Director of Information Department, Sri Lanka
- 10.00 hrs : Welcome address by  
\* Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne  
Chairman / SLEJF
- 10.10 hrs : Greetings  
\* Prof. Jim Detjen, USA  
President/IFEJ
- 10.30 hrs : Address by the Guest of Honour  
\* Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse,  
Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
- 10.45 hrs : Address by the Chief Guest  
\* Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake,  
Minister of Tourism and Aviation
- 11.00 hrs : Addresses by the Representatives of  
Congress Supporting Agencies  
\* Statement of Dr. Klaus Topfer,  
Executive Director / UNEP,  
\* Statement of Stan Van Wichele  
Head of Bureau Asia and the former Soviet Union  
HIVOS, the Netherlands  
\* Olv Herner, Senior Adviser  
Royal Norwegian Embassy / NORAD, Colombo  
\* Statement of The Commonwealth Foundation,  
Director, Dr. Humayun Khan

- \* Dr. Stefen Dreyer  
Director, Goethe Institut, Colombo
- \* Message from the ESCAP Executive Secretary  
Adrianus Mooy
- \* Lisa Lumbao  
Communications Specialist, US-AEP, Manila

11.45 hrs : Presentation of  
SLEJF's International Green Pen Awards

12.00 hrs : Presentation of Sri Lanka Green Awards

12.15 hrs : Vote of Thanks  
\* Nadaraja Pillai, General Secretary, SLEJF

12.15 hrs : Refreshments

13.00 hrs : Lunch

**Session 1 :** Chair : Michael Schweres,  
Co-Executive Director/IFEJ

14.00 - 14.30 hrs : AFEJ vision, its past, present and future

14.30 - 15.00 hrs : IFEJ vision, its past, present and future  
Valentin Thurn, Founder of IFEJ

15.00 - 15.20 hrs : Reporting on Ecotourism  
Atty: Manuel Satorre jr, Chairman,  
Philippines Environmental Journalists Inc. (PEJI)

15.20 - 15.30 hrs : Ecotourism : A Businessman's Viewpoint  
Chandra de Silva, Finance Director,  
Ranweli Hotel, Sri Lanka

15.30 - 16.15 hrs : Challenges and opportunities faced by  
World's Indigenous people:  
A case study of Sri Lanka

**Panelists :** Dambane Gunawardhana  
(1st Graduate from Sri Lankan  
indigenous people)  
G.A. Prabath Kumara  
Environmental Journalists and SLEJF  
member who lived with Veddha  
Community for 5 years

16.15 - 16.40 hrs : Tea Break

16.40 - 17.00 hrs : Reporting on Biodiversity  
Haroldo Castro, Senior Director  
International Communications,  
Conservation International

17.00 - 19.00 hrs : IFEJ Meeting (members only)

19.00 hrs : Dinner hosted by H.E. Ilkka Usitalo  
Ambassador, European Union  
Delegation of the European Commission

### ***DAY 3 : Wednesday, October 21, 1998***

**Session 2** Chair : Randa Fouad  
Treasurer, Egypt Society of Writers on  
Environment and Development

- Panelists :** Marta Sarvari, Chairman,  
Hungarian Society of Environmental  
Journalists
- 9.00 - 9.30 hrs : International Cooperation for  
Climate Change  
Prof. Mohan Munasinghe  
Vice Chairman, International Panel on  
Climate Change (PICC)
- 9.30 - 9.50 hrs : Agenda 21: Specific Recommendations on  
Environmental Education and  
Communication  
Prithi Nambiar,  
Programme Coordinator,  
Centre for Environment and Education  
(CEE) Ahmadabad, India
- 9.50 - 10.10 hrs : Eco-voluntaryism in Developing Countries  
Sue Allan, Programme Officer,  
Asia Regional Unit, Australian Volunteers  
International, Australia
- 10.10 - 10.30 hrs : Imagine Tomorrow's World :  
IUCN and the Media  
E. Yasaratne,  
IUCN Country Representative, Sri Lanka
- Panelists :** Om Khadka, Nepal  
Kapila Fernando, Sri Lanka
- 10.30 - 11.00 hrs : Tea Break
- Session 3** Chair : Wirasuk Salayakuend  
Chairman, Science and Environmental  
Communication of Thailand



- Facilitator :** Quamrul Chowdhury, Bangladesh  
Chairman / FEJB
- 11.00 - 11.15 hrs : The Water Crisis : The Struggle within  
Each Drop: A Video Film  
( 19 minutes, produced by ADB)
- 11.15 - 12.00 hrs : Waste Water re-use :  
Stakes, Experience Research  
Dr. Jacques Manen,  
Director, Asia Pacific Technical and Research  
Network,  
LYONNAISE DES EAUX
- 12.00 - 12.15 hrs : Environmental Management and  
Human Resources Management  
Erick Boerset, Environmental Adviser,  
The Netherlands
- 12.15 - 13.15 hrs : Panel Discussion on Funding and  
Collaborative Possibilities  
\* David Lazarus, UNIS / ESCAP  
\* Hutton Archer,  
The Global Environment Facility (GEF)  
\* Prabath Gunathunge - US-AEP
- 13.15 - 14.00 hrs : Lunch
- Session 4** Chair : S. Dammulla,  
Secretary, Sri Lanka Press Council
- 14.00 - 15 30 hrs : Formulation of Environmental  
Journalists Code of Ethics  
Panel Discussion

**Panelists :**

- \* Dr. Dharman Wickramaratne, Sri Lanka
- \* Darryl D' Monte, India
- \* Dr. Bob Thomas, USA

**Session 5**

15.30 - 18.30 hrs : Workshops, IFEJ and AFEJ meetings

**Group 1**

Formulation of AFEJ 3-Year Strategic  
Management Plan (Year 1999 - 2001)  
Coordinator: Mohan Mainali, Nepal

**Group 2**

IFEJ Meeting  
Coordinator: Michel Schweres, IFEJ

**Group 3**

Screening of selected environmental  
TV films,  
produced by IFEJ/AFEJ/SLEJF  
member organizations and individuals  
Coordinator: Helana Blomquist,  
Swedish Television

20.00 hrs : Dinner hosted by the Minister of  
Media and Telecommunications,  
Hon. Mangala Samaraweera

**DAY 4 : Thursday , October 22, 1998**

***Day Excursion to Kandy  
the Hill Capital of Sri Lanka***

- 6.00 hrs :           After breakfast proceed to Kandy
- 6.45 hrs :           ***Arrive at the SLEJF Secretariat***
- 7.45 hrs :           Proceed to Kandy

*Kandy* situated 116 km from Colombo was the last capital of Sinhala Kings. At present it is the main cultural capital of Sri Lanka with a rich heritage of living monuments. Kandy is still the home of fine arts and crafts, music, dance and songs.

Located 488 ft above sea level, surrounded by misty hills and valleys, Kandy is still the most beautiful city in Sri Lanka.  
Extent 1940 Sq km, population 2 million people.  
Temperature varies 20-22 C

No visit to Sri Lanka is complete without a visit to the ancient Kandyan kingdom, one of the most picturesque cities in the Island, and the Kandy lake adds to its beauty. This last seat of Sinhalese kings is famous mainly due to it being the home of the *Dalada Maligawa* or the Temple of the Tooth which houses the sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha, and also the palace of the last Sinhalese king. Kandy is also world famous because of the world's oldest cultural pageant, the *Esala Perahera* easily the most colourful pageant of Asia. Near the Kandy lake (in the centre of the city) is the old building and at the edge of it is the queens bath used during the Kandyan era.

This lovely city is the erstwhile hill capital and the last stronghold of the Sinhala Kings, encircled by hills, with a tranquil lake in its centre,

10.30 hrs : Reach the Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawala in time to see the milk feeding of the baby elephants. Also, watch elephants at bath in Maha Oya River. See the world's first elephant orphanage which has over 100 elephants. The orphanage was set up to feed, nurse and house young elephants found abandoned by their mothers.

At this orphanage you will find elephants of all ages who have been abandoned or otherwise unable to feed themselves due to injury. They are looked after with loving care until such time they are ready to work or be freed back to the jungle. The elephants are also bathed daily in a river located across the orphanage. This is a paradise for elephant photographers.

11.45 hrs : Continue the journey to Kandy via Kadugannawa where you could enjoy hill country scenery at a mountain pass (photo stop)

12.15 hrs : Visit the gem museum

13.00 hrs : Buffet lunch at Hotel Suisse

14.00 hrs : Commence city tour of Kandy

See a panoramic view of Kandy city from the upper lake drive. Visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic, Kandy.

Visit Arts and Crafts Association,  
Kandy for Sri Lanka Souvenirs.

Stop at Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya.

16.00 hrs : Return to hotel

21.00 hrs : Dinner hosted by  
Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic  
Resources Development,  
Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse

***DAY 5 : Friday, October 23, 1998***

**Session 6** Chair : Atty. Manuel Satorre, jr.  
Chairman, Philippines Environmental  
Journalists Inc.

**Facilitator :** Nadaraja Pillai, Veerakesari Newspaper

9.00 - 10.00 hrs : Plenary Session for International and  
Regional Environment Media  
Workshop Organizers

- \* Vijay Menon, AMIC / Singapore
- \* Emannual D Silva, EDI / World Bank
- \* Bitte Lyden FOJO seminars,  
Kalmar University, Sweden

10.00 - 10.30 hrs : Urban Development and Infrastructure Issues  
Jeremy Hagger,  
Managing Director, US-AEP

10.30 - 11.00 hrs : Tea Break

11.00 - 12.30 hrs : Workshop for Training of Trainers on  
Environmental Journalism  
Organized by Prof. Jim Detjen,  
Knight Chair in Journalism, MSU School  
of Journalism, USA

- 12.30 - 13.30 hrs : Lunch
- Session 7** Workshops and IFEJ/AFEJ meetings
- 13.30 hrs : Briefing to the Working Groups
- 14.00 hrs : Each Group will carry out separate discussions under the guidance of a group moderator

### ***GROUP 1***

#### **Use of Television and Video for Environmental Education and Awareness**

- Moderator :** Valentin Thurn, Germany
- Facilitator :** Anoma Rajakaruna, Director  
Green Sri Lanka Eco-Video Magazine

### ***GROUP 2***

#### **Using E-mail for Environmental Information Gathering**

- Moderator :** Nishantha Jayawardena,  
Lanka Internet Services

### **GROUP 3**

#### **Using Broadcast Media in Environmental Journalism**

##### **Session 8**

- 16.30 hrs : Presentations from Working Groups
- 17.00 hrs : Recommendations and Colombo Declaration
- 18.00 hrs : Closing Presentation of Congress  
Chief Guest  
Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake,  
Minister of Environment and Forestry
- 19.00 hrs : IFEJ and AFEJ meetings
- 21.00 hrs : Congress Concludes
- 21.00 hrs : Dinner hosted by  
Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake,  
Minister of Environment and Forestry

#### **DEPARTURES**



*" .... The congress in Colombo has to be commended for bringing journalists from countries like Jordan, Tunisia, Cameroon, China, Indonesia, Japan, Mauritius, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Bhutan, Maldives, Australia and Solomon Islands as it was the first time that these journalists participated at a IFEJ world congress. Colombo Congress was a great success and the ratification of the code was a significant achievement ..."*

*Prof. Jim Detjen - IFEJ / President.  
The Sunday Observer  
Colombo - October 25, 1998*



## *6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists* *List of Participants*

\* SLEJF Fully Funded

\*\* SLEJF Part Funded

● Ms. Randa Fouad \*\*

Treasurer

Egypt Writers of Environment and Development

**Egypt.**

● Mr. Mostafa Rizk

Freelance Journalist

**Egypt.**

● Ms. Nahed Hamza

Journalist, Al Akhbar Newspaper

**Egypt.**

● Mr. Ziyad Alawneh

Regional Coordinator

Med Eco Media Network

**Jordan.**

● Mr. Hafedh Hentati

Representative

Med Eco Media Network

**Tunisia.**

● Ms. Angele Luh \*

General Secretary

Mother Earth Communicators

**Cameroon.**

● Mr. Michael Anane \*

Chairman

League of Environmental Journalists

**Ghana.**

● Ms. Sonia Edith \*

Treasurer

Colombian Environmental Journalists Association (ANPA)

**Colombia.**

● Mr. Dario Salazar \*\*

Vice President

Colombian Environmental Journalists Association (ANPA)

**Colombia.**

● Prof. Jim Detjen \*

Founder President

US Society of Environmental Journalists

**USA.**

● Dr. Robert A. Thomas

Loyola Chair in Environmental Communications

Loyola University

**USA.**

● Mr. Haroldo Castro

Senior Director

International Communications

Conservation International

**USA.**

● Mr. Yang Mao \*

Chairman

China Forum of Environmental Journalists (CFEJ)

**China.**

- Ms. Zhang Xiaoqing \*\*

Project Manager

China Fourm of Environmental Journalists (CFEJ)

**China.**

- Mr. Darryl D' Monte \*

Chairman

Forum of Environmental Journalists of India (FEJI)

Mumbai - **India.**

- Ms. Prithi Nambiar \*

Programme Coordinator

Centre for Environmental Education (CEE)

Ahmedabad - **India.**

- Mr. Damandeep Singh \*\*

General Secretary

Indian Forum of Environmental Journalists (FEJI)

Delhi - **India.**

- Ms. Anjani Khanna \*

Rapporteur - Colombo Congress

Mumbai - **India.**

- Dr. (Ms) Nanditha C. Krishna

Hon. Director

C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre

Chennai - **India.**

- Ms. Javanthi Prabhakaran

Editor

C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre

Chennai - **India.**

- Ms. Elisabeth R. Kuswijyanthi \*  
Co-ordinator  
Eco Media Indonesia  
**Indonesia.**
  
- Ms. Mardiyah Chamin \*  
Editorial Staff Member  
Panji Masyarakat Weekly Magazine  
**Indonesia.**
  
- Mr. Kenichi Mizuno  
Chairman  
Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists (JFEJ)  
**Japan.**
  
- Mr. Leong Shen-li \*\*  
Treasurer  
Malaysian Forum of Environmental Journalists (MFEJ)  
**Malaysia.**
  
- Dr. Jacques Manen  
Director  
Lyonnaise Des Eaux  
**Malaysia.**
  
- Ms. Carol Christian  
Communication Officer  
ASTRAN  
**Malaysia.**
  
- Mr. Soodhakur Ramlallah \*  
President  
Mauritius Union of Environmental Journalists (MUEJ)  
**Mauritius.**

- Mr. Quamrul Chowdhury \*  
Chairman  
Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh  
**Bangladesh.**
  
- Mr. Kamal Hyder \*\*  
Freelance Journalist  
**Bangladesh.**
  
- Mr. Om Khadka \*  
Chairman  
Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NFEJ)  
**Nepal.**
  
- Mr. Mohan Mainali \*  
Co-ordinator  
Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ)  
**Nepal.**
  
- Atty. Manuel Satorre \*  
Chairman  
Philippine Environmental Journalists Inc. (PEJI)  
Cebu, **Philippines.**
  
- Ms. Elizabeth Roxas \*\*  
Executive Director  
Environmental Broadcast Circle (EBC)  
Manila - **Philippines.**
  
- Mr. Vijay Menon \*  
Secretary General  
Asian Media Information and  
Communication Centre (AMIC)  
**Singapore.**

- Mr. Wirasak Salaykanond \*  
Chairman  
Science and Environmental Communication  
**Thailand.**
  
- Mr. Tindoong Soong \*\*  
Meinung People's Association  
**Taiwan.**
  
- Ms. Nguyen Thi Diep Hoa \*\*  
First Vice Chairman  
Vietnam Forum of Environmental Journalists (VFEJ)  
**Vietnam.**
  
- Ms. Karen Kirby \*  
Chairman - Adhoc Committee  
Bhutan Environmental Journalists Forum  
C/o WWF  
**Bhutan.**
  
- Mr. Foruq Ahmed \*  
General Secretary  
Forum of Writers on Environment  
**Maldives.**
  
- Mr. Mohamed Jinah  
News Producer  
Voice of Maldives  
**Maldives.**
  
- Ms. Aminath Ratyu  
Secretary (Information )  
Forum of Writers on Environment  
**Maldives.**

- Dr. Dharman Wickramaratne \*

Editorial Director

Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF)

