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**CEL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**18-19 MAY 2007**

**PARQUE ESTADUAL INTERVALES, STATE OF SAO PAULO, BRAZIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**1. Call to Order – Note Quorum**

The Chair of the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL), Ms. Sheila Abed, called the meeting to order at 02:00 p.m, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

The following members of the Steering Committee sent their regrets for being unable to attend the meeting: Prof. Michel Prieur; Dr. John Scanlon; Prof. Edith Brown-Weiss; Dr. Tatiana Zaharchenko; Prof. Veit Koester; Dr. Tony la Viña; Prof. Robyn Stein; Prof. Daniel Sabsay; and Prof. M.C. Mehta

A full list of persons present at the meeting is attached as Appendix II.

The CEL Chair then declared the presence of a quorum.

**2. Opening of the Meeting and Welcome to Steering Committee Members by Sheila Abed, Chair of CEL**

The Chair welcomed the members of the Steering Committee, and delivered her opening remarks. She thanked the members present for attending the meeting and expressed her hope that next year a larger number of members will be able to participate, considering the yearly SC meetings are planned and scheduled well in advance. She also thanked SC member Antonio Benjamin, his institution “Law for a Green Planet” and the Secretary of the Environment of the State of Sao Paulo for hosting the meeting at the “Parque Estadual Intervales”.

**3. Welcome by Dr. Alejandro Iza, Head of ELP and ELC.**

The Head of the ELP welcomed the Steering Committee members, and expressed his wish for a productive meeting.

**4. Introduction of new Steering Committee Member, Dr. Gonzalez Ballar from Costa Rica**

Sheila Abed informed the members present at the meeting that Dr. Gonzalez Ballar's flight had been delayed, and that therefore, he would be formally introduced upon his arrival to the park. Dr. Gonzalez's incorporation to the Steering Committee was discussed and approved at the 2<sup>nd</sup> CEL SC meeting in Bonn, 2006.

## **5. Adoption of Agenda & Meeting Methodology Issues**

The agenda for the meeting was adopted.

The Chair then reminded the participants of the methodology of the meeting, which had already been put into practice in the former meetings. The rules were agreed to by the members of the Steering Committee

## **6. Presentation by Alejandro Iza:**

It was decided that Dr. Iza's report would take place later, as the last point of the first day of the meeting.

## **7. Package of Incentives for CEL Membership and for the Union's Membership**

The Chair shared with the SC members the advances of two "products" launched to promote a more dynamic involvement with both the CEL membership and the IUCN institutional membership:

- **CEL Help Desk:** The Chair explained that considering CEL brings together an extensive network of environmental law experts, specialized in a wide variety of fields, and that among the members' requirements identified by CEL there is a need for technical legal assistance. CEL has developed a programme to respond to these needs of IUCN members and to this end, institutional IUCN members have been invited to express their requests for technical legal advice in the form of a letter sent to the Chair of CEL. In the letter, members need to specify the following issues: theme/subject; urgency; status of the discussions of the subject at national level of the country concerned; and relevance for the programme of IUCN. She finished by saying that this offer is only open to members in developing countries.

Dr. Burhenne mentioned that something similar had been done before, as a response to specific requests from the membership, but that it is very good to institutionalize this proposal.

Antonio Benjamin said the only concern could be raising expectations higher than what CEL can deliver; causing people and institutions to feel deceived and annoyed if their expectations cannot be met. He suggested that the offer be publicized in a way in which everyone would clearly understand that this is a pilot project, which is of course subject to budgetary constraints.

Melinda Janki said that she liked the idea, and that she agreed with Antonio that it should be presented as a pilot project. She also recommended that the beneficiaries

make the task absolutely clear, and that the justification should clearly show that the institution / organization's capacity is strengthened as a consequence of receiving this support.

Wolfgang Burhenne mentioned that when analyzing the requests, the feasibility of the product being afterwards applied or implemented in the country should be assessed.

