



Dear Colleague,

We are writing to you as the recently-elected Chair and appointed Deputy Chair of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, to advise you on the status of the Commission and its membership following the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress held in November 2004.

Under the IUCN Statutes, a Chair is elected for the Commission at each World Conservation Congress, following which a new Steering Committee is appointed by the IUCN Council upon the Chair's recommendation. The Statutes also provide that all Commission membership expires three months after the Congress. It is then for the new Chair to determine Commission membership, with the help of the Steering Committee.

We are pleased to inform you that the IUCN Council has now appointed the new Steering Committee, which met for the first time in mid-June. Each member of the team brings a diverse wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm into the Commission. We have attached the names of the Steering Committee members to this letter for your reference.

You were appointed as a Commission member prior to the last Congress. Your membership has now expired under the Statutes. We are writing to extend you the opportunity to express your interest in being considered as a candidate for Commission membership. In this regard, we have attached a copy of the new Bylaws adopted by the Steering Committee, which sets out the procedure for applying for membership and the expectations of all Commission members.

We have now created four categories of Commission members, namely: senior members, junior members, corresponding members and honorary members, the latter of whom are appointed directly by the Steering Committee in recognition of their lifelong commitment