**Sri Lanka.**

- Mr. Rohana Siriwardena

Chairman

Western Province Media Forum

**Sri Lanka.**

- Mr. S.N. Pillai \*

Chief Reporter

Virakesheri, Tamil Daily and

General Secretary of SLEJF

**Sri Lanka.**

- Mr. Daya Lankapura \*

Editor - Janatha Sinhala Daily

Co-Editor - Silumina Sinhala Weekly and

Treasurer of SLEJF

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- Mr. Sudharman Radaliyagoda \*

News Producer

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**Sri Lanka.**

- Ms. Tharuka Disanayake \*

Environmental Reporter

The Sunday Times

**Sri Lanka.**

- Mr. Damian Ganegoda \*

Co-Editor

Sri Lanka Soba Cineru Environmental Television (SOTV)

**Sri Lanka.**

- Mr. E. Weeraperuma \*  
News Editor  
Sunday Observer and Daily Observer  
**Sri Lanka.**
  
- Mr. Wilfred Ranasinghe \*  
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Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum  
**Sri Lanka.**
  
- Mr. Ranjan Amarasinghe \*  
News Editor  
Sirasa and Yes FM Radio  
**Sri Lanka.**
  
- Ms. Tarika Gunathilake\*  
Environmental Reporter  
Daily News English Daily  
**Sri Lanka.**
  
- Ms. Sakuntala Perera \*  
Environmental Reporter  
The Island English Daily  
**Sri Lanka.**
  
- Mr. Suriya Gunasekara \*  
Chairman  
Sri Lanka Environment Congress  
**Sri Lanka.**
  
- Mr. Siri Dammulla \*  
Press Commissioner  
Sri Lanka Press Council  
**Sri Lanka.**



- Mr. Ariya Rubasinghe \*

Director of Information

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- Mr. Dinesh Weerakkody \*

Managing Editor

Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ)

**Sri Lanka.**

- Ms. Lilanthi Samaraweera \*

Editor

Conservation News Service (ENS)

**Sri Lanka.**

- Mr. Zaigham Khan \*

Chairman

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Lahore - **Pakistan.**

- Mr. Zaffarullah Khan \*

Chairman, Green Press

Islamabad - **Pakistan.**

- Ms. Sue Allan

Programme Officer - Asia Regional Unit

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**Australia.**

- Ms. Dorothy Hatigeva \*

Soloman Islands Environmental Journalists Forum

C/o Soloman Islands Broadcasting Cooperation

**Soloman Islands.**

- Ms. Marta Sarvari Tyapay  
President  
Hungarian Society of Environmental Journalists  
**Hungary.**
  
- Ms. Albena Arnaudova \*  
Chairman  
Society of Environment and Health Journalists  
C/o Union of Bulgarian Journalists  
**Bulgariya.**
  
- Mr. Valentin Thurn \*  
Founder General Secretary  
German Environmental Journalists Association  
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**France.**
  
- Mr. Christopher Piedonel  
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- Ms. Lngun Lnarsen  
Representative  
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Course Coordinator, FOJO  
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**Sweden.**
  
- Ms. Helena Blomquist  
News Reporter  
Swedish Television  
**Sweden.**
  
- Ms. Eleni Andrikopoulou  
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- Mr. Emmanule D' Silva  
EDI - The World Bank  
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\* \* \* \* \*

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## ADDRESS OF WELCOME

● **Dharman Wickremaratne**

**Chairman**

**Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF)**

Hon. Ministers, members of IEJF and AFEJ, Representative of UNEP, Supporting Agencies and friends, first of all, it is a great source of pleasure for me, on behalf of myself, the SLEJF and the co-organizers, to welcome all of you to the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists. I must also thank particularly our Chief Guest, Hon. Dharmasiri Senanayake and the Guest of Honour, Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse for agreeing to grace this occasion. I need hardly mention the fact that this Congress is the result of much hard work on the part of the SLEJF, IFEJ and AFEJ.

Environmental Journalists numbering 76 from 34 countries have travelled to Sri Lanka for this Congress. The theme of this Congress as you all know is "Environmental Journalism Beyond 2000: To Work Together for a More Sustainable Future". Under this theme there will be many important presentations during the next few days and I am confident that all of you present here will benefit from these presentations. Also it will provide you with an opportunity to interact with journalists from other countries.

Environmental journalism in Sri Lanka occupies an important place and I am proud to say that even the Sri Lanka Government has recognized this fact mainly in view of the fact that Sri Lanka is a fast developing country economically and that it has opened its doors to foreign investors. Under these circumstances, it is important that environmental journalists keep a vigilant eye in view of the many development projects now taking place. This does not mean that we as environmental journalists have to find fault with everything. We should make it a point

to be constructive and to create a sense of awareness where environmental protection and sustainable development is of prime importance. Let us do our duty with a sense of responsibility and acceptance.

***In the course of this congress we hope to adopt a Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists worldwide. It will be the first such Code in the world. We also hope to form an Association of Environmental Journalists of the Commonwealth countries.***

Before I conclude this address it is my bounden duty to thank our donors most sincerely without whose generous support this Congress would not have been a reality. I will be failing in my duty if I do not express a word of thanks to the staff of SLEJF who have given their best, ungrudgingly, during the past several months to make a success of this Congress. Last, but not the least, I wish to thank all the participants and everybody else present here today.

THANK YOU.

**ADDRESS BY Prof. JIM DETJEN  
PRESIDENT, IFEJ**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists. I would like to start by thanking Dharman and the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum for hosting this year's Congress. Dr. Dharman and his staff have been tireless in their efforts. It is an enormous challenge to raise the necessary funds, send invitations to journalists across the world, handle the logistics of bringing in representatives from nearly 40 countries and to successfully organize all the details of a Congress like this.

*Dharman has done a magnificent job. We are meeting in one of the most beautiful sites of any IFEJ conference and I am confident we will have a very fruitful meeting.*

This Congress is also being jointly organized by the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists. We have representatives from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, Bhutan, Maldives, Pakistan, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka.

The final joint organizer of the Congress is IFEJ.

This year's Congress is historic in several ways. *First*, it is the first time we are meeting in South Asia. This Congress gives IFEJ the chance to further build our network in this important region of the world. *Second*, this year's Congress creates a new record for the number of countries represented. 76 journalists from 34 countries have registered.

*Third*, one of the tasks we will work on during this week is the creation of a Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists world-

**wide. As you are aware, the styles and cultures of journalism vary greatly worldwide. If we can agree upon a basic code -- and I think we can -- this will be an important accomplishment.**

I would like to say a few words about why environmental journalism is so important. First, studies show overwhelmingly that mass media is the principal medium through which people learn about the environment. A survey by the Roper Polling Firm in the United States has found that television, newspapers, magazines and radio are by far the most important ways to inform the public about environmental news.

Environmental journalists play a vital role in shaping the public agenda, uncovering problems and identifying solutions.

Second, numerous surveys around the world show that the public is hungry for more news about environmental issues. For example, a 1997 survey by Environmental Monitor in Canada found that public interest in environmental issues in virtually all of the 24 countries it surveyed has continued to grow. Unfortunately many of us have had difficulty convincing our editors that news about the environment is just as important as news about sex, crimes, celebrities and scandals. But that is why IFEJ/AFEJ and national groups such as the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF) are so important. We have to continue to lobby our editors and news directors about publishing more environmental news.

I will cite one more survey. The CBS Television Network and Time Magazine in the United States has asked the public last April what it's greatest concerns were as we look forward to the 21st century. The survey found that overwhelmingly the public is most concerned about environmental problems -- even more so than crime, the economy or war. There is great public anxiety about issues such climate change, population growth, deforestation, the decline of the world's fisheries and other critical issues. It is our responsibility to continue to write and broadcast about these issues.



In many parts of the world it is difficult -- and often dangerous -- to report about the environment. Many of the journalists sitting here today have been harassed or threatened because of what we have reported. Many IFEJ members have had their work censored. Some have been imprisoned.

And, unfortunately, sometimes environmental journalists are killed. Let me cite just one case that occurred last year in Indonesia. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Muhammed Sayuti Bochari, a newspaper reporter in Sulawesi, Indonesia was killed on June 11, 1997 while he was investigating illegal logging. He had written front page articles about corrupt officials involved in the deforestation of his region and as a result of his report, Bochari was beaten to death.

This is why the work of IFEJ is so important. By banding together we can publicize such incidents and campaign against such abuses. The IFEJ Council has taken a stand in support of journalists who have been threatened in Algeria, Tonga and other nations -- and we will continue to do so.

Since the IFEJ was founded in October 1993 in Dresden, Germany, the organization has been successful in holding annual conferences in Paris, Boston, Cebu City, Budapest and now in Colombo. We have been fortunate in having strong organizers such as Manual Satorre in the Philippines, Marta Sarvari in Hungary and Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne in Sri Lanka.

**During the past year, Michael Schweres and Lovisette Gouverne have worked hard to release four issues of IFEJ's Newsletter, The Planet's Voice, and to serve as Co-Executive Directors of IFEJ. This is not an easy task. The world is a big place and IFEJ's resources are very modest. One of our major goals in the coming year is to raise more funds so that our headquarters in Paris can grow and better serve our members.**

At this time I would like to thank some of the sponsors of this year's Conference. They include the United Nations Environment Programme, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Norwegian Agency for International Development, Lyonnaise des Eaux, HIVOS, the Goethe Institute, the European Union and the US-Asia Environmental Partnership. Thank you all for your support. And to all of you who are gathered in this room today I thank you for coming such great distances from all over the world to participate in this year's Congress. One of the greatest benefits of these IFEJ conferences are the friends and contacts we make each year.

I know we are going to have an outstanding conference. Thanks again to Dr. Dharman and the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum for hosting it.

**ADDRESS BY HON. DHARMASIRI SENANAYAKE,  
MINISTER OF TOURISM AND AVIATION**

Rev. Sirs, Hon. Ministers, President and Executive Members of IFEJ, AFEJ and SLEJF, Representative of UNEP, Representatives of Congress Supporting Agencies, distinguished participants and guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed a privilege and honour for me to deliver this address at the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists, held in these beautiful surroundings. I am indeed thankful to the organizers for inviting me to the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists as the Chief Guest.

As you will note from the booklet that has been made available to you, the theme of this Congress is "**Environmental Journalism Beyond 2000: to Work Together for a More Sustainable Future**". As far as I can see, this is undoubtedly a very broad theme which encompasses several important subject areas. According to the detailed programme, a copy of which I am sure you will have in your hands by now, the presentations listed therein cover a diversity of very important and useful topics. I have no doubt that by the end of this Congress all of you would have benefitted immensely.

I need not emphasize how important environmental journalism is both in the local and global context. Without environmental journalism there will be hardly any awareness creation. On the other hand, environmental journalism is the only means by which the authorities responsible for the enforcement of environmental laws are kept on their toes. If there is no group called environmental journalists, we cannot imagine what the world will be like from the point of view of environmental protection. It is very crucial in a country like Sri Lanka which is developing economically at a very rapid pace and which has opened its doors for foreign investment. It should not be development at any cost, but it should be sustainable development. Today the environment is globally and locally challenged

by development. Therefore there is a need to protect the environment from our own hands. I have a special interest in tourism as the Minister in charge of the subject. I feel that every effort should be made to encourage eco-conscious tourists rather than mass tourists. Journalists have an important role to play in promoting ecotourism and spotlighting any threats to the environment from tourism. In this process they should at all times endeavour to report responsibly and impartially. Media freedom should thus be always maintained.

Having said this, it behoves me to thank the SLEJF for taking the initiative along with IFEJ and AFEJ to organize this all important Congress of Environmental Journalists. It is hardly necessary for me to say that the timing of this Congress is very appropriate. While sharing and exchanging views on matters relating to a "sustainable future", the participants will undoubtedly be able to formulate strategies to face the next decade starting with the year 2001.

I am aware that Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum has a very impressive record of achievements which is too long to be enumerated. It is a vibrant professional media NGO in Sri Lanka interested in environment and development. It is also the most active journalists organization in Sri Lanka at present. I said that the SLEJF is vibrant because its existence is felt not only in Sri Lanka but also throughout the world where environment and development is of significance. It is the only environmental NGO in Sri Lanka to have won the coveted Global 500 Award of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). I am happy to say that Dr. Dharman Wickremaratne, Chairman of SLEJF is a very dynamic person. I mean it because whatever he has handled up to now has been quite successful. It is no exaggeration to say that what he begins modestly ends in tremendous success.

Let me at this stage state that the Government will do everything within its power to work in cooperation with all agencies concerned with environment.

Before I conclude this address, let me wish success to the deliberations of this Congress which I am aware will go on till 23rd October. I also wish to extend a very warm welcome to all the foreign participants and wish them a very pleasant stay in Sri Lanka. Finally, let me once again thank the organizers for making it possible for me to be present here today.

**THANK YOU.**

**ADDRESS BY HON. MAHINDA RAJAPAKSE,  
MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND  
AQUATIC RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

Rev. Sirs, Hon. Ministers, Foreign Delegates, Journalists, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be present at the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists as the Guest of Honour. I thank the organisers for the kind invitation.

I very much appreciate the value and importance of this conference on environmental journalism where delegates from 43 countries are participating. It is of equal importance that in this Year of the Ocean this significant conference is hosted in the island of Sri Lanka, surrounded by the sea. As the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, I am glad that the conference is bound to provide the international journalists the rare opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge and experience of the country's marine resources and biodiversity. Sri Lanka's 1585 metre long sea coast is studded with sandy beaches, lagoons, estuaries, mangroves and coastal wetlands. 29% of Sri Lanka's land area belongs to its coastal belt and no less than 37% of its population live here. It comprises the natural habitats of coral reef, estuaries and river mouths, lagoons, mangroves, salt lagoons and obstructive reefs which are a rich environmental diversity. And you are provided the opportunity to observe and study all this.

Sri Lanka is one of the major biodiversity areas identified by the international scientific community. The available information indicates that in respect of several major taxometric groups, Sri Lanka's biodiversity for a unit of land area is among the highest in South and South-East Asia.

As for a terrestrial ecosystem, Sinharaja forest contains more than 200 species and Bonovista has more than 500 species, which number is

almost equal to the number in the Great Barrier Reef for a marine ecosystem. At present Sri Lanka has a systemic and depository system for plants but for animals there are gaps, for which I consider, we should take immediate action for the re-establishment of a national zoological collection and an improved zoological survey.

Most of our older specimens were deposited in foreign countries such as in the Smithsonian Institute in the USA and the British Museum in the UK. In this regard, I propose to establish a field gene bank to preserve the rare and vanishing species. Some of these specimens are required to prove and establish the "country of origin" of particular species. There by we should be in a position to establish the patent right of these organisms.

We are aware that the journalist moves ahead of society and with regard to development and environment his responsibility is extremely important. The field of the environmental journalist is a very wide one. This makes his role all the more important. His function is not confined only to the dissemination of knowledge and information. Development of new knowledge is also his duty. It is a redeeming feature that the present conference of journalists is expected to draft a code of conduct for environmental journalists.

The convention signed in Rio de Janeiro is meant for the 21st century and the effective implementation of environmental concerns embodied in it needs to be undertaken in the future. In this context the responsibility and commitment of the environmental journalist is great and critical indeed. Examination, review, investigation, criticism and also self-criticism may be elements in the functioning of environmental journalism for the 21st century.

Finally, may I wish the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists all success and wish all the foreign delegates a pleasant stay in Sri Lanka.

**THANK YOU.**

## ***MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP***

● **Dr. Klaus Topfer**  
**Executive Director**  
**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**  
**Nairobi - Kenya.**

I am really pleased to learn that the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum is hosting the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists in Sri Lanka.

The theme of this year's conference, "**Environmental Journalism Beyond 2000**" is indeed very appropriate.

The future may be unpredictable, but the options and possibilities open to us need not be unknown. Clearly, the critical elements of the processes which can launch us on the road to a healthy and sustainable future have to be explored and relentlessly pursued.

*It is precisely to chart the passage to this future, to lay out a vision of the world in the next millennium, to share our perspectives on the future of environmental journalism that we are gathered in Colombo today.*

If 1997 is any indication, we are headed on a very unattractive if not suicidal trajectory. 1997 was the hottest year on record. There are, of course, tremendously serious consequences for the world arising from our heavy reliance on fossil fuels and the resulting warming of the global climate, symptoms of which are now upon us.