Samuel Nguiffo pointed out that many times it is necessary to count on the joint work of lawyers and scientists to produce a piece of legislation, or to advise on technical matters. Therefore he asked if this support could also contemplate the presence of a scientist at a specific request. Alejandro Iza answered that although the idea is good, the budget limitations would make this difficult. Sheila Abed added that perhaps this could be something to discuss with the other Commission Chairs.

Dr. Nguiffo mentioned that he is already a member of an E-law electronic interaction system that works very well; and that if under the Help Desk, requests in French are received, he would be glad to collaborate in issuing recommendations.

At this point, Sheila Abed and Alejandro Iza shared with the SC members the full text of the Help Desk offer, sent in English, French and Spanish; and they all agreed that the text was clear enough.

The Chair also took advantage of this opportunity to mention that she has had some difficulty in communicating this incentive to the Union's institutional membership, as there seems to be a regulation or policy in place, by which every communication of this sort should be handled by the Membership Unit. She explained that at least 3 weeks went by from the time she asked the information to be sent, until it was actually delivered. Her concern gave place to a discussion about this being a limitation on her capacity as Commission Chair. Alejandro Iza finally explained that the Membership Unit went through a major change, including personnel, and that this might be the cause for still handling issues with some delay.

- Paper Contest for young professionals: Sheila Abed said that this contest started this year, and that the winners have already been selected and will soon be announced. She continued explaining that this contest aims at encouraging the work of young environmental lawyers. The call for papers will be launched each year, and the best six papers shall receive recognition. The six best papers will be published, while the authors of the two best papers will be awarded a ten-day internship at the ELC. Their stay in Bonn will also allow them to visit the offices of the Convention's Secretariats. All of the six authors will receive a set of available EPLP publications.

After finishing her explanation, the Chair proposed that the SC members dedicate this incentive program in memory of Dr. Alexandre Kiss, who passed away earlier this year. This motion received unanimous approval from the Steering Committee.

The Chair mentioned that very soon the 2007 Call for Papers would be launched, and requested from the SC members their strong commitment in support of this initiative, giving it wide publicity.

A short discussion took place on the best way to circulate the call for papers, and how to clearly transmit the goal of the contest, which is to involve young professionals and

invest in the future development of Environmental Law. It was finally agreed that the call should clearly establish the “positive” and “negative” criteria, such as: xx years from graduation, xx experience, not more than xx years old, etc.

The participants also agreed that the evaluation of the papers would be the same as this year: divide the papers according to the language in which they are submitted, and request the help of SC members - native speakers of each language - in their evaluation. Papers should be ranked 1 to 5. The six best papers ranking will be communicated by the Chair upon receiving the results from the evaluation committee.

### **Parenthesis in the SC meeting: Presentation of Dr. Pedro Ubiratan Escorel de Azevedo– Environment Undersecretary of the State of Sao Paulo**

Dr. Ubiratam offered the Steering Committee members an interesting presentation about the State of Sao Paulo’s protected areas. The Chair thanked him for giving the presentation and also thanked the Environment Secretary of the State of Sao Paulo for hosting the meeting; as the accommodation, meals and local transportation was donated to CEL by this office.

### **8. Oral Reports from the Vice Chairs**

It was decided that the SC members’ reports would be postponed until the second day of the meeting, when they would merge their presentations as Vice-Chairs, with the presentation related to their work as Liaisons with Specialist Groups (Point 13 in the Agenda).

### **9. Report of the Chair of CEL**

#### **Publications:**

The Chair shared with SC members some details of the activities undertaken since the last meeting. She referred to the publication of two case studies, mentioning that this has been done under a different series than that of the EPLP Series, as this constitutes a whole different kind of publication.

Dr. Burhenne expressed concern about creating a different set of publications, based on the fact that the Series was started by the Commission, even before the ELC was founded.

The Chair explained that this decision was taken because, as opposed to the works published under the EPLP Series which are elaborate analyses written by eminent experts on several specific issues, these are simple chronicles of interesting cases in which CEL members have been involved.

