



Ashok Khosla, IUCN President

Ashok Khosla is President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Founded in 1948, IUCN is the world's largest, most representative alliance of conservation agencies and interest groups. Its more than 1000 members include sovereign states, government agencies and civil society form a solid platform for conservation research, action and advocacy with worldwide influence. Its six specialized Commissions with an active network of some 10,000 of the world's leading scientists provide cutting-edge knowledge and advice on issues of biodiversity, from the local to the global.

Ashok has had a close association with the Union for 35 years, as a long-standing member of the IUCN Council, Chair of an IUCN Commission and the head of a leading IUCN Member organization, Development Alternatives. He was one of the main contributors to the World Conservation Strategy. He has been a prominent promoter of policies and activities to strengthen the Union and has consistently advocated the need for a strong focus on its heartland of concerns – conserving living natural resources – but within the broader context of sustainable development, and opportunities for partnership with complementary organizations in the international family, who can provide their respective expertise.

In 1983, Ashok founded the Development Alternatives Group and now chairs its Board. Headquartered in New Delhi, the DA Group was among the first civil society organizations set up to address the issues of sustainable development as a whole. It also pioneered the concept of social enterprise, creating business-like approaches for eradicating poverty and conserving the natural resource base.

In India, he has served on the National Security Advisory Board, the National Environment Board and the Science Advisory Council to the Cabinet and on the boards of many official, NGO and academic bodies.

At the international level, Ashok has had several official assignments, such as Special Advisor to the Brundtland Commission (WCED), Chair of the '92 NGO Forum at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and has served on the Boards of several environment and conservation organizations, including Chair of the Centre for Our Common Future, the Club of Rome and Energy Globe, and member of IISD, Stockholm Environment Institute, ZERI, the Alliance for a New Humanity, EXPO 2000, Toyota Environmental Awards.

Globally, he helped to design and teach the first university course on the environment (as an assistant to Professor Roger Revelle at Harvard University, 1965); to set up and head the first governmental agency for the Environment in a developing country (under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, 1972); to set up the original international information system on environment (Infoterra, with Maurice Strong at UNEP, 1976); and to establish the first social enterprise for sustainable development (Development Alternatives, 1983).

Currently, Ashok is also Co-President of the Club of Rome and Co-Chair of UNEP's Resource Panel. He is an Officer of The Order of the British Empire, a Senior Ashoka Fellow, Patron of LEAD-India and has received the United Nations Sasakawa Environment Prize, the Schwab Foundation Award for Outstanding Social Entrepreneur and the Stockholm Challenge Award. He has a PhD in Experimental Physics from Harvard University and a BA in Natural Sciences from Cambridge University.