Despite efforts over the past decade to break our addiction to ozone depleting substances, 1998 is witnessing the largest ever ozone hole forming over the Antarctic.



UNEP reported in its Global Environmental Outlook report that the rate of plant and animal extinction has reached truly alarming proportions. Equally alarming is the rate at which the world is losing soil and, with it, the capacity to produce food to feed the growing population. The pollution of rivers and the contamination of ground water is also a grave concern. And these are just some of what we might describe as environmental consequences of the way we humans are conducting ourselves.

And what of the social consequences? There are over a billion impoverished people on this planet. There are children, working away their childhood in dark, dangerous industries. There are women carrying inordinate burdens and stresses in caring for others, mothers struggling to eke out the basics of survival for their families. Life in many cities, not just in developed world, is degenerating into a chaotic world of insecurity, hopelessness and drug addiction, social disintegration and violence.

The report of the Brundtland Commission, entitled **Our Common Future**, concluded that "human survival and well-being could depend on success in elevating sustainable development to a global ethic. A global ethic".

The question of human duty, of our responsibility to others, of morality has been fundamental to the concept of sustainable development from the outset. Pursuing sustainable paths of development may well harness technology but sustainability is not just about technological fixes. It may well employ cost-benefit analyses, tradeable permits, eco-labelling and a host of market instruments, but it is just not about economics. It may well involve regulations but it is not just about command and control.

Let me emphasize that as important as the economy is, it must be viewed and used as a tool in the service of the people, in the fulfilment of human needs. We must recognize that as powerful as the market is in stimulating creativity in the generation of wealth, it has distinctly limited abilities in attributing value to many aspects of our life that contribute to our well-being.

Sustainable development is a world view that spans time, for just as our well-being now derives in part from the conditions in which we found the planet where we were born, so too will the well-being of generations yet to be born depend on our legacy.

From interdependence comes responsibility, from responsibility comes the ethical foundation for a way of seeing the world and our role in it. This is what sustainable development is about.

Environmental is a hard sell in a world where people like scandal, sensationalism, personalities and celebrities. Though environment still gets coverage it may be on account of the fact that the media values people and ideas in conflict more than conditions and long-term trends. Thus, environmental disasters get more news coverage than scientific reports on the quality of air and water, the extinction of a species.

Environment is a political story. It is an economic and commercial story. It is also a scientific and political story which has legal and social ramifications. Birken puts it very well when he says that " topics left to theologians, philosophers must become the province of women and men with reporter's notebook". Apart from the enormous complexity involved, the coverage is also affected by the lack of hard news, short deadlines, inadequate sources.

The media has to empower the reader. People need usable information that allows them to engage each other as citizens. Unfortunately, the media has been slow in identifying and covering citizen's movements that have proliferated in recent times around the world. The more dynamic parts of this movement have been working silently away from the glare of the spotlights of the media. And it is these grass-root movements which have been the driving force for institutional change in very important areas of our daily life. By publicizing the activities of these groups, media will only be doing its assigned task.

The information that the media provides to its readers should provide depth and context to the readers. The information should be presented in a manner that leads the readers to refined judgements and help people to bring about change. The audience should come to know that there are ways they can influence the destiny of life on earth. But people generally decide what they want only in the light of what they think they can get. And what they can get at any time often reflects options developed in response to previously unobtainable desires. The media has to alert the audience of the options they have. This may cover a range of interrelated topics - technological options, organizational options and economic options.

Most importantly, the media should communicate messages of paradigm change as they relate to the environment. Paradigm has been defined to be the deepest shared beliefs - spoken or unspoken, conscious or unconscious - of society about how their world is. The paradigm of society tells its members the goals it should strive for and the aspects it should care about. Thus, a change at the level of the paradigm would basically mean a change and restructuring of the world itself.

There has to be a change in the terms and focus of the debate about what in this world has abiding value - economic, social, moral and ecological. The media has to ask fundamental questions about the existing concepts of growth, consumption patterns, poverty and planning. Unfortunately, the coverage of environment has yet to break from existing patterns and paradigms of economic and social thinking. The message has to be communicated to the people that a society that refuses to think about limits to growth and thinks there is an infinite space to dispose of things will ultimately choke in its own waste. A paradigm of society gets stronger by its constant affirmation by every information exchange.

I am convinced that if connections between choices and pollution are clear, many people are willing to waste less, conserve more and are willing to make environmentally correct decisions.

Today, there is a hunger for honesty from politicians and the media on a wide range of issues that relate to human security, to our ability as individuals to have a sense of well-being, of peace.

Hope lies in seeing that our aspirations for security and for peace are closely bound up with the health of the environments in which we live. This implies responsibilities for all elements of society, not the least of which those whose job it is to help us see.

## ***MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION***

● **Dr. Humayun Khan**

**Director, The Commonwealth Foundation (TCF)  
United Kingdom**

The Commonwealth Foundation sends its greetings to the Sixth World Congress of Environmental Journalists and is proud to sponsor the attendance of seven distinguished participants from countries of the Commonwealth.

**The environment is a subject which is today uppermost in our minds. In this, as in many other important subjects, the role that enlightened and informed journalism has to play is vital.**

Equally necessary is the need for environmental journalists to share their experiences and expertise with their colleagues all over the world. In this regard, the goals set for itself by the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) and Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) for the year 2000 are praiseworthy.

The Commonwealth Foundation hopes that Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF) has a fruitful conference in Sri Lanka and that this will be a significant step towards achieving its aims and objectives.

## **STATEMENT OF HIVOS**

● Stan Van Wichelen

**Head of Bureau Asia and the Former Sovier Union**

**HIVOS - The Netherlands**

On behalf of HIVOS (Humanistic Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries) I would hereby like to extend my warmest congratulations for the holding of the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists in Sri Lanka.

*HIVOS strongly believes that supporting local initiatives of NGOs and community - based organizations in the field of economics, culture, human rights, gender and the environment can help make a better world for our and future generations. This conference juxtaposes two HIVOS' policy spearheads, the environment and human rights. People throughout the world have a basic right to live and work in a safe and sustainable environment and to be informed on these issues. In order to make this right a reality, various parties must contribute their share, including governments, schools, businesses, producers and consumers. This conference is so important because environmental journalists are a crucial element in making civil society and state actors take their respective responsibilities in promoting a better environment. This is a worldwide process. For this reason HIVOS is very glad that it has been able to contribute to this conference by making it possible for more participants from various continents to attend the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists.*

We wish you much success during this important conference and thereafter, upon your return to your work places, either in Sri Lanka or abroad. You will then be able to incorporate the new insights and inspiration that you have gained during this week in your articles. And all the valuable pursuit of a more equitable and environmentally sustainable world. Once again, we commend you on this important occasion and wish you much success.

## ***AFEJ -- PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE***

● **Aditya Man Shrestha**

**Founder Chairman**

**Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ)**

**Nepal**

Asian Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ) was born in 1988 in the thick of a global environmental crisis. In Asia, Bangladesh faced unprecedented floods. In America, an unheard-of heat wave swept the Northern United States and in Europe, the Chernobyl disaster took the people out of their breath. There were numerous other alarming signs and symptoms of environmental break-down in many parts of the globe. Australians were refraining from sun tanning for the fear of getting exposed to ultra-violet rays from the ozone layer destruction. Massive deforestation was a common feature in many of the Asian, African and Latin American countries. The rich and developed countries had woken up to the emerging phenomenon of global warming.

*The latter half of the eighties was the time when the world took full cognisance of the gravity of environmental problems and many governments ushered it in their regular agenda. No speech made at the United Nations and other international for a missed to talk about it. The international organisations too made it a point to include environment in their activities. It is at this juncture that UN-ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific) initiated, among other measures, a move to motivate the media to give more attention to environmental issues and get them involved in a concerted effort in the promotion of public awareness on these problems. This eventually led to the establishment of national forums of environmental journalists in a number of Asian countries and finally the birth of AFEJ in 1988. We must remember Dr. Jalal and Dr. Karim of*

*UN-ESCAP with high appreciation for his tireless efforts to bring these organisations to this stage.*

*It has now been in existence for ten years, but not yet permanently settled in one venue. Perhaps it was never meant to be so. The founders of this regional network perceived it, as far as my knowledge goes, as a floating organization shifting from place to place with the Presidents or the Secretaries in different parts of Asia. This has accordingly remained so. Some efforts were indeed made to find a permanent venue for AFEJ for better functioning but could not succeed due to legal and financial complications. After our experiences over these years, the AFEJ members may, if they consider it desirable, give some attention to this issue of establishing a permanent office in Sri Lanka.*

If you take an overview of its activities, we will observe that the eighties were fruitful primarily because international funding for environmental activities was willingly forthcoming. In the nineties, the funding scenario underwent a drastic change specially after the Gulf War and I believe that it considerably slowed down the momentum in the global environmental movement. Even the 1992 Rio Conference was not encouraging to the funding situation as a couple of billion dollars were committed at a time when the need was felt at the range of some 40 billions. Currently, funding is getting scarcer and scarcer as the global agenda is fast shifting to so many other areas like human rights, gender issues and democracy.

In this context, it would be getting increasingly difficult to raise funds for regional activities of AFEJ. I am sure all my colleagues who have taken the responsibility of this organisation would agree with me in this respect. It however does not mean that funds have completely dried up for environmental issues. But to tap is indeed a stupendous task and those who are determined to take it up are bound to be well responded and rewarded. At the national levels, it is heartening to find that many forums have been able to galvanise resources and carry out various activities of merit and value toward enhancement of the environmental



cause. *However at the regional level, the kind of efforts the Sri Lankan forum has demonstrated must be highly appreciated. If the current linkages were strengthened at the international level between the real actors and funding agencies, AFEJ can certainly deliver better performance than in the past.*

It is nonetheless necessary to provide a proper reorientation to the AFEJ programmes in the wake of changing conditions in the gravity of the environmental situation and priorities of the world. It is no more sufficient to talk about the climatic change and global warming. It must be, as it were, linked with the consumption of fossil fuel, industrial production and employment. The Kyoto agreement on bringing the global emission level down to the 1990 level was overshadowed by the possible reduction of jobs in the developed countries.

Therefore, like in the 1980s, it becomes an incomplete story to talk about global warming and ask for its control by energy reduction. Today it is necessary, I believe, for the environmental journalists to take a holistic view of all scientific, economic, social and political issues and drive to the point of sustainable development. It demands well-thought-out interdisciplinary training programmes for those who want to focus on environmental issues.

It is thus necessary to reframe the programmes firstly to cope with the broader view of environmental issues and also to suit the emerging and serious environmental writers. AFEJ activities have generally been, with a few exceptions, confined to the members and officials of this regional body. The strategy must be changed to get the professional journalists involved and benefit from its activities. The main stress should be laid on professional skill promotion specially for those who are really writing on environmental issues. Our attention should go to the professional side rather than to the organisational nuances. After one decade of existence, AFEJ has all the more reasons to vindicate its role in the current environmental state. The year of 1998 has stood witness to increasing flooding as foreseen ten years ago. The frequency of the typhoons,

hurricanes and storms has increased many-fold during this period. The theoretical discussions on climate changes are slowly making their presence felt all the world over. Do we still need more evidence to drive the seriousness home to environmental phenomenon ? But simply stating the obvious may suffice for the ordinary journalist but for the environmental journalist there is a lot more to make a story. That should be the main focus of the AFEJ in the coming days.

## ***REPORTING ON ECOTOURISM***

● **Manuel S. Satorre Jr.**

**Chairman**

**Philippine Environmental Journalists Inc. (PEJI)**

**Cebu - Philippines**

Ecotourism or nature tourism, for that matter, is actually not a new beat. It has always been part of the development beat. The only difference is that it has taken up new shapes in recent years. And the shapes go with the flow of new realities brought about by changes in the concept of environment and development.

While in the past reportage was focused on development in response to a call from the United Nations (UN) for media to help generate public awareness on development initiatives, more particularly in developing countries, this institution quickly changed its tune when massive development in many countries saw the world's ecosystems being swiftly degraded.

So in 1987, "Our Common Future," a book produced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) led by Gro Harlem Brundtland, introduced and promoted the concept of what is now commonly called "sustainable development" meaning, environmental considerations are to become part of the development process rather than separate from it. The premise of sustainable development is "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It is a continuous process in which resources must be managed or stewarded to be regenerated.

Such a concept was further enlarged with Agenda 21, the blueprint on how to make development socially, economically and environmentally

sustainable, drafted by nations during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992.

With this concept, journalists no longer just report that an airport, a hotel, a resort, or a road is being built to provide needed infrastructure for the economic growth of a particular community or country. They now have to look at how such a project will affect the natural ecosystem where these facilities are going to be built. And unless journalists today are trained on how environmental management and systems work in relation to projects that create "ecotourism opportunities", reports could be so-so and would not be able to help enlighten the media audience to generate some response to promote environmental protection.

Thus, it is incumbent upon every environmental journalist today to immerse himself or herself in environmental issues and understand the depth of the unending conflict between environment and development to avoid superficial reportage which could affect media credibility.

In ecotourism or nature tourism, the journalist must understand what it is all about. Many definitions have been offered. Jackqueline Aloise de Larderel, Paris, Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Industry and Environment Department, says it is usually defined as environmentally responsible travel and visits to enjoy and appreciate nature, which promotes conservation, has low visitor impact and provides for the beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations. It is only one of the aspects in the wider topic of sustainable tourism however.

Panos Institute, on the other hand, notes that some of the exotic destinations are packaged as ecotourism, a prefix which stands for responsible travel now occupying the fastest growing niche of the global tourism industry. But it also explains it can mean all things to all parties from the tourist to the operator, to the environmentalist and government official. In its purest sense, it is an industry which claims to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to create

jobs and conserving wildlife and vegetation. It also claims to be responsible tourism which is ecologically and culturally sensitive.

But what is it to the journalist who looks at the concept from the point of view of a balanced observer, one who weighs the pros and cons of a particular undertaking? Will the journalist simply agree that if ecotourism provides the dollar-earning to a community, region, or a country, it must be good? Will he or she agree that if ecotourism indeed helps conserve the ecosystem, is it that good?

Saying that it is good however is one thing; confirming this is another. For there are many aspects to the ecotourism issue than just the dollar income that it generates or the jobs that it creates or the seeming "environmental protection" that it purports to offer.

If we simply look at its prospects and why ecotourism will be an important beat today and the future, we just have to look at the figures. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has reported that tourism grossed US\$ 3.4 trillion in 1994, creating work for 10 percent of the global workforce. And the industry continues to grow.

Before the Asian financial crisis which erupted in July of 1997 that had affected the world economy, projections were very bright. The WTO reported that by the year 2020, as much as 937 million tourist arrivals are expected every year and about 20 percent of international tourists will arrive in developing countries like Sri Lanka or the Philippines. Arrival growth rate in developed countries is pegged at 3.5 percent and 6 percent in developing economies. But the WTO report has noted that ecotourism is the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry, estimated to have a current growth rate of 10-15 percent. Britain's Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) put the worldwide ecotourism market at US\$ 10 billion in 1989. Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) placed it at over US\$ 200 billion, spent on ecotourism activities in 1990. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), an international conservation organization, estimated that of US\$ 55 billion earned by tourism in developing countries in 1988, about US \$ 12 billion came from ecotourism.

Surely, these figures are a testimony to ecotourism's attractive investment possibilities. And even if there is a slow-down in the world economy today, spawned by the crisis which will surely reduce the bright projections about the industry's prospects, it is still a business opportunity. It will be continuously pursued by those who still believe that there will be money in ecotourism.

With this belief, both the government and private sectors in the highly industrialized and developing economies will continue to pursue ecotourism initiatives in having had a track record of generating lots of revenue for those in the business.

When such initiatives are pursued, there will be a continued rush toward building more tourist-oriented infrastructures that will definitely have an impact on the ecosystem. This despite the fact that many of such infrastructures like hotels and resorts have suddenly become inoperational or whose operations have been suspended due to the worldwide economic slump. As a matter of fact, in many Asian countries which had enjoyed some kind of "tourism boom" highlighted by nature tourism promotions have been reported to have closed some multi-million dollar facilities as a result of a drop in international and even domestic visitor arrivals.