She continued to explain that these first two publications are related to problems arising from the installation of paper mills in the southern cone: The first Case Study is the one developed in answer to Bangkok’s Congress RES 3.053 “*Protection of Chile’s first Ramsar site, threatened by a cellulose factory*”. The investigation was coordinated by Chilean CEL member Miguel Fredes. The second document was written by Uruguayan CEL member Ricardo Gorosito, regarding the disagreement between Argentina and

Uruguay with regards to the installation of two paper mills (Spanish and Finnish capital) on the Uruguay river, which is a shared watercourse.

Prof. Benjamin agreed with Mrs. Abed, explaining that he is an avid reader and admirer of the EPLP Series, and that he supports the idea that it should be reserved for pieces of very high academic quality.

Dr. Iza took advantage of this discussion to remind the Steering Committee members that the work of Specialist Groups would be very welcome to be published under the EPLP Series; and encouraged them to transmit this to the SG with which they liaise.

At this point, the Chair requested Dr. Iza to briefly share with the group the new system of posting the papers sent by members online. He explained that a call has been made through the ELP webpage, inviting CEL members to send papers. Not necessarily new papers like those related to the Alexandre Kiss award, but papers that they have written before for any other purpose, and which they particularly like. Afterwards papers are posted on a special section of the webpage. He said that this invitation has had a very positive response.

Dr. Burhenne offered to publish the best papers received in the ICEL journal. The Chair thanked him for this offer and agreed to make relevant arrangements with the ELC staff for selecting the best papers.

Prof. Benjamin said that the best papers could be compiled in one EPLP publication.

Dr. Iza said that he wanted to stress the need of papers and case studies focusing on Congress Resolutions. He said that there are still a small number of pending issues from Bangkok to be attended.

Dr. Burhenne offered to work together with him in listing these pending issues so as to accomplish them.

Dr. Iza mentioned that he would try to find a way for the ELC to organize or re-phrase the manual originally made for the Amman Congress, containing the most relevant Resolutions that call upon ELP and CEL, including those from the previous WCC.

He also mentioned that he had been planning together with Dr. Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin, that ELC/CEL would issue a special publication of the EPLP Series as a tribute to Alexandre Kiss. International Law would be the topic, as he was very much an international lawyer.

Antonio Benjamin said that this is a very good idea, and that he considers “Comparative Environmental Law” to be the best topic to pay tribute to Alexandre Kiss.

Dr. Burhenne suggested that CEL ask Dinah Shelton to prepare a paper elaborating on the Martens Clause. Dr. Iza pointed out that this could be one Chapter of the publication paying tribute to Prof. Kiss. At the same time, he suggested the formation of a “petit comité” under his coordination to analyze all aspects of this publication. Those present at the meeting agreed on this, and Antonio Benjamin and Samuel Nguiffo offered to join this committee. It is also agreed that Michel Prieur, Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin and Dinah Shelton will be invited to join.

### **E-Course:**

The Chair explained that she had been discussing with Dr. Iza about the possibility of implementing E-courses on Environmental Law. She said that although UNITAR has been carrying out this kind of training, it is only undertaken in English; which leaves out a large number of people. She said that the possibility of implementing a course in Spanish, French and Portuguese must be considered.

Antonio Benjamin said that his Court has a platform for e-learning for Judges, and that his local organization, Planeta Verde is launching e-lectures. He continued saying that Loja University, in Ecuador is the best in South America in e-courses; and that the success of this kind of initiative has to do mainly with two issues: appropriate technology and enough teachers' time to interact with students. He considers this to be a very good opportunity for CEL and ELP in general; and something that would have a big impact at the next WCC in Barcelona.

Nawzat Ali said that she has taken the UNITAR course, and briefly shared with the participants the details of how this course works. She considers it to be of good quality and user-friendly.