Despite these isolated cases, many in the tourism industry in Asia and elsewhere in the world are still bullish about the future of the tourist trade and in ecotourism. Those bold enough and are banking on a resurgence of the industry when the crisis shall have passed by 1999, will not hesitate to indulge in further investments on tourism-related infrastructures. This is the area where the journalist has to focus his attention on for it is in the creation of ecotourism projects that usually creates that impact on the ecosystem.

It may be true that in an ecosystem which a government wants to conserve, ecotourism can be a source of revenue not only to generate jobs but also the funds that will be used to manage a protected ecosystem. But

what is unfortunate, however, is when they try to make that protected ecosystem more attractive to visitors, more facilities have to be built for access, for rest and recreation, food and other amenities. In the provision of such, natural systems are tampered with. For when a hotel is built, a part of the ecosystem has to be given up. That part is, of course, land together with all the living things on it which has to be covered by a hotel.

Although such construction is to be covered by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), a device used by many countries today to see to it that any negative impact on the environment is mitigated in a project, it is no assurance that this natural ecosystem that had been tampered with could still be sustainably managed. For such an EIA is nothing but promises which are to be monitored by government for compliance. Human as we are, there is always the possibility that many will be broken. And when this happens, irreparable damage to the ecosystem is sure to happen.

It is the job of the journalist to see to it that the promises are properly monitored and fulfilled. Stories can be written on this topic. In Cebu in Central Philippines where we come from, we have worked on stories that were even centered on the process of issuing an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), a document needed to be able to start a tourism-oriented project. Environmentalists had vehemently opposed the construction of an island in a reef area fronting the Olango Island bird sanctuary in the guise of an ecotourism initiative. Had an ECC been issued, the project would have destroyed the coral reefs and affected the movement of the birds in that swampy area in Olango, a 920-hectare sanctuary installed as a Ramsar site, being a wetland of international importance.

That sanctuary has been the target of many prospective ecotourism investors who want to build tourism facilities close to the birds. But in a protected ecosystem, there is always a buffer zone established to keep people away from the natural system so as not to create a negative impact. So far, the government had resisted the attempts.

But the point we are trying to stress here is that if tourist facilities are not built near the “attraction” or within the protected area in an ecotourism program, will enough revenues be generated to make this project feasible? That is a question that can only be answered in actual case studies for a lot will depend on ecosystem management. The situation in one ecotourism program may differ from others. It is now up to the journalist to look at the issues that will crop up in every ecotourism project. And this will generate a lot of stories.

Other issues that are sure to come up in an ecotourism program will be the relationship between the protected area itself and the communities found on the fringes of the site. These are the people whose survival could be as important as the flora and fauna that environmental conservationists seek to protect. How will these communities come into every program? How will they be simultaneously assisted as the birds in Olango Island sanctuary, for instance? Will the journalist not look at this issue, it being important since many environmental stories have been written giving mere focus on the flora and fauna and conveniently neglecting the community-based people who may be as endangered a species as the birds?

In many communities where the protected ecosystem is located, the people are often poor and living a marginal existence. They need as much help as the wildlife.

In the Olango Island bird sanctuary, we have confirmed this fact through a project being undertaken by the Philippine Environmental Journalists Inc. (PEJI) with the help of the Rotary Club of Metro Cebu (RCMC). In this project, we have initiated an ecotourism program that gives primary importance to the people living on the fringes of the bird sanctuary. Not only are the people given environmental education, livelihood projects have also been initiated to help improve the quality of their lives. Most of the people in the area are marginal farmers and fishermen. Before the bird sanctuary was established, the wetland was part of their source of food as they gather sea shells and fish in the swamp. But the sanctuary



had excluded them from the use of this natural ecosystem as it was given to the exclusive use of the birds. And this had aggravated their impoverished conditions. So many had resorted to dynamite and cyanide in fishing. Many have also killed the birds that were being protected.

It is only by helping these people living in the fringes of the sanctuary that these negative activities could be stopped. And under the program, basic needs of the people are being addressed such as provision of potable water, food, and livelihood. They are now being trained to produce their own food and to become tour guides for sanctuary visitors. A hostel is being planned inside the San Vicente Village adjacent to the sanctuary for use by visitors. More activities are being introduced to help these residents so that they can participate in the ecotourism program created by the establishment of the protected area.

While simple tourist facilities are envisioned outside the protected area, community residents are actually taught the value of having to limit the number of visitors as too many can create a negative impact on the sanctuary.

Beyond the community focus, however, are ecotourism's possibilities for environmental conservation and at the same time the economic benefits derived from the program. Millions of dollars have been generated in ecotourism programs in Africa (safari tours), in Costa Rica (tropical forest tours) and other areas of the world.

Because of the big revenues that it has generated for governments and tour operators, many think it is the answer to environmental conservation which is actually financed by tourist receipts.

Tensie Whelan, an environmental journalist, in her book "**Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment**" however says: "Nature Tourism is not the solution to all conservation problems. Some protected areas cannot sustain any direct use; others may yield larger

social benefits when developed for other forms of tourism. Nature tourism will usually be more suitable when areas fall between these two extremes. This includes fragile ecosystems that can accommodate limited numbers of visitors but cannot sustain high-use levels; for example, certain coral reef ecosystems or most tropical forests, may not be able to sustain intensive visitor use. This so-called low-impact tourism has important conservation and protection benefits as compared with resort tourism, which is usually more intrusive, even if it yields greater financial benefits”.

In other cases, Wheelan says demand, not carrying capacity, may be the limiting factor. “Nature tourism is suitable for places that are very remote or difficult to reach, a characteristic that often translates into fairly high cost per visit. Safari in Africa or cruises to Alaska or the Galapagos come to mind”, she adds. “Nature tourism may also be a desirable alternative when investment funds are limited. Nature tourism frequently uses simpler facilities and has less expensive and less intrusive infrastructures. Thus, it may be practical in cases where funds for large-scale development are not available”.

But the bottom line in ecotourism is how journalists would be able to perceive the pros and cons in a program to be able to enlighten and create an awareness that could lead to better environmental management. Ecotourism, because of the revenue it generates, is going to survive and grow even in the midst of the world economic crisis. That is why it will be an important issue that will get the attention of every environmental journalist in the world – be they in Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Asia or Antarctica.

## ***ECOTOURISM : A BUSINESSMAN'S VIEWPOINT***

● **Chandra de Silva**  
**Director**  
**Ranweli Holiday Village**  
**Waikkala - Sri Lanka**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I thank you for inviting me to address you on Ecotourism which is a subject which has been close to my heart during the last 3 to 4 years and also translated its concept into practical terms at Ranweli Holiday Village for which you have so graciously awarded a "Green Award". This is a great personal honour to me as well as to Ranweli Holiday Village.

In my address, I would endeavour to reflect on a theoretical and conceptual framework of this new product, in a Sri Lankan perspective in general and Ranweli Holiday Village in particular. It is necessary to approach this by looking very briefly at the evolution of Ecotourism.

### **EVOLUTION OF ECOTOURISM**

Visitors have been travelling to natural areas under the guise of tourism in the early 1990s which is a form of mass tourism. Queensland's Gold Coast in Australia, Golf Resorts in Hawaii label their products as ecotourist products. Even the city state of Singapore promoted itself as an ecotourism destination because of its renowned zoo. So also Canada's largest and the oldest fishing and hunting lodges. Western Samoa and Fiji did likewise although they were all mass tourism destinations.

In contrast, Sri Lanka was primarily promoted as a beach destination

from the inception of planned tourism in 1967. Although round trips to cultural and historical sites, wild life parks etc. were provided as an additional facility to the beach product, fortunately these products were not labelled as ecotourism. Therefore, Sri Lanka can commence ecotourism from a professional base and put its act together to cater to the ecotourists who have now emerged as a growing segment of the niche market of tourism. They are well educated and demand professional knowledge on fauna and flora as well as immersion to culture, history and the arts at some depth. They are ecologically sensitive while on tours.

## **DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM**

I think the next logical step is to get some kind of a working definition of ecotourism. There are a multitude of definitions. The Ecotourism Society of the United States, an NGO of very high repute for its academic work on this subject for over a decade, has summarised most definitions of ecotourism as "tourism and recreation, both nature-based and sustainable and which improves the welfare of the local people". In the Sri Lankan context, I would like to add one more parameter to this definition and make it nature-based and man-based. Nature base and man made base components are descriptive and sustainable, a component which is prescriptive. We will go into this a little later.

## **SRI LANKAN PERSPECTIVE -- NATURE-BASED AND MAN-BASED RESOURCES**

Product base, which is the descriptive component could be broadly classified as nature-based and man-based.

### **(I) Nature - Based Resources**

I do not have to labour in describing the biodiversity of this land which is said to be greater per square kilometer of surface area than any other country in Asia. Biodiversity is the essence of an ecotourist destination.

Some of our visitors have already seen part of our country and they will also see some other parts of the country in the post-conference tour which has been arranged. This is a land of stunning beauty, ranging from sandy beaches, wetlands, mountain ranges, primeval forests, wildlife parks. Singharaja forest has been declared a man and biosphere reserve in 1968.

## **(ii) Man-Made Resources**

Man-made resource base consists of a fascinating kaleidoscope of cultural and historical sites dating back to over 2000 years. Among the 300 monument sites from all over the world, Sri Lanka possesses six. So, we have a resource base second to none for the development of ecotourism.

This resource base is easily accessible due to the smallness of the island which is 65,000 km<sup>2</sup> enriched by an equitable climate and an altitudinal variation within short distances.

I mentioned a little while ago that the sustainability of this resource base is prescriptive. We have to look after the sustainability of this valuable resource. We have mechanisms in place in the form of laws and regulations with regard to the preservation of this resource base.

## **Eco-Lodge**

For a visitor to experience all these attributes an ecotourist must stay in an eco-lodge or an eco-hotel. I will bring both my personal experience and academic knowledge into this area.

The location of an eco-hotel is a primary ingredient. It should be unique with a rich and natural environment; access by country road, transfer by boat or ferry across lagoon or river creates a psychological impression of a nature excursion and gives the feeling of remoteness and exclusiveness.

Ranveli Holiday Village is a good example of an ecotourist location, as Ranveli is situated in a peninsula with lush vegetation and the facility is reached by a short ferry ride. Sri Lanka has numerous locations of this description. The second is the design, which must blend with nature, not overpowering it, with minimum impact to the site which is referred to as site-sensitive development. The designer and the architect must use as much as possible local material and employ skilled workers from the neighbourhood who are familiar with local material as well as skilled traditional building methods. Using local building material and local craftsmen will contribute to the welfare of the local people which is a basic concept of ecotourism.

The furniture and fittings of the lodges must be as much as possible hand-made locally so that the atmosphere inside the lodge gives the visitor the flavour of the country. Further, rustic artifacts well-designed, beautifully crafted and functional can provide a sense of orientation, welcome and hospitality. Ecotourists travel for recreation and search for authentic experiences that incorporate learning rather than contrived entertainment.

Renewal sources of energy e.g. solar energy, wind power, bio-gas etc. should be used as much as possible. Kitchen waste must be recycled and the water used for the garden and sludge used as compost. Recycled paper indigenously hand-crafted could be used. This will create not only a sustainable source but also a local economic opportunity.

## **CONCEPT OF CARRYING CAPACITY**

Eco-lodges are usually small and should not cater to more than 50-100 guests. A good ratio would be 10 bungalows to one acre. Ecotourists do not like crowds. Crowding reduces the quality of the experience. Researchers call this the experimental dimension.

## OPERATIONS

Eco-hotels must be managed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Good hearty meals, service with a cultural influence should be provided and not gourmet meals, service and presentation which are common in five-star traditional hotels. The facilities should be soft adventure-based. In our property we provide numerous sports activities both water-based and land-based other than water skiing which causes sound pollution as well as damage to the fish larva in the rivers, turbulence of the ecology of the mangrove community and erosion of river embankments.

Craftsmen who design and weave colourful mats from reedware, the village potter who demonstrates his skill in pottery, rope making with a wheel manually-operated, and lace making by village girls, expose the guests to traditional crafts of our country and soft learning experiences. The craftsmen are also benefitted as their products are sold thus opening a marketing channel.

Nature tours are arranged twice a week in our extensive garden which has 72 varieties of plants and shrubs. They are accompanied by a qualified horticulturist. This is an interpretive programme, with nature notes given to our guests who get very interested in the trees and plants and particularly the mangrove community with its natural ecological balance.

An ornithologist takes our clients on a bird watching tour and also to explore the flora and fauna.

A cycle tour takes the visitors through rural villages. They will visit churches, temples, water bodies with beautiful flowers and birds. They will visit a brick factory, a rope making village and a forest. These activities keep them fully occupied with learning experiences and interaction with the community. All these activities need professionalism and high quality and therefore we must develop our educated youth as animators for these rewarding careers in the short term.

## **ECOTOURS/BUILT-IN HERITAGE TOURS**

Ranveli is strategically located to serve as the perfect hub for day trips and longer overnight tours to Kandy, the capital of the last kingdom in the island founded in the beginning of the 14th century, with its Temple of the Tooth Relic, sacred to the Buddhists the world over. Also easily accessible are Sigiriya, the world famous rock citadel built by a patricide king in the 6th century A.D., the Dambulla cave temple 1st century B.C., the ancient cities of Anuradhapura, the capital for nearly a thousand years from the 4th century B.C. and Polonnaruwa which became the capital in the 12th century A.D.

## **MARKETING**

The Worldwide Fund for Nature estimates that of the US\$ 55 billion earned from tourism in developing countries, about US\$ 12 billion are generated from ecotourism. These are figures as at 1997.

More and more people are looking to relieve them from pressures of urban living. The big question is how do you get this up-market ecotourists. Although demographically -- I am speaking only of the income level in relation to a demographical analysis of a blue collar worker and a professional may be the same. However, psycographically, life styles and purchasing habits are totally different. The professionals and nature lovers are a large segment of the ecotourists.

The Seychelles, Belize, Botswana and Kenya are a few of the many countries heavily reliant on nature tourism for hard currency earnings. Why not Sri Lanka?

We have to engage in target marketing and get the independent traveller. There are specialised operators in Europe and they have to be tapped. The image of this country as a mass tourist destination must be changed to a mix of mass tourism as well as a speciality product such as ecotourism. This is not easy, only a well planned marketing exercise by the Tourist Board will help.



I have only made a dent in this niche market and I hope others will follow. Ecotourism could be used as a tool for conservation. However, I must add a word of caution, as ecotourism could destroy the very thing it seeks to perpetuate, threatening the fragile ecosystem of places of scenic beauty in Sri Lanka. Therefore it is desirable to establish a national ecotourism council with officials both from the private and public sectors as a regulatory body.

## COMMENTS

Manuel Satorre Jr., Chairman Philippine Environmental Journalists Inc. (PEJI) at the conclusion of my address expressed concern regarding the negative effects of ecotourism. In particular he referred to the destruction of coral reefs and construction of hotels in nature reserves and ecologically sensitive areas.

In replying I stated that coral mining for the building industry has caused more damage to coral reefs than visitor impact. Visitor impact can be controlled by ecotourism as it is a responsible form of travel and could be used as a tool for conservation.

Building hotels in nature reserves is prohibited in Sri Lanka and further eco-lodges should be constructed well away from nature reserves and other ecologically sensitive areas. They should be planned and developed after evaluation with site-sensitive methods and constructed with local materials as expressed earlier. I reiterate that a regulatory body has to be in place before Sri Lanka ventures into ecotourism, to ensure the sustainability of the resource base.

Ecotourism with its built-in environment-sensitive programmes could markedly reduce environmental degradation.

I would respectfully request Environmental Journalists to expose unauthorised deforestation by loggers.

Before I conclude I wish to read from a poem by William Wordsworth:

"Sweet is the lore which nature brings; our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things we murder to dissect".

I also wish to repeat the proverb of the Haida Indian people of Canada.

"We do not inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from  
our children".

I thank you very much indeed for your courtesy of so patiently listening  
to me.

## ***HOTSPOTS PRESENTATION***

### ● **Haroldo Castro**

**Senior Director, International Communications  
Conservation International (CI), USA**

### **Importance of Hotspots**

The accelerating and potentially catastrophic loss of biodiversity is unlike other environmental threats because it is irreversible. Given the rapid loss of biodiversity and limited resources available to address environmental issues, we must set priorities for our efforts to conserve biological resources. Because biodiversity is by no means evenly distributed, some areas are far richer than others in overall diversity and endemism. Furthermore, many of the richest areas also happen to be under the most severe threat.

### **History of the Hotspot Approach**

In 1988, British scientist Norman Myers created an approach to determine conservation priorities using plants as indicators of biodiversity. He identified 10 tropical rainforest "Hotspots." Two years later, he added several other rainforest areas and four Mediterranean type ecosystems resulting in a total of 18 areas that accounted for 20% of global plant diversity in just 0.5% of the land area. That same year, Conservation International (CI) and the MacArthur Foundation were the first organizations to adopt Myers' Hotspots as the guiding principle for their conservation efforts and investments. Now, after further research and analysis, a total of 24 Hotspots have been identified by Conservation International. They contain no less than 50% of all terrestrial biodiversity in only about 2% of the land surface of the planet. At least 75% of the terrestrial animal species that have been identified by IUCN to be endangered and vulnerable are found within this extremely reduced extent of land.

## How Hotspots are Determined

CI's President, Dr. Russell Mittermeier, is completing a new book on the Hotspots. All information I am sharing with you today represents excerpts from a chapter on the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, co-authored by Dr. Ajith Kumar, and from an article Dr. Mittermeier wrote in the magazine, *Conservation Biology*.

Hotspots were identified by two main criteria: **Plant Endemism** and **Degree of Threat**. Specifically, Hotspots are regions with 0.5% or more of the total global plant diversity (estimated in approximately 270,000 species) considered as endemic species or species found nowhere else. This represents a minimum of 1,350 endemic plant species. In addition, the Hotspot areas have lost an estimated 75% or more of their original, pristine vegetation—many have actually lost much more, sometimes 95%-98%. Scientists determine these percentages by analyzing digitized images of forest cover, dispatching rapid assessment teams, and researching reference material on past and present trends in the distribution of original pristine vegetation.

Endemism is the most important criterion for the Hotspots because endemic species are entirely dependent on a single area for survival. These species are often among the most vulnerable components of any particular community, and will almost certainly be the first hit by extinction. It is for these reasons why rapid and effective conservation action is most needed in these Hotspots.

## An Important Hotspot: The Western Ghats in India and Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats in India make up a crucial Hotspot. Although separated by 400 km of land and water, these two forests are strikingly similar in their geology, climate, evolutionary history, and biodiversity. Given these common elements, Dr. Mittermeier has, for the purpose of this analysis, grouped them together as a single biodiversity Hotspot.

India, with its high biodiversity, a human population estimated at 960 million, and a growth rate that will have it reaching one billion near the beginning of the 21st century, has emerged as one of the world's most critical conservation priorities. Clearly, the human demand for natural resources, renewable and otherwise, will severely stress the country's natural ecosystems (beyond the degree to which they are already stressed) and significantly impact conservation efforts in the decades to come.

In the late 1980s, India's remaining forest cover, country-wide, already stood at less than 20% of its original extent, and continuing rates of decline show signs of reaching the point where only those forests included within officially protected areas will ultimately survive. In the Western Ghats, forest loss has been driven largely by conversion to agricultural land for tea, coffee, teak, Eucalyptus and wattle plantations, as well as for the creation of reservoirs, and the construction of roads and railways. Significant loss of species has probably resulted from this forest loss, although this is very difficult to document.

Even though the Western Ghats have been reported to have a forest cover of 25% of the original extent of 160,000 km<sup>2</sup>, this figure includes extensive monocultures of teak and Eucalyptus, and natural forests with coffee and cardamom planted in the understory. Moreover, there has been extensive degradation and fragmentation of forests through much of the Western Ghats. Forests have been selectively logged over extensive areas and fragmented throughout their range. With this information in mind, it appears that only about 12,000 km<sup>2</sup>, or 7.5%, of the original Western Ghats forest cover of 160,000 km<sup>2</sup> remains as relatively undisturbed, more or less pristine forest.

Combining the data for the Western Ghats and the Wet Zone of Sri Lanka, we find that only 12,445 km<sup>2</sup>, or 6.8%, of the original area of 182,500 km<sup>2</sup> of this Hotspot remains in more or less pristine condition, one of the lowest percentages of any of the 24 Hotspots.

The biological studies that have taken place in the Wet Zone of Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats reveal striking statistics. Because of the monsoon

weather patterns that mediate the warm and tropical climate, and due to the changes in elevation occurring throughout the montane forest ecosystems, there are high regional levels of biodiversity and endemism. For example, combining plant diversity and endemism figures for the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, we arrive at a Hotspots flora comprising at least 4,780 species, of which approximately 2,180 (46%) are endemic.

### A Case Study: Sinharaja Forest

The Sinharaja Forest is particularly worthy of note. It represents a conservation success story for Sri Lanka. This lowland forest is in the Wet Zone of South Western Sri Lanka and it represents about half of the tiny fragment (1.5%) of original lowland rain forest vegetation in Sri Lanka. Located in the Rakwana massif, the Sinharaja region consists of the Sinharaja Reserve Forests, and the adjoining forests of Ruhunakanda, Panangala, Delgoda, and Morapitiya, some 473 km<sup>2</sup> in all.

In terms of fauna and flora, there are some interesting figures for Sri Lanka:

- 3,400 species of flowering plants, nearly 90% are restricted to tropical rainforest
- 270 species of vertebrates; 65 are endemic (24%)
- 89 mammal species; 15 are endemic (17%)
- 267 birds in Sri Lanka; 23 are endemic (9%)
- 54 amphibians; 26 are endemic (48%)
- 144 reptiles; 72 are endemic (50%)
- 67 freshwater fish species; 18 are endemic (27%)

Several biological studies have been carried out in Sinharaja. There one will find:

- Altitude range of 90 m to 1,171 m (Hinipitigala Peak)
- Middle elevation forests (600-1,000 m) and montane forests (above 1,000 m) mostly intact

- 215 species of trees and woody climbers; 140 endemic to Sri Lanka
- around 50% of 54 amphibians of Sri Lanka
- around 50% of 26 endemic amphibians of Sri Lanka
- around 35% of 144 reptiles of Sri Lanka
- around 30% of 72 endemic reptiles of Sri Lanka
- around 40% of 267 birds of Sri Lanka
- around 90% of 23 endemic birds of Sri Lanka
- around 50% of 89 mammals of Sri Lanka
- around 60% of 15 endemic mammals of Sri Lanka

These percentages are extremely high considering the fact that the Sinharaja Forest area of 473 km<sup>2</sup> represents only 0.7% of Sri Lanka's land area! In other words, Sinharaja is really a Hotspot within a Hotspot. Saved from the chain saws in the nick of time, the importance of this area is now well recognized by the government, the people of Sri Lanka, and the international community. This has resulted in a reasonable budget allocated by the Government and by international funding for integrated management of the reserve. Nonetheless, there are still problems. Despite protection, within the last 40 years the pace of forest destruction has accelerated in response to a burgeoning population and its needs for fuelwood, timber, agricultural land and living space. Encroachment by the 39 villages that surround the reserve continues to occur: there is increasing access through roads established for logging, and collection of non-timber forest products especially, continues. The infrastructure for effective patrolling and management of the area also needs improvement.

### **Conclusion**

In many ways, the Sinharaja Forest is a microcosm of this particular Hotspot, and indeed a symbol of the Hotspot concept as a whole. Hopefully, all of the good work that has taken place over the past two decades will continue to bear fruit, and it will be possible to conserve this very special little corner of our planet in perpetuity.

The Hotspot theory of priority setting suggests, and the Hotspot of Sri Lanka and Western Ghats prove that a very high percentage of global terrestrial biodiversity can be protected in a very small portion of the Earth's land surface. International efforts to conserve biodiversity should focus heavily, but not exclusively, on these areas. Therefore, you, as journalists and communicators, play a crucial role in helping this effort to succeed. I encourage you to use your gift of communication and your sphere of influence to help preserve the natural wealth of Sri Lanka and our planet.



## ***AGENDA 21, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE MEDIA CHALLENGE***

● **Prithi Nambiar**

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**Centre for Environment Education (CEE)**

**Ahmedabad, India**

### **1. Introduction**

Agenda 21, a blueprint for making development socially, economically and environmentally sustainable, offers policies and programmes to achieve a balance between consumption, population and the Earth's life-supporting capacity. Agenda 21 calls on governments to adopt national strategies for sustainable development involving wide public and NGO participation. However, building capacity to plan and carry out sustainable development decisions requires the transfer of information and skills.

This requirement and the fact that Agenda 21 has identified decentralized decision making and the empowerment of the people as a key prerequisite for sustainable development, makes environment education a priority area for policy attention.

Seen in this context, environmental education is a critical precondition for sustainable development for it improves the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues. Environmental education deals with the dynamics of the physical/biological and socio-economic environment and employs formal and non-formal methods and effective means of communication. Environmental education is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision making.

The 1977 Tbilisi report on Environmental Education defines it as a life-long process, interdisciplinary and holistic in nature and application, more an approach to education as a whole rather than a subject, and concerns the inter relationship and interconnectedness between human and natural systems. Environmental education emphasizes that the environment be viewed in its entirety which includes social, political, economic, technological, moral, aesthetic and spiritual aspects.

An effective strategy for sustainable development would need to have several components that work together in a synergistic manner such as political will, comprehensive legislation, institutional infrastructure, access to appropriate technology and public participation. But the generation of environmental awareness remains central to the implementation of such a strategy. Understanding the integral link between environment and development issues is critical to making development sustainable.

## **2. Strategy for Sustainable Development Education**

### **2.1 The Elements**

The Agenda 21 strategy for sustainable development education recommends that governments and educational authorities should:

- \* Make environment and development education available to people of all ages.
  
- \* Work environment and development concepts into all formal and informal educational programmes, along with analyses of the causes of the major issues. There should be a special attempt to address decision makers.
  
- \* Involve school children in local and regional studies on environmental health including safe drinking water, sanitation, food and the

environmental and economic impacts of resource use linking these studies with services and research in national parks, wildlife reserves and ecological heritage sites.

Since the world needs a flexible and adaptable workforce, equipped to meet growing environment and development problems and changes during the transition to a sustainable society, Agenda 21 recommends that countries should:

- \* Set up training programmes for school and university graduates to help them achieve sustainable livelihoods.
- \* Encourage all sectors of society including industry, universities, governments, NGOs and community organizations to train people in environmental management.
- \* Provide locally trained and recruited environmental technicians to give local communities the services they require, starting with primary environmental care.
- \* Foster opportunities for women in non-traditional fields and eliminate gender stereotyping in curricula.
- \* Bring indigenous people's experience and understanding of sustainable development into education and training.
- \* Work with the media, theatre groups, entertainment and advertising industries to promote a more public debate on the environment.

Under Agenda 21, initiatives in the field of formal education include national strategies and actions for meeting basic learning needs, universalizing access and promoting equity, broadening the means and scope of education, developing a supporting policy context, mobilizing resources and strengthening international cooperation to correct existing economic, social and gender disparities which interfere with these aims.

Governments are expected to prepare strategies aimed at integrating environment and development as a cross-cutting issue into education at all levels within the next three years while providing training for all teachers and other personnel in the nature and methods of environmental education.

### **3. Progress Since Rio**

\* At the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April - May, 1998, progress was reported inter alia, on the education, public awareness and training aspects of Agenda 21 specifically addressed not only in its 36th Chapter but also as a cross-sectoral concern running through the entire plan.

\* The five years since the UNCED in 1992 have witnessed significant progress in each of the broad programme areas of Chapter 36. The rapid expansion of access to communication technologies, the development of new technologies, the increasing impact of the mass media, globalization and the evolution of the "information society" have all impacted on the concerns of Chapter 36.

\* The decision by the Commission on Sustainable Development to initiate a special work programme on Chapter 36 in its fourth session drew attention to the fact that Governments did recognize that education is a fundamental priority even if it was one that was often financially neglected.

\* Action plans of UN conferences after the UNCED and also the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework on Climate Change etc. have all drawn up recommendations on education, public awareness and training.

\* The International Conference on Environment and Society Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability in Thessaloniki, Greece in December 1997 tried to provide a conceptual framework for regional

action programmes. It recommended that the approach to education must be transdisciplinary, with a participatory learning and research approach in which traditional knowledge is given as much importance as scientific knowledge.

\* The Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixth session in April 1998 reported that at the national level, a number of countries have included education, public awareness and training in national strategies and plans for sustainable development.

## **4. No Sustainable Development without Environmental Education**

### **4.1 The New View**

Regional meetings including some organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and UNESCO and agreements at intergovernmental or expert level have repeatedly endorsed the importance of taking action on education for sustainable development.

Since 1992, much rethinking regarding education and public awareness is said to have occurred in a period marked by major UN conferences on sustainable development. Experience since Rio has reinforced the conviction that sustainable development cannot be achieved without public understanding, support and action. That Chapter 36 is critical to the implementation of all other Chapters of Agenda 21 is even stronger today than it was in 1992 for the barriers in implementation of the sustainable development strategy have more to do with low public involvement than inadequate resources in most cases.

Education and more specifically environment and development education, is no longer seen as an end in itself but as a means to effect the changes in values, behaviour and lifestyles that are needed to achieve sustainable development and ultimately democracy, human security and peace, disseminate the knowledge, know-how and skills that are needed

to bring about sustainable production and consumption patterns and to improve the management of natural resources, agriculture, energy and industrial production and ensure an informed public that is prepared to support changes towards sustainability emerging from different sectors.

## **4.2 Implications**

There are major implications of this new view of education for formal education systems which endorse broad rethinking within many countries regarding the relevance of existing formal education systems to changing needs of society and the workplace. While traditionally, education has been designed largely to pass on existing knowledge, skills and values, today, education is being redesigned to prepare people to work towards happiness, well-being and a better quality of life.

## **5. Building Networks**

The sixth Commission on Sustainable Development has called for mobilization and broadening of networks to deliver education, public awareness and training particularly at the grass-roots level.

### **5.1 Partnerships for Public Awareness**

NGOs are seen as critical partners in catalysing action and awareness raising for advancing sustainable development and mobilizing civil society to take up initiatives in their communities.

The UNCED action to implement Agenda 21 has been targeted increasingly towards the municipality and community level because it is at the local level that people are most easily motivated and mobilized to take action towards solving the concrete problems that affect their daily lives. Public awareness-raising is particularly important in this context, with the household being a key point of entry.

The Commission recommends that scientific and technological communities be involved in training and awareness raising programmes,

as youth could be in advocating sustainable development at the community level. The local community and household are seen as important entry points for messages on sustainable development while special programmes to strengthen the role of women have been emphasized.

A large number of local and international NGOs are particularly active in the field of education. In many countries, NGOs have proved to be key actors in disseminating information and developing materials at the local level. UNEP has also initiated a 'Global Environmental Citizenship Programme' in 1996 with the intent of organizing NGO and media support for the promotion of attitudinal and behavioural changes. The NGO groups are to implement the Commission on Sustainable Development work programme.

## **5.2 Identifying and Sharing Innovative Practices**

It was recommended that initiatives be taken to identify and share innovative practices in support of education and public awareness for sustainability. An international electronic registry is being developed by UNESCO to address this need by establishing a second generation web site and a knowledge management system for Chapter 36 of Agenda 21. Such initiatives could include raising a wareness of the implications of current unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, partnerships with industries and the media to work out strategies for advertising, making use of educational tools to facilitate policy making, developing and promoting social instruments through education and training. Innovative case studies from non-conventional sources, such as various groups including industries, women, youth and NGOs are to be included in such an inventory. Regional networks and fora for sharing innovative practices are being encouraged.

## **5.3 Training Through Cooperation**

Public-private cooperation is seen as a way to organize effective education and training of NGO workers as well as for undertaking public

awareness campaigns which may also be carried out through the media and advertising, for communicating key issues of sustainable development.

## **6. The Media Challenge**

However it is in the non-formal sector that networking through a multiplicity of organizations is required in order to reach the complex and diverse range of target groups that make up a community. And it is this part of the Agenda that constitutes the Media Challenge.