Alejandro Iza mentioned that there is the possibility of approaching UNITAR with the idea of making a joint effort. He said that he has perceived an interest from UNITAR in working with IUCN.

Samuel Nguiffo considered the difficulty of relying on the internet, particularly for people in developing countries. He said that it may be important to evaluate the possibility of also developing DVDs. Melinda Janki and Nawzat Ali expressed their endorsement of this idea.

Melinda Janki said that there is an Open University in the UK, whose materials are excellent. She suggested that CEL take a look at their modules, in order to obtain good ideas.

Dr. Benjamin said that it would be a good idea to start with taped lessons, while a more ambitious and comprehensive methodology is developed.

Dr. Iza explained that the "Flows" publication of the Water and Nature Initiative was converted into an E-law course, and that it was a great success. He continued that his idea is to have particular courses on very specific topics or aimed at specific groups of people, for instance: Protected area managers, judges, rangers; with eye-catching titles, such as "xx in 10 Lessons", or "xx in a nutshell").

The meeting decided on the creation of another "petit comité" to further analyze this possibility, composed of Sheila Abed, Alejandro Iza, and Thomas Greiber, ELC staff lawyer.

### **Presentation of Alejandro Iza, Head of ELP and ELC**

As decided earlier, **point 6 in the Agenda** was the last point on the first day of the SC meeting:

Dr. Iza started by mentioning that the legal officers' recruitment process had been completed at ELC, and that 2 new legal officers joined in June and August 2006. He also mentioned that a reallocation of areas of responsibility had taken place.

Immediately afterwards, Alejandro Iza explained about several initiatives underway or projected for the upcoming months:

- Biodiversity: There is a new project with the German Ministry of the Environment, under which the ELC will provide technical legal support on access and benefit sharing.
- Forests: Legal-technical input under the FLEG process;
- Oceans: An important meeting took place in Bonn. The Secretariat is working well at engaging the Specialist Groups with the ELC and the Headquarters' Marine Programme. This group will be working on a paper requested by the German Ministry of the Environment, on High Seas under UNCLOS;
- Protected Areas: ELC has received from the Jensen Foundation (from Denmark), an important grant to implement a project to revise the protected areas categories. This is a 4 year project, which should involve the Specialist Groups.
- Water: 3 new publications under the WANI Initiative Toolkit have been launched: RULE, SHARE, NEGOTIATE;
- Incentives: A new project is starting, consisting of a toolkit to help countries establish Payment for Environmental Services;
- Regional Projects: The Caucasus project. This is a major project, designed to help countries work with the Judiciary in compliance and enforcement, as well as help them in drafting legislation, raising civil society awareness, and enhancing the protected areas system. It incorporates a particular challenge, considering there are political problems in the area.
- The process of transferring the ECOLEX data into another program and the migration of its platform to the FAO database has been completed; as well as its new interface. Now it is possible to search for information through Google. Ideas are welcome from CEL members on ways to "market" this renewed tool. Unfortunately, attempts to obtain funding to upgrade the system have not been successful; and neither FAO nor UNEP are allocating enough funds towards this effort.
- The 2006 ELP Newsletter has been launched and distributed, and it is presently being translated into Spanish.
- The list of publications underway is as follows: ABS Series, Glaciers, Revision of the African Convention, Shared Water Resources Governance, Transboundary Natural Resources Management, and Transboundary EIA.
- With regard to communication issues, Dr. Iza informed participants that the ELP Website has been redesigned. He also said that good posters with critical messages had been printed, as well as brochures and CD ROMs, which are useful tools for approaching and attracting donors. He also explained, with the help of the Chair, that the CEL Newsletter will have a new interface, and will be put together and sent from Bonn, with the long distance support of the Chair's Liaison, Adina Tomasi.
- Reorganization of IUCN: Alejandro Iza shared with the meeting news about the Union's reorganization process, which focuses on regionalization and decentralization. This means fewer people will be reporting directly to the DG. This process also contemplates the redefinition of IUCN's RCOs and the rearrangement of the Secretariat. At this point Dr. Iza explained that every

intersessional period adopts a new Plan, and every Programme needs to develop its own component. Afterwards, a unifying document will be produced, reflecting both global priorities, and the contribution of every Programme.

He stressed the importance of counting on the active participation and collaboration of the Steering Committee in the definition of this document, to be submitted before September 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Day 1 Session Closed**

### **10. CEL Budget Submission**

The Chair informed the participants of the meeting that the budget submission and the execution chart are attached to the Reports each of them received when the meeting started. She gave information on the funds to be allocated to CEL's initiatives, and offered to explain further at the participants' request, also committing herself to send the audit reports.

#### **Introduction of new SC Member: Dr. Rafael Gonzalez Ballar, from Costa Rica**

At the opening of the second day of the meeting, the Chair introduced Dr. Gonzalez Ballar, who arrived late due to flight delays. He was welcomed by the SC members present at the meeting, and he expressed his satisfaction in joining the group and being able to attend the meeting.

#### **Comments related to day 1:**

Prof. Benjamin proposed that the meeting participants decide on implementation steps towards the ELP component plan to be sent to HQ before September 30<sup>th</sup>. After some discussion, the meeting participants decided that there should be one consolidated ELP product by late August, containing the input from the CEL Steering Committee members. This document should be sent for consultation with the membership no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>, in order to open a 2-week period for receiving comments, as well as to allocate enough time to incorporate these comments.

Sheila Abed expressed her conviction that Specialist Groups would contribute a great deal of input, and she said that to this end, the June SG meeting in Istanbul would be particularly valuable, especially considering that Regional Committee Chairs and some Regional officers had also been invited to the meeting.

Dr. Iza stressed on the fact that the coordination of the process towards building the document demanded a strong leadership, and that the processing of the information should be made by not more than 4 people. To this end, it was agreed by the meeting participants that one meeting should take place in Bonn during the second half of August, and that in order to take advantage of the presence in Europe of CEL Steering Committee members, Michel Prieur and Veit Koester will be asked to join Alejandro Iza at the meeting where the first draft of the document was to be put together.

Alejandro Iza mentioned that in the past, the Union had prepared an instrument called "Situation Analysis", and that this had not been made this time. The Chair intervened saying that she considered this to be very important, and asked Dr. Iza to draft something similar, in order to have a starting point, from which to build the new component plan.

### **11. Presentation by Dr. Burhenne**

It was decided that Dr. Burhenne would deliver his presentation as the last point in the meeting agenda.

### **12. Matters arising from the IUCN Council**

The Chair shared with the SC that at the recent Council meeting, the Guidelines for applying the Precautionary Principle to Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resources Management was approved, as re-drafted by CEL.

This document is the result of a working group formed within the Commission on Environmental Law, concerning the content of the Guidelines for applying the precautionary principle to biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, published in 2005. The 2005 Guidelines were developed over a number of years by the Precautionary Principle Project. That project was a joint initiative of Fauna & Flora International, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Resource Africa and TRAFFIC, involving an international consultative process carried out from 2002 to 2005.

At this point, the Chair expressed her deep gratitude to the group of experts who were involved in this effort: Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin, Ben Boer, Ron Engel, Holly Dublin, Antonio Benjamin, Klaus Bosselmann, Brendan Mackey and Eckhard Reh binder for their commitment and kind support.

### **13. Reports on Specialist Groups by the Steering Committee Liaisons of each Group**

**Samuel Nguiffo:** Dr. Nguiffo reported on the following issues:

- He has contacted African lawyers, and they have implemented an email discussion list sharing information. He considered this group a very good resource for the Helpdesk, as they are willing to provide support.
- Together with the aforementioned group, Dr. Nguiffo has prepared a declaration of French-speaking lawyers regarding a problem in Cote d'Ivoire.
- He is preparing a book on "Contemporary Issues in African Environmental Law", for which he is counting on the support of both IUCN African Offices.
- He asked whether CEL would support an initiative under which the group of African environmental lawyers could work on assessment reports on several issues affecting the continent; such as: Waste, oil spills, mining. Dr. Nguiffo was requested to send a document describing this initiative to Sheila Abed and Alejandro Iza, in order to be evaluated.