### **6.1 Potential**

Media infrastructure is in place in the most remote areas of the world, revolutionizing the potential for educational communication outside the formal educational system. The universality of the media is particularly appealing because environment and development education is essentially a democratizing activity.

### **6.2 Focus**

At the national and local levels, through public fora, attention needs to be focused on environment and development issues and efforts made to suggest sustainable alternatives to policy makers. Specific training for decision makers is an important need identified under Agenda 21. Media can help draw the attention of policy makers in all sectors including the corporate sector to the importance of sustainable development issues.

### **6.3 Information Support**

Countries are expected to strengthen systems that provide public environment and development information in order to raise the awareness of all groups, the private sector and particularly the decision makers. Systematic surveys of the impact of awareness programmes need to be conducted in order to guide them towards greater effectiveness.



## 6.4 Materials

Agenda 21 has also stressed the need to improve the quality and practical value of educational materials of all kinds and for all audiences by basing them on the best available scientific information, including the natural, behavioural and social sciences, and taking into account aesthetic and ethical dimensions. This guideline is of particular relevance to the media sector if it is to play the role as envisaged in the Agenda.

## 6.5 Training

It is recommended that countries and the UN system promote a cooperative relationship with the media, popular theatre groups, and entertainment and advertising industries by initiating discussions to mobilize their experience in shaping public behaviour and consumption patterns and making wide use of their methods. Training for media personnel is also a concern with UNESCO, UNEP and universities developing programmes to enrich pre-service curricula for journalists on environment and development topics.

## 6.6 Technology

Countries in cooperation with the scientific community are to establish ways of employing modern communication technologies for effective public outreach. National and local educational authorities and relevant UN agencies are expected to expand as appropriate, the use of audio-visual methods, especially in rural areas in mobile units, by producing television and radio programmes for developing countries, involving local participation, and employing interactive multi-media methods for integrating advanced media with folk media.

## 7. Initiatives taken

Several environmental education initiatives have already integrated developmental issues into their programmes. Many of the initiatives have started not as environmental programmes *per se* but as a response to

diverse local issues, which then evolved into programmes that saw development in the environmental context. This effort needs to be strengthened with a greater sharing of knowledge and insights and resources commensurate with the requirements of the immensity of the task ahead.

To illustrate the manner in which Agenda 21 objectives are being implemented in the non-formal arena, it would be relevant to mention some case experiences reported by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). These case studies point to the far reaching impact of media-borne initiatives in achieving awareness and impacting indicators of sustainable development.

## **7.1 Elements of Media Strategy**

Any strategy that is aimed at the press would involve making information available to media professionals and working with them to reach environmental education goals.

Apart from making information available, training can also be provided formally and informally on environment and development education issues to practising journalists or by training conservation organizations in media skills.

The drawbacks of this strategy are the lack of quality control of EE material which could seriously limit the effectiveness of the educational programme.

Editors would need to receive an EE input through meetings, direct contacts and through the workshop mode to increase media space available for conservation issues.

The use of the media as a channel for environment and development education would involve training in media skills. The concerned agency

could then develop its own educational programme that either uses available channels of mass media or accesses them through news feeder services as in the case of CEE's news campaign which used both the mainstream press and its own News and Feature Service (CEE-NFS). This would include the writing and placement of articles in the press, production of audio-visuals, radio programmes etc.

The advantages of such a strategy would be control over the quality of the education material and low investment.

The constraints are the need to address the commercial or other priorities of the medium that is to be used. Further the skill level and the quality of the programmes must be of a professionally acceptable standard so as to construct media accounts that make an impact.

## **7.2 Potential and Constraints**

The true potential of mass media as a powerful educator is yet to be tapped in an organized way. This is obvious from the non-specific manner in which Agenda 21 deals with the role of mass media in awareness building and education. The fact remains however that media is the most influential educator in the non-formal sphere with the potential to both magnify and multiply educational messages.

Media visibility is of critical importance in moving environmental problems from conditions to issues to policy concerns. Without media coverage, it is unlikely that an erstwhile problem could either enter into the arena of public discourse or become part of political process. It either offers the opportunity to link environmental concerns to current economic, social and political realities in a way that enables the two way and simultaneous flow of information to decision makers and the public at large. The transparency of information made possible by the media, enables truly participative decision making by applying the pressure of public attention and expectations on the decision makers.

Through this process environment and development education would be closer to the achievement of its goal of democratization of decision making which takes attitudinal change into the arena of action.

However there is a limit to how far media can be used to project single-point NGO agendas even through focused campaigns.

The low acceptability of goal-oriented use of media by activist organizations could be attributed to its identification with propaganda. The need for news balance and objectivity acts as a constraint on the acceptability of environmental journalism. "These dual pillars of objective journalism first arose during the nineteenth century as part of the sweeping intellectual movement towards scientific detachment and the culture-wide separation of fact from value. Despite periodic lapses, newsmen today view objectivity and balance as the cornerstones of their profession.

By definition therefore, environmental reporting would be effective if it maintains the standards of objectivity and balance and is not seen as being motivated. "For environmental reporting, objectivity and balance mean that reporters often attempt to distance themselves and their readers from the environmentalist struggle to effect a shift in public consciousness, taking refuge instead in the objectivism of science".

In fact there is a view that "the major attraction of environmental issues for the media is that they can be depicted in non-partisan terms, allowing journalists to subversively foster environmental protest at the same time appearing to maintain a politically balanced stance".

## **8. Conclusion**

The main objective of environmental education is to promote broad public awareness as an essential part of a global education effort to strengthen attitudes, values and actions which are compatible with sustainable development.

The possibility of using media to construct an ecologically sustainable culture needs to be explored in a systematic way.

Current developments in information technology are doubtless contributing towards a participatory approach to communication. However unless a concerted attempt is made to rethink all prevalent values, beliefs and attitudes that have supported the unsustainable way of life that we live today, and these changes are mainstreamed through both formal and informal education; mere transfer of volumes of information may not amount to much.

It is time now to develop a land ethic which will provide the new context for ecologically sustainable behaviour: a new morality that says "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends to be otherwise".

## ***PANEL DISCUSSION ON FUNDING AND COLLABORATIVE POSSIBILITIES***

- **Hutton G. Archer**  
Senior External Relations Coordinator  
Global Environment Facility (GEF), USA

I am grateful to the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF) for inviting the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to this 6th Congress.

Over the last three days, I have had a chance to speak individually with most of you, and I am impressed by the tremendous amount of work you are doing towards an important goal that we share, conservation of the environment in a sustainable way. I have also recognized that most of you know and have had some contact with the GEF although all of you have some questions about it. Given this, my introduction will be brief.

The GEF represents one endeavour, in a whole mosaic of endeavours including your own, to change the world for the better through promoting meaningful action to reduce the pace of climate change, the erosion of biodiversity, pollution of international waters, depletion of the ozone layer, and, in the context of these four focal areas, continued deforestation and land degradation.

The GEF serves as the financial mechanism for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, both signed in Rio in 1992. The facility makes grants and concessional funds available to developing countries to undertake projects geared to addressing these focal areas by meeting the incremental costs of capturing global environmental benefits, i.e. the costs incurred in taking actions that go beyond national goals. The projects are developed

and implemented through the three agencies in this joint venture : the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank. To qualify for funding, the projects must be country-driven, i.e. they must:

- (1) come from individuals or groups within developing countries;
- (2) be accepted by the country focal point designated by each government;
- (3) be executed in-country, whether by the private sector, NGO, government agency, community group etc.

The GEF was conceived of in recognition of the fact that --

- (1) Protection of the global environment could come only through the combination of actions at the local level;
- (2) Many solutions already exist within local knowledge and traditional practices;
- (3) There has to be an incentive for developing countries, preoccupied as they are with the provision of basic needs, to take action that would have significant global environmental benefits;
- (4) The scientific underpinnings of projects must be sound.

Currently the GEF has committed more than \$2 billion to over 500 projects in 119 developing countries. Sri Lanka has five projects with a total value of \$81 million. Of this, the GEF contributes \$17 million as grant funds; the rest (\$64 million) represents co-financing, leveraged from other sources including government and other local sources. The projects include:

- (a) The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Medicinal Plants Program;
- (b) The Renewable Energy and Capacity Building Project; and
- (c) The Energy Services Delivery Project.

This last mentioned project will encourage participation of the private sector, NGOs and co-operatives in the provision of grid and off-grid energy services, and strengthen the public and private institutional capacity to deliver energy services through renewable energy technologies.

*I hope today to start a new partnership with the IFEJ and AFEJ. The GEF is a partnership in many ways. First, it is a partnership of countries, both developed and developing. The 36 donor countries that contribute to the GEF's core fund include a number of developing countries. Second, the GEF's 32 member Council consists of 16 representatives from developing countries, 14 from developed countries and two from countries with economies in transition. Thirdly, the GEF currently leverages \$ 5 from other sources for every \$ 1 it grants. Fourthly, the GEF works with a variety of stakeholders. Prominent among them are environmental NGOs.*

NGOs have been staunch advocates of the GEF from its inception. There are currently close to 500 NGOs on the GEF roster. NGO focal points, on behalf of NGOs worldwide, contribute to GEF policy-making in a number of ways, including meeting twice yearly before the GEF's biannual council meeting, and through their representatives, commenting on Council agenda items during the debate on policy, priority setting and the work program. The GEF is the only multilateral financial institution that welcomes an NGO presence and input into the deliberations of its governing body.

On the operations side, as of June 1998, 156 GEF-financed projects are executed or co-executed by NGOs or contain contracts or sub-contracts



to NGO groups. These 156 projects represent 32 per cent of all GEF projects. Total funding for NGOs involved in projects has grown from less than \$80 million in 1996 to almost \$200 million in 1998, a 60 per cent increase. 594 NGOs are involved in GEF project activities; 72 per cent are local or in-country NGOs. The Philippines Conservation of Protected Areas Project, which has received a GEF grant of \$20 million, is executed by a consortium of NGOs.

How can we work together? Many of you, in addition to being journalists, are also NGOs and are already working in partnership with the GEF. While the GEF cannot provide institutional support for IFEJ or AFEJ, we are willing to work with your executive to find funding sources to strengthen the IFEJ / AFEJ secretariat, and we are particularly interested in helping you find funding for journalists' training. As far as GEF project activities are concerned, your extensive environmental knowledge and networks could be brought to bear to help groups in your countries develop project concepts suitable for GEF funding.

Recently the GEF Council approved an outreach and communication approach based on strengthening country ownership of GEF activities. I hope that in our continuing communication and collaboration, we could find ways to help develop opportunities for more and better GEF projects in the countries which you serve.

## ***AMIC's CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS AS A REGIONAL INSTITUTION***

● **Vijay Menon**

**Secretary-General**

**Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC)  
Singapore**

I propose to outline for you --

- AMIC's background
- How we came to be involved with environmental communication
- The nature of our activities in the recent past
- Our environmental communication projects in 1998
- Our plans for 1999

The Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) is a non-profit, non-government foundation serving the needs of mass communication professionals and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region. AMIC was founded in 1971.

AMIC is actively engaged in mass communication documentation, research, training, publishing and mass media project consultancy. As a centre for institutional development, AMIC organizes conferences, seminars and workshops in partnership with national and regional bodies on current issues in journalism, radio and television broadcasting, film and audio-visual media, satellite communications and information technologies.

With rapid industrialization in Asia contributing to an equally rapid rise in industrial problems, we felt the need to create an awareness among media and communication practitioners of environmental issues to stimulate debate and facilitate action.

In this age of rapid multi-media developments, there is a need to train communicators in the use of new technologies including E-mail and websites to access environmental information and to repackage information for dissemination.

## **Recent Activities**

For over eighteen years now, AMIC has been actively engaged in the promotion of environmental protection and conservation through a programme of seminars and workshops, research studies and publications.

In 1980, AMIC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) co-sponsored a regional workshop on "Media and the Environment".

From 1984 to 1989, AMIC in implementing a series of Seminar-Workshops on "Media and the Protection of the Environment".

These regional workshops, held in the Philippines, Malaysia, Nepal, Indonesia and Thailand, were conducted by environmental scientists who served as resource persons on subject matter, and by popular science and environment writers who served as writing and media development facilitators.

In 1987, AMIC initiated action projects for the use of grassroots media for environmental education and communications.

From 1987 to 1990, AMIC, with UNEP support, implemented three action research projects on the use of traditional or folk media in environmental communication. These projects, in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, tested the feasibility of using selected folk media for conveying environmental messages to increase public awareness and understanding of environmental issues. Replication projects were implemented in Malaysia and Tamil Nadu State, India, in 1990-91.

AMIC has also contributed to several regional initiatives to protect the environment. In 1991, AMIC participated in the ESCAP/UNDP-sponsored Consultative Meeting of the Media and NGOs on a Regional Strategy for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific at Hua Hin, Thailand; the first Regional Environmental NGO Network - Asia/Pacific (RENN A/P) Meeting in Bangkok; and the ESCAP/UNDP Expert Group Meeting on Institutions, Legislation and Public Participation on Environment, Bangkok.

In the early 90s, AMIC organized seminars on "Editorial Cartooning", "Environmental Reporting" and "Environmental Policies and Media Reporting". AMIC's Documentation Unit prepared a select bibliography on "Media and the Environment". AMIC also participated in the Inter-Country Consultative Meeting on "the Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific Region" organized by UNDP in Kuala Lumpur and in the World Bank's Metropolitan Environmental Programme (MEIP) Third Annual Inter-Country Workshop in Colombo. AMIC was also invited to be a member of the Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific (UMPAP) Steering Committee.

AMIC also promotes knowledge and awareness of environmental issues through its publication activities. These include:

- a) Publication of an environmental section in its bi-monthly Asian Mass Communication Bulletin
- b) Publication of environment-related articles in the quarterly, Media Asia
- c) Publication of *Water: Asia's Environmental Imperative*, with support from UNEP and CAF, in 1997. This was launched in Singapore on *World Water Day* (March 22nd, 1997)

AMIC is associated at regional and international levels with various environment organizations:

- Member of the Advisory Panel which helped develop a Strategy Plan for UNEP
- Member of the Executive Council of the South and Southeast Asia Environmental Network (SASEANEE)
- Panel Member of the Education Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- *Associate Member of the Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFEJ)*

### **Management of Environmental Information Resources**

The principal environmental activities that AMIC will be organizing in 1998 are two workshops on the management of environmental information resources jointly with the School of Communication Studies-Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, the Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad and national chapters of the AFEJ.

The first workshop, for print media journalists from Southeast Asia, will be held in Singapore from November 9th to 14th, 1998. As we have planned it, there will be at least two journalists (one from an English language newspaper and another from a national language newspaper) from each of the following countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam.

The second workshop will be held in Ahmedabad, India from December 14th to 19th, 1998, with assistance from the Centre for Environment Education. Meant for South Asia's journalists, this project is supported by UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of

Communication (IPDC). We expect to have two journalists from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In addition, at least four journalists from the host country, India.

Both workshops have been structured to have three modules as follows:

- A concept module dealing with the overview and background of environmental problems in the region and participants' responsibilities as journalists
- A skills development module which will provide environmental information management and advanced editing and writing skills; and
- A management module which will provide skills for monitoring the proposed environmental news home page.

The workshops will be a mix of lectures and discussions, working group sessions, hands-on experience and field exercises. They will provide updates on technology, including the use of the Internet for more effective environmental reporting.

After the participants were nominated, we sent questionnaires to them to establish a profile of participants and ascertain their expectations. An analysis of the questionnaires received so far indicates that:

- a) The majority of respondents have shared access to the Internet at their place of work. They use it primarily to send and receive E-mail. A few respondents also use the Internet for purposes of research and for access to print media (especially in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand).
- b) All respondents operate in English and one other language which is usually the national language. A few of the respondents are trilingual (with both written and spoken ability).

c) Journalists in the Philippines and Malaysia file environmental stories at least thrice weekly, while their counterparts in other countries write environmental stories once a week or possibly once a fortnight.

d) Academic qualifications of journalists vary from Master's degree (in India and Pakistan) to the equivalent of Of and A levels (in Brunei and Laos).

e) The major environmental issues identified by the respondents are:

- Deforestation, including slash and burn cultivation
- River and sea pollution
- Urban pollution in the major cities
- Environmental degradation
- Haze and air pollution
- Waste disposal

## **Future Activities**

Our two workshops in 1998 will result in the creation of websites for environmental information. These websites will constitute the core of a proposed Regional Environmental Information Network (REIN) that AMIC plans to develop in 1999 and beyond. We would like to invite AFEJ members to support this initiative and contribute to the development of the network.