**Antonio Benjamin:** Prof. Benjamin reported on the following issues:

- In his capacity as Liaison to the Ethics and the Soils Specialist Groups. Prof. Benjamin congratulated them for being so active. He said that the Code of Ethics for Biodiversity had been a huge task; as well as the Protocol on Soils.
- He has been contacted by the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture with regards to the Soil protocol, as they are very keen to support a global initiative in this regard.

- Being also Co-President of INECE, Prof. Benjamin reported on his efforts to try to bring both organizations' work together.
- With regards to the Precautionary Principle Guidelines recently approved by the Union's Council, Antonio Benjamin congratulates all experts involved, remembering that he had called the attention of the need to look into this from the very start, being a controversial issue, and considering the original version before being "re-crafted" by CEL did not include the Ethics concept.
- Prof. Benjamin reported that he is applying a great deal of work and effort in the organization of two meetings that start right after this SC meeting is over: The Academy Colloquium and the First Mercosur Judiciary Meeting.
- Prof. Benjamin told the SC that his local organization, Planeta Verde, has implemented a masters degree in association with the Rio Grande do Sul University; and that he is engaging the ELP, through the invitation of CEL members as guest speakers.
- Finally, he shared with the meeting participants a project idea on which he has been working, consisting of an Environmental Law Programme Judicial Fellowship in Bonn, under an agreement with the Judiciary School.

**Rafael González Ballar:** Prof. González Ballar reported on the following topics:

- Prof. Gonzalez informed the SC that he has been having conversations with Central American colleagues about the possibility of incorporating a normative similar to Aarhus in the region; and they are planning to organize a small Colloquium on Participation and Access to Justice.

**Nawzat Ali:** Ms. Nawzat Ali reported on the following activities:

- Nawzat Ali shared with the Steering Committee the work she has been carrying out in activating the work of the SG on Armed Conflict and the Environment and liaising this with the SC. This led to a brainstorming discussion among the SC members present at the meeting, on how the group can move forward within the context of IUCN work and its resolutions
- Ms. Ali also explained in detail about her participation in a report that was made on an oil spill that occurred in Lebanon as a consequence of the bombing of a power plant. For this purpose, she established contact with the SG on Armed Conflict and the Environment.
- After extensive discussions, the SC decided that after it reviews the work plan of the group and its ToR, it will then approve the budget. The SC also decided that the Chair of CEL in consultations with the SC members will need to decide on approving the membership that is submitted to the SC.
- The SC emphasized the importance of building membership from CEL as much as possible and reverting to experts from outside the Commission if needed for specific tasks and not the other way around.
- The SC also agreed that the ToR needs to fit within IUCN resolutions and the ELP new strategic plan just like the rest of the SGs.
- The SC advised that it would be better to start with a small group to be able to deliver before Barcelona and suggested that the first small meeting of this group would be hosted at the ELC in Bonn to benefit from the secretarial support and that extra funding can be requested from the German Government, for example, among others.