We also plan to replicate our workshops in 1999 for broadcast journalists. One particular area of concern to Southeast Asian countries is preservation of coastal and marine ecosystems. Convinced of the importance of this topic, we have developed a proposal for a regional consultation on this issue.

There is also a need to raise environment consciousness among rural women and to facilitate their involvement in sustainable development

efforts. We have proposed a project to promote knowledge and awareness of environment issues among women.

As a regional organization, committed to cooperative effort, we feel that we must all strive to avoid duplication and waste in the use of scarce resources. This is possible through regular and systematic exchange of information about projects, participants and problems, about research, resource persons and replication. Coordination and cooperation, these should be our watchwords.

AMIC will be glad to respond and to reinforce any initiative. We hope that the Asia-Pacific Communication Network and the *Asian Mass Communication Bulletin* can become active instruments for the spread of environmental awareness in the region.



## ***ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM IN BHUTAN***

● **Karen Kirby**

**Chairman**

**Bhutan Environmental Journalists Forum (BEJF)**

**C/o WWF Bhutan Programme**

Nestled in the Eastern Himalayas between India and the Tibetan plateau, the Kingdom of Bhutan possesses extraordinary - and largely untouched - biological wealth. Fortunately for the world, this small nation harbours some of the best remaining representatives of Himalayan wildlife and habitat.

A tremendous diversity of species results from the country's wide altitude range, moist climate and position at the junction of two major bio-regions, one temperate and the other tropical. More than 160 kinds of mammals can be found; even more extensive are the number of bird species, with some 770 types known. The country also hosts 5,400 plant species.

As it does in so many fundamental ways, Bhutan presents a unique situation for environmental journalism: on the one hand, reporting on the environment is still in its initial phases here and remains to be developed, while on the other, great importance is already placed on coverage of such issues.

In terms of background, it is necessary to be aware that Bhutan, unlike many nations, has benefited from largely enlightened conservation policies. The Royal Government, under the leadership of his Majesty King Jigme singye wangchuck, has exhibited a firm political commitment to preserving the country's biodiversity. At the same time, it has taken control of both the direction and pace of the development process to ensure sustainability - an opportunity perhaps unique to Bhutan.

So far, these policies have proven instrumental in preventing the extent of environmental degradation that is found elsewhere. They include: Preservation of the intact forest cover, which now stands at more than two-thirds of Bhutan's land area, at a minimum of 60% perpetuity. A higher priority is also given to conserving forest resources for ecological reasons rather than exploiting those resources for short-term economic gain;

Establishment of a protected areas system encompassing 26% of the country, which significantly helps to protect the rich variety of habitats and species found here;

Establishment of the world's first official trust fund for environmental conservation, designed as an innovative, ambitious tool to provide a sustainable mechanism for conservation funding.

To be sure, it is a remarkable commitment on the part of the government, based largely on the premise of the interconnections - not the mutual exclusivity - of environmental and cultural integrity with socio-economic development. Even so, amid its ecological wealth, Bhutan still faces the potential for negative environmental side effects from development initiatives, and continued vigilance is crucial.

This, of course, is where environmental journalism comes in.

At this point the Bhutanese media are highly limited, consisting of the country's only newspaper, Kuensee, a weekly publication, and the Bhutan Broadcasting Service. Both are strongly influenced by the fact that the environment is a vital concern here, among policy makers and the public alike, and are cognizant of the fact that such an issue cannot be ignored.

Thus far, however, neither organization has established a separate beam or sector for environmental reportage. Instead, it is integrated into the main news flow, but made a priority topic. Most stories tend to be "soft" rather than investigative journalism, in part because the government disallows nearly all industry, for example.

Indeed, given Bhutan's relatively recent emergence onto the world stage as well as the late start to the development process, both Kuensel and BBS have a strong link with environmental education. Many broadcasts and articles are aimed toward generating public awareness of conservation issues.

On BBS, programs in the national language of Dzongkha tend to feature the environment, agriculture, health or religious issues nearly every week on their "Topical Evening". Nepali programs also feature numerous environmental stories, with English programming the least geared in that direction.

About four or five BBS journalists are concentrating on environmental issues, especially government policies, plans and programs. Nevertheless, even though sustainable development and environmental affairs are major topics of coverage, there has been no move toward specialization among the staff.

Taking a closer look at the last three years, the most recent period for which records are available, BBS has broadcast a total of 76 stories on environmental subjects, 40 in Dzongkha, 21 in Nepal and 15 English Topics included:

Urbanization and related problems;

Consumer "green tips" such as environmentally friendly ways of preparing maize fields for cultivation, using insecticides and herbicides on farmland, the medicinal value of plants and animals, the advantages of permanent over shifting cultivation and the proper disposal of domestic waste and used engine oil;

So-called "flagship" species found in Bhutan, such as the Bengal tiger and the snow leopard;

Buddhism and the environment;

The importance of environmental impact assessments in development planning.

However, in such thoroughness of coverage, BBS has created a rather unusual dilemma for itself. Many of the topics have been thoroughly reported that a plateau has been reached. Producers are looking toward changing their format, and only to remove the considerable repetition found in the three year list. There it is agreed for several things:

To go beyond straight reportage and infuse a sense of responsibility among citizens;

To report from a dynamic point of view, with more investigative pieces;

To enable the BBS staff to become more trained in environmental issues and coverage.

Whether this actually occurs remains to be seen, but reporters and producers alike are keen to adopt creative new approaches that can enhance their already substantial coverage.

At Kuensel, meanwhile, editorials often hit environmental issues, but again, there is no specialization within the staff. One or two staff members have attended short courses or workshops on environmental journalism in order to familiarize themselves with what other countries in the region are doing.

Like BBS, Kuensel is strongly committed to environment-related stories. From July 1996 to October 1997, for example, it ran 40 such pieces, including explanatory stories on topics such as biodiversity, vehicle pollution, greenhouse gases and climate change.

It has, however, a more limited audience than does BBS, which is listened to in virtually all households nationwide. Because of limited

literacy in the rural areas, as well as the hardships of delivery in the rugged terrain there, Kuensel has a circulation of only about 10,000 in Dzongkha, English and Nepali, although many readers share the weekly edition with people as well.

In addition to the mainstream media, some environmental journalism occurs under the sponsorship of international non-governmental organizations working in the country. A few years ago, for example, WWF Bhutan program gave a small "action grant" to a freelance Bhutanese journalist in order that he could write a series of six articles on conservation issues here. Included in these articles was one on the difficulty of dealing with the widespread problem of wild boars destroying farmers' crops, when the taking of any life is against the nation's strongly held Buddhist beliefs.

Other journalism outside the Bhutanese mainstream also is likely in coming years, it would appear. Officials of WWF Bhutan program, the National Environment Commission and the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, a Bhutanese NGO, today are encouraging independent reports on environmental issues to be written and disseminated. Increasingly, in their efforts to get conservation messages across to policy makers and the public, they are setting up media interviews with consultants and other visitors to the country as well as attempting to place articles from international sources in the newspaper and on the air.

Thus, the situation that one finds in Bhutan is seemingly simple but, in actuality, rather complex. It is a society and a government that values highly the idea of conservation but nonetheless needs reminders and instructions in the practical realm. It also is a society where journalism in general is not yet mature and its role little understood by much of the public. Media outlets are limited, which is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Now, it seems, it only remains for the country's journalists to seize that opportunity.

## ***URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT: FOSTERING A CLEAN REVOLUTION IN ASIA***

● **Lisa Lumbao and Jeremy Hagger**

**United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (US -AEP)**

**USA**

This is an important, but not very glamorous area of environmental concern: urban and industrial environmental improvement.

First, a brief note on US-AEP. It was launched in 1992 to help Asia develop sustainably with the assistance of U.S. technology and experience. Originally a presidential initiative, US-AEP is jointly implemented by several U.S. government agencies, under the leadership of the US Agency for International Development.

US-AEP embodies a new model of cooperative development, one that encourages US-Asian partnerships. With the participation of a wide spectrum of partners, US-AEP has become a flexible, responsive vehicle for delivering timely answers to environmental questions.

US-AEP facilitates and catalyzes efforts by Asian governments, NGOs, academic, and the private sector to address urban and industrial environmental degradation and promote sustainable development in Asia.

US-AEP currently works with governments and industries in ten key economies: Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand.

If you've visited or live in any of the megacities in Asia, you know how serious the urban environmental problems are. These vast urban areas of ten million people or more continue to attract poor people from rural

areas in spite of slums that boast of dirty water, no sewage systems and filthy air. Scavengers pick through solid waste in overflowing open dumps—conditions that are endangering the environment and peoples' health.

More than 1.5 million Asians die each year from the effects of air pollution alone. 500,000 more die each year from dirty water and lack of sanitation, according to the World Bank and the World Health Organization.

Although slowed by the current financial crisis, the East Asian economic miracle has achieved remarkable gains in poverty reduction and industrial growth. In Thailand, for example, the proportion of people living in absolute poverty dropped from about 45 percent in 1960 to less than 10 percent in 1990.

But, as happened in the West, this dramatic growth has come with serious environmental consequences. The effects on the environment will probably be much more severe because of Asia's larger population and faster pace of industrialization. Asia contains 60 percent of the world's population and industrialization has occurred at triple the pace of the industrial revolution in the West. Because of this, the extent of industrial pollution in Asia will soon surpass the world's most serious environmental problems.

The key to reducing these environmental effects, while maintaining industrial growth, lies in reducing the intensity of pollution in the production and use of goods and services. Industries can use cleaner technologies and pollution prevention to achieve this.

Although industrial development in Asia has been rapid, it is still in its infancy. Asia has yet to install 80 percent of the industrial capacity that it will have by the year 2010. That means there is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shift industry to clean production and leap-frog over the costly, inefficient environmental experience of the industrialized countries.

Many Asians are beginning to realize that the Western industrial strategy, with its heavy use of raw materials and energy, is a highly toxic model. The West has been able to reduce its pollution and make its cities livable only because of the enormous investments it has made in pollution control and prevention since the 1960s. In contrast, if Asia's industries and governments tackle the problems early on, they could set themselves squarely on the path to sustainable environmental and economic development. When new plants are being planned and built, management has the chance to focus on industrial design, technology choice, and production efficiencies. Asia enjoys the unusual opportunity to base its industrialization on a clean foundation—clean technology and clean production systems.

US-AEP's objective is to promote a "clean revolution" in Asia and the Pacific. Just as the "green revolution" of the 1970s and 80s completely changed Asia's approach to agriculture and how to feed its peoples, Asia in the 1990s could be on the cusp of a "clean revolution"—transforming how Asia industrializes and protects its environment. By "clean revolution," I mean the continuing development and adoption of ever less-polluting and more resource-efficient products, processes, and services.

Asia is uniquely situated to achieve a clean revolution. Recent trends indicate that in many Asian countries there is increasing **public awareness and concern** for the environment. The public's demand for access to information on industrial pollution and urban infrastructure are influencing decisions made by industry and government leaders. This is where all of you come in to inform the public about the environmental performance of the factory next door, the effect of leaded gasoline on their children's health, etc. This pressure from the public has been found to be quite effective in changing companies' behavior.

Another recent trend is the increasing pressure from the **global marketplace** to include the environment as a strategic business factor. These pressures are coming from financial institutions, industry



associations, local and multi-national buyers, and international standard organizations.

In response to these first two trends, governments are increasingly promoting and deploying **innovative policies** instead of relying only on top-down regulations. Examples of innovative policies include market-based incentives, information-based incentives, voluntary compliance schemes, and private sector financing of infrastructure.

To support these trends, and to further the clean revolution in Asia, US-AEP has developed activities that will have significant results in the areas of (1) policy innovation, (2) clean technology and environmental management, and (3) technology transfer and cooperation.

I don't want to bore you with all the details of our organization, but I will give you a brief overview of some of the activities we are working on to encourage industry to adopt cleaner and more efficient ways of doing business.

Lisa will talk later about the work led by the **Policy Group** because it covers the information disclosure activities that most concern you as journalists. But first, a brief note on the other two components:

**US-AEP's CTEM** activities support the emerging pro-environmental pressures in the global marketplace, and facilitate voluntary efforts being made by industry in effecting a clean revolution. This is an effort to work with industry, not against it, and to persuade companies to improve their environmental performance because it is good for their bottom line. Corporate Environmental Management encourages firms to use environmental management systems such as ISO 14000 to measure, evaluate and improve their environmental performance. Voluntary Business Standards are codes of conduct that industries commit to as a pledge to reduce pollution without compromising product quality, competitiveness or profit. Greening the Supply Chain occurs when large companies, such as multi-nationals, require a higher level of environmental performance

from their suppliers as a condition of doing business with them. Financial Due Diligence refers to banks including environmental risk factors and criteria into their loan application reviews. Industrial extension systems are used to get information on clean technologies out to the factory floor.

**US-AEP's Technology Transfer and Cooperation** activities help Asian industries to apply pollution control and remediation technologies, and encourages industry to build in pollution prevention and cleaner production technologies from the on set.

In addition to the three components listed on the last slide, there is another very important effort under way that I'd like to talk about—Urban Transformation.

The Clean Revolution focuses on new investments. But there is an urgent need to deal with all of the existing pollution that is concentrated in urban areas.

Asian cities should work like the best of Asian businesses. Those businesses are financially and technologically sound, environmentally responsible, and accountable to their constituents for their actions.

Our goal is to transform the way cities are managed, so they can effectively tackle the overwhelming task of providing the infrastructure needed to address pressing needs for clean water, sewage, waste management and clean air. We are now expanding our efforts in this area to mobilize finance to meet urban needs; engage communities; and promote private sector involvement in managing cities. Lisa will now say a few words about information disclosure.

Public awareness of environmental threats has risen rapidly and caused dramatic shifts in priorities for government and industry in Asia. Everywhere, community concerns about industrial pollution and infrastructure are affecting the way governments and industry do business. Increasing demand for public access to information on pollution releases

and impacts is gaining the attention of industrial, NGO, and government leaders.

- To achieve a clean revolution that will allow a sustainable future in Asia, public policies need to be based on adequate information on industrial environmental performance that is accessible to all the stakeholders who influence industrial decisions.

A recent World Bank study showed that pressure from neighboring communities and market forces significantly affected companies' environmental performance, even in places where environmental regulations are not enforced. The term "market forces" refers to the effects that consumer, supplier, stockholder and financier judgements have on a company's reputation.

The PROPER program in Indonesia is a good example of how public information can be a powerful tool for environmental protection. It was launched in June 1995 by the Government of Indonesia's Environmental Impact Management Agency (BAPEDAL). PROPER stands for Program for Pollution Control, Evaluation and Rating. It uses a five-colour coding system from black to gold to rate factory's waste water pollution.

- Discloses the ratings first to firm, time to improve, then to the public and the media
- PROPER has resulted in a significant improvement in participating companies' average performance and wastewater pollution control. The number of firms rated "black" has significantly decreased, and a large number of rubber processing firms moved up from red to blue, because their industry association provided help.
- It is now being duplicated in the Philippines, Mexico, and Colombia.
- US-AIEP is currently working with BAPEDAL to expand PROPER:
  - to include air pollution and hazardous waste,
  - to enlist 1,000 companies by the end of 1998, and
  - to assist in developing a computer system to handle 4,000 industry volunteers.

**STATEMENT BY H.E. ILKKA USITALO  
AMBASSADOR OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION IN SRI LANKA**

I am very glad that I have been given this opportunity to say a few words on the EU and our environmental policies to this conference of environmental journalists. I therefore want to thank the organisers of this conference, Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum, Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists and International Federation of Environmental Journalists for the opportunity.

The European Union today consists of 15 countries, ranging from Sweden and Finland in the Northern Europe to the Southern Mediterranean countries, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. This area, with a population of some 370 million, forms an ever loser union of these states, which started with economic integration and cooperation in the 1950 and has since widened and deepened to other areas including political and foreign policy and security co-operation.