**Melinda Janki:** Melinda Janki reported on the following:

- She said that the Specialist Group on Indigenous Peoples has grown very quickly and now has about 20 members from all over the world. The co-chair is Dr. Laura Westra. The SGIP has an initial project to examine legal regimes to protect indigenous peoples' rights in conservation initiatives. The overall aim is to produce a publication which can be useful to indigenous peoples as well as the conservation community. Ms. Janki also confirmed that she was looking for an indigenous person to take over from her as co-chair and asked for any suggestions.
- With regard to the Protected Areas SG, Ms. Janki asked for and received a clear mandate from the Steering committee to move this forward. The SGPA will develop terms of reference and membership. One proposed activity is to check Ecolex and provide copies of updated legislation. Following a meeting with Barbara Lausche and Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin, it is expected that the SGPA will also provide support and advice to the ELC project regarding the guidelines for drafting protected areas legislation. Rodrigo Agostinho, a legal expert on protected areas and a leading environmental lawyer in Brazil was confirmed as the co-chair of the SGPA
- She also reported that the Inter-Commission Task Force on Protected Areas (CEL/WCPA) has almost finalised its terms of reference. WCPA will make its nominations very shortly. Although there has been some delay it looks as though the Task Force will soon begin its work. She will be meeting the other co-chair in June to agree a work plan and implementation.
- At the request of the Chair, Melinda Janki will coordinate CEL's presence at the Latin-American Protected Areas Congress to be held in Bariloche, Argentina.

**The following things were agreed, after the SC Presentations, and after some discussion:**

- The Chair will request those SC members and SG Chairs that do not show enough commitment to indicate a person who could replace them.
- A new SG on Forestry will be created, and the Chair will try to identify experts from Indonesia, Russia, China, Malaysia, Brazil, Central America, West Africa and India.
- Rodrigo Agostinho, from Brazil, has been appointed as the new Co-Chair of the Specialist Group in protected Areas, joining Melinda Janki in this effort.
- The SG work plans need to get SC approval, and their relevance to IUCN resolutions should be clearly set. Based on this work plan, budget will be allocated.
- The chair in consultation with SC members will approve members of each Group.

**Dr. Burhenne's Presentation**

Dr. Burhenne, who presides over the Arctic Regime Task Force, explained to the meeting that back in 2004, a team of legal experts under his chairmanship met in Ottawa, Canada and prepared an indicative list of questions as part of an issue-oriented analysis needed to further consider how to strengthen the legal regime applying to the Arctic Region. The meeting participants included experts from Arctic countries, NGOs, and also indigenous communities.

In 2006, Dr. Burhenne was invited to the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians in Kiruna, Sweden in which Ambassador Hans Corell, former Under Secretary General of the UN and Legal Counsel to the UN Secretary General also took part. The Kiruna meeting confirmed the view that, before a decision on the necessity for an improved regional legal regime for the Arctic could be reached, an audit of the existing legal situation should be undertaken. This, in Dr. Burhenne's opinion, would entail looking at

three levels of action: global, regional and national. While a number of studies have been made to map the MEAs applicable in the Arctic, as well as on the regional agreements in place, there is a lack of sufficient knowledge on national legislation.

Based on the above, Dr. Burhenne requested the Chair to send a letter to the Academy of Environmental Law, asking for their help in undertaking an audit of the existing legal situation in the Arctic countries. Not extensive papers, but rather short descriptions of the situation and identification of existing legal gaps. The Chair accepted and took note of this.

#### **14. The Road to Barcelona**

The Chair informed the SC that each of the Commissions will have 6 slots available at the Congress, of one hour and a half each. Ms. Abed has confirmed that CEL will make use of all of the slots available. She asked the support of the SC members to start planning CEL's presence at the Congress.

#### **15. Venues and Dates for the next CEL Meeting**

It was decided that the dates of the next CEL meeting will be defined by virtual discussion. CEL Steering Committee members are earnestly requested by the Chair to set apart the dates for the meeting as soon as they are confirmed.

There was consensus to give priority to the selection of a venue in Asia, given the SC has met in America, Europe and Africa already.

#### **Meeting adjournment**

The CEL Chair thanked all those present for their support, and particularly, Prof. Benjamin for obtaining important support from the Sao Paulo State Secretary of the Environment for this meeting, consisting of providing free accommodation, meals and local transportation for CEL. A special word of thanks also went to the staff of Planeta Verde for their hard work and efficiency, and to the Liaison Officer, Adina Tomasi, and the other staff that support the Chair in her hometown.