Environmental issues have been part of the European co-operation since 1970s. The earlier European legislation focused on dangerous chemicals, protection of drinking water and controlling air pollution. In 1987 the Single European Act gave the formal legal basis for this growing body of legislation and set out three objectives: protection of the environment, human health, and prudent and rational use of natural resources. This was reflecting the ever growing understanding of the global nature of the environmental issues.

In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty formally established the concept of sustainable development in the EU law. And in 1997, the Amsterdam Treaty made sustainable development one of the overriding objectives of the European Union. The new Treaty considerably strengthened the commitment to the principle that the European Union's future

development must be based on the principle of sustainable development and a high level of protection of the environment. Therefore, the environment must be integrated into the definition and implementation of all of the Union's other economic and social policies, including trade, industry, energy, agriculture, transport and tourism.

I guess you are now wondering whether anything in practice has been achieved based on these ideals. In general terms I would say that much has been achieved within the EU, but much remains to be achieved. Unfortunately, while certain problems have been relatively well solved, there are improvements in the quality of water. Thanks to the better treatment of sewage, industrial emissions of many toxic substances have been reduced. New problems are coming up because of increased consumption and economic growth. Therefore, unfortunately, we cannot yet say that the target of sustainable development would have been met.

The future enlargement of the European Union will pose new additional challenges to the Union. It is a well known fact the former socialist system in the Central and Eastern European countries did a lot of damage to the environment in these countries. The effects are still being felt years after the iron curtain collapsed. The European Union has already for years had special funding programs - Phare and Tacis - to provide assistance to the Central and Eastern European countries. Environmental programs are one of the priorities, including, especially, measures to improve the safety conditions in the many nuclear power stations of the region.

*The European Union is not only concerned with internal conditions and immediate neighborhood. The EU is actively co-operating with other countries, with the UN system, NGOs and scientific bodies to improve international standards and to increase worldwide co-operation. The European Union endorsed Agenda 21 approved in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. And in Kyoto, Japan just about a year ago, the European Union was in the forefront in the negotiations to reach a meaningful agreement on the global reduction in greenhouse gases.*

In the 1990s environmental projects and programmes have become an integral part of our co-operation with the developing countries. Any larger projects should now include Environmental Impact Assessments.

During the period 1990-95 the European Commission, which is managing the development aid funds of the EU budget, committed 1.3 billion ECU to environmental projects. This represents 8.5% of the total funds committed over this period. Most of the funds for environmental projects were committed to Asia, followed by Latin America and Africa. Due to the time lag during which the implementation takes place, the total amount for funds actually disbursed were just over 30% of the commitments. The situation was especially alarming in Asia, where out of some 600 million committed, only some 100 million were actually disbursed.

The main themes funded were land resources, tropical forests, biodiversity, urban environment and institutional strengthening, which accounted for 85% of the projects.

In 1996 the Commission initiated a comprehensive independent evaluation of the environmental performance of its programmes in the developing countries. The results of the evaluation were not very good. The evaluation concluded that the overall environmental performance was relatively low in the period of 1990-95, in view of the extensive policy objectives which existed. However, some improvement was seen towards the end of the evaluation period.

Amongst the factors that contributed to this poor result were: low demand for environmental projects by partner governments, unclear targets/directions for environment spending at country level, limited environmental awareness in partner countries and very few staff specialized in environmental issues within the European Commission.

Since this evaluation was carried out, some new measures have been taken to improve the situation. There is a new council regulation on the

environment budget line providing a clearer legal basis, more precise objectives and greater accountability. And as regards Asia, a new EU-Asia cooperation strategy in the field of environment should provide better basis for co-operation in this field based on mutual interest of Asia and Europe.

As you could notice one of the problems we have encountered has been low priority of environmental projects and low environmental awareness in partner countries. To improve this situation, I think that we need your help. You as environmental journalists are the ones creating greater awareness of pressure on political decision makers so that environmental issues get a higher priority in their agenda.

It is true that many measures to protect our environment are costly, but unless there is awareness of the importance of these measures, there is no way we can succeed. And many measures for cleaner environment do not necessarily require huge amounts of money; they require that people realize that through their own action much can be done to improve our environment. In this direction your work is needed and I am glad to see that there is this large gathering today to discuss these issues during this week. For my part I want to wish all the success to your conference.

## ***A CASE STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS***

### **● Sue Allan**

#### **Programme Officer**

**Australian Volunteers International (AVI)**

**Australia**

From humble beginnings, as a scheme to send 11 Australians to work with developing communities in the Pacific in 1964, Australian Volunteers International (AVI) has steadily grown to become **Australia's largest voluntary technical assistance program.**

In 1997-98, AVI recruited, prepared and supported **673 Australians** to live and work in developing communities in **44 countries throughout Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Latin America.**

Volunteers are employed on local salary and conditions for development work in a range of sectors, including:

- health
- education and training
- community development
- administration
- infrastructure and services
- agriculture and fisheries
- engineering and skilled trades
- economic development
- environmental management.

More than **4000** Australians have now contributed to building a better world as Australian Volunteers Abroad participated in technical assistance work through the Australian Volunteers abroad and other programs of the AVI.



AVI operates on the principle of **partnership**, recognising that both the volunteer and the host community can benefit from the exchange of skills and experiences. Aside from the immediate impact of technical and professional skills shared by volunteer development workers with their local colleagues and counterparts, AVI has also contributed to the building of long-term people-to-people and community to community relationships.

## **AVIs & the environment**

AVIs are assigned to a wide variety of positions with employers in both the government and non-government sectors. **Environmental protection** is one of the three most common areas in which AVIs work - the other two being community development and education and training.

The state of the world's environment is of growing concern. Its present deterioration has come about mainly as a result of human activities, especially those concerned with industrialisation.

Over the past 200 years, industrial processes have been responsible for the pollution and degradation of the air, water and land. The environment, too, is being degraded as a result of unsustainable use of natural resources and environmentally unsound agricultural practices. The spread of urbanisation and the development of transport systems also have an environmental impact, as does armed conflict.

The recognition of the importance of the environment is reflected in the development of environmentalism—a movement which began in the 19th century as a response to the effect of industrialisation.

The importance of protecting the environment is now recognised by governments and non-government organisations. The UN Conference on Environment & Development in Brazil in 1992 put the focus on action,

rather than awareness raising, and set the environmental agenda into the 21st century.

It is, therefore, not surprising that since the Rio conference, the Australian Volunteers Abroad program has increasingly been called on to provide technical assistance in the field of 'environment' - from working on projects involving the conservation of wildlife, through to land, water and plants; and dealing with issues surrounding the environment and its inter-relationship with human activities, poverty and environmental degradation.

## **Case studies - AVIs protecting the environment**

### **Improving the environment in regional Africa**

Robyn Tucker, from Sydney, is an Australian Volunteer working in Zimbabwe on regional environmental projects funded through the United Nations Development Program Africa 2000 Network. Based in Harare, the 33-year-old environmental consultant, is preparing training materials to help local communities achieve sustainable development and maintain biodiversity by increasing seed and crop variety and improving dam catchment management.

### **Farm management in PNG**

Michael Pritchard, a landscape gardener from Adelaide, recently left Australia to work as a farm manager in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. Michael will spend the next two years re-establishing a school farm at an agricultural college run by the Catholic Diocese of Madang. He will work with secondary students, passing on his practical knowledge of agriculture practices and farm management so the farm can contribute the staple crops of sweet potato and slippery cabbage to the school.

## **Restoring gardens to former beauty**

Rod Spivey, landscape architect and urban planner, from Melbourne is working as a curator for the Lae Botanic Gardens in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. Rod has accepted a two-year AVI placement at what was once considered one of the finest tropical botanic gardens in the region. In recent years, the gardens have been neglected - so much so that they are now a favourite haunt for rascal gangs. The gardens contain a large number of exotic species, and it is hoped that they will regain their pre-eminence over the next few years

## **Cleaning up in Bali**

Carolyn Goonrey, 23, is working as an AVI with an Indonesian community environmental organisation, the Environmental Education Centre. Carolyn is working on a program to combat and prevent marine pollution in Bali and Java. This is a collaborative effort with the University of Wollongong, Hunter Institute of Technology and Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

## **Legislating for the environment**

Clare Cory, who until January this year was working in the Bangkok office of the United Nations Environment Program, has joined the South Pacific regional Economic Program as an Australian Volunteer Abroad legal officer. Claire's eight-month contract focuses on advising countries on the implementation of environmental conventions and agreements, and how to strengthen national legislation.

"I see the job as being mainly capacity-building. I'm working with people in environment and legal departments throughout the Pacific who are

charged with drawing up legislation, and who request assistance,” says Clare, a lawyer from Canberra. “In many ways the issues facing Pacific Islanders are no different to the ones that face countries in Asia and Africa: the strengthening and coordination of institutional arrangements to achieve sustainable development.”

Clare is assisting in the production of a book containing all the environmental treaties and agreements signed by Pacific countries. “How can we expect good law to be drawn up, or conventions to be adhered to, when countries don’t even have a copy of the text, don’t know what the Convention says, let alone what they should be doing?” she asks.

### **Marine biology in Tuvalu**

To the uninitiated, the waters of the Funafuti Conservation Area appear to be brimming with fish and coconut crabs. To marine biologist Claudia Ludescher, an AVI, the 33 square kilometre conservation zone has been overfished and desperately needs attention.

Claudia has been working with the Funafuti Conservation Area team since late 1997. She says her task is daunting and exciting at the same time.

“Our main aim is to give fish in the area the chance to grow and replenish their stocks so people can fish without the concern that it will be overfished too quickly,” she says.

### **Wasting away in the Marshall Islands**

Stephen Eke, 24, from Dubbo in New South Wales, is working with the Environmental Protection Authority in Majuro, the capital of Marshall Islands. Recently graduated, Stephen has been placed through the AVI

program to assist in a coastal management survey and a feasibility study into incineration of solid wastes. Majuro is a small, densely populated coral atoll with a population of 25,000, which places severe strain on the island's fragile environment. Stephen will complete his two-year term in April 1999.

## **Making a splash in the Philippines**

Scott Bemmer, a 26-year-old science honours graduate from Adelaide, is carrying out resource inventory in Agusan Marsh, one of the largest wetland ecosystems in the Philippines. Home to the indigenous Manobos people, as well as migratory birds, freshwater fish species and plants, this wetland is being threatened by the expansion of agribusiness plantations. Scott, who has been placed through the AVI program, is working with a non-government organisation, KABILIN, which has been given responsibility for the management of the wetland.

## ***TALKING POINTS FOR UNIS/ESCAP PRESENTATION***

● **David Lazarus**  
**Chief - UNIS, UN/ESCAP**  
**Bangkok - Thailand**

UNIS provides information and public awareness support for ESCAP's subprogrammes namely Regional Economic Cooperation, Environment and Natural Resources, Social Development, Population and Urban Development, Transport, Communications and Tourism and Infrastructure and Statistics. As well as UNIS represents DPI in seven countries-- Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, China.

We have worked with UNDP in some of these countries to set up information counters --being successful in Malaysia, Hong Kong, China ( at the Foreign Correspondents Club), Vietnam and Laos.

We are also helping DPI to build up its network of radio journalists. We also help DPI to disseminate its public information products and events, as well as work very closely as a "team leader" in coordinating joint interagency activities publishing a joint newsletter, UN Asia Pacific News.

### **1. Our work is divided into three categories:**

Press and media relations Press releases, information back grounders, features and press briefings. The two major events-- Commission Session and launch of the Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific. The latter is launched in 14 cities and for the first time we launched the 1998 survey here in New York.

## **NGO-relations**

We work closely with the UN Associations on joint public awareness activities especially the UN Association of Thailand (UNAT) and the UNA Asia-Pacific body which has its HQ in Calcutta. They have been very cooperative and have helped us in some of our campaigns.

We work with academic institutions, NGOs etc on observation of Special UN observances. This year we have organized special events for the Special Assembly on Drugs and Human Rights.

UNIS also organizes briefings for the Visitors Programme to the UN Conference Centre-- Last year, for example, we handled briefings for 6,000 visitors.

## **Publications**

We publish two newsletters one UN Focus-- spotlights UN Activities which will soon evolve into a newsletter for ESCAP.

UN Asia Pacific--this is an interagency effort which UNIS edits and publishes.

UN Agencies based in Bangkok contribute toward publication expenses.

The biggest special event was the observation of ESCAP's 50th Anniversary in 1997. UNIS organized many events as well as designed and published information material. We produced a 5-minute video on ESCAP through the kind help of an NGO.

One very successful venture has been the cartoon exhibition titled "UN/ESCAP through the Eye of Cartoonists." We organized the cartoon competition on socio-economic issues for ESCAP's 50th Anniversary last year. Over 300 entries from established cartoonists from 14 countries

were received. We now have a roving exhibition of 100 of the best of them. It's currently touring Japan for one year courtesy of the Japan Foundation, we have just finished a New York run here in this building, and will be sending it out to UNA-- USA ,California chapter, for their use. We hope to publish a book and our 1999 calendar, T-shirts etc from this.

## **Electronic Communications**

### **United Nations Library, Bangkok**

UNIS also looks after the library. In recent years, ESCAP Library has responded significantly to the changing scenario of modern information technology. The Library's resources has been expanded to include electronic information resources, in addition to the in-house ESCAP Bibliographic Information System (EBIS), Internet resources, CD-ROM, and databases on diskettes. In cooperation the Dag Hammarskjold Library, through the United Nations System Consortium on Electronic Information, the Library is providing access to on-line databases services such as EIU (Economic Intelligence Unit), Viewsire, Oxford Analytica and News Edge.

The other on-line service subscribed by the Library is SSRN (Social Science Research Network) service which provides on-line access to a number of electronic journals through the Economic Research Network and the Financial Research Network. The staff of ESCAP, United Nations agencies and international organizations in Bangkok, as well as the local research community have greatly benefited from the workstation facilities and Internet services provided by the Library which enable them to access the United Nations documentation in full-text through the Optical Disk mechanism and other current information through UN websites around the world and through World Wide Web.

In addition, the Library has strengthened the supporting role in the promotion of the dissemination of ESCAP publications and information



generated by the secretariat through the compilation of a catalogue of "ESCAP Publication, 1996/97" which has been distributed widely among the member countries of ESCAP and through the ESCAP's website.

UNIS also established ESCAP's web site to commemorate ESCAP's Anniversary, and I am proud to say that UNIS pages, at the last count, had the greatest number of hits -- 26,000 in three months.

## **Future Plans**

This year for UN day we are having two events-- one a Forum on Human Rights on UN Day, and then a week later a UN For the People Bazaar. All UN agencies and many NGOs are involved in the latter. They will exhibit their work in a busy downtown street which will be closed to traffic for the day. The holding of street fairs is a new event that the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority organizes to encourage tourism and reduce pollution.

I am also very proud to announce that UNIS will work with Worldview International Foundation, an NGO dedicated to mass media issues, to launch a massive Human Rights campaign through film. The project funded by the Government of Norway will begin next month. We will tie in human rights issues with ESCAP's work in the region in poverty alleviation, environment and social issues.

I would be very happy to work with the UNICs in the region to produce these video shorts.

Both these plans--the films and communication centres-- are heavily dependent on funds being raised. We are very thankful to Worldview and the Government of Norway for financing the project.

In the pipeline is a Media Handbook and a new ESCAP profile. And the

production of two 60-second spots on ESCAP's issues which will be made gratis by an NGO.

To give you some idea of what challenges we and all of us face not only in the Asia Pacific region, apart from its diversity and area, and the dire lack of funds, is this fact which I came across in my e-mail. I think this is the major challenge.

In a survey carried out by the US Center for Media and Public Affairs from January to August on the networks' evening news bulletins. The newscasts devoted more air time to Zippergate (Clinton/Lewinsky) than their COMBINED coverage of the Asian economic crisis, the GM motor strike, nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, peace efforts in Northern Ireland, the Pope's trip to Cuba, Clinton's first trip to China, the Winter Olympics and believe it or not--God's gift to men, Viagra.

Whither the UN in all of this? Especially at a time when newspapers in the current Asian meltdown, for example, have cut down their pages due to the high costs of newsprint as well as let go hundreds of journalists. To get the UN message across is indeed a challenge and is a test of our skill as communicators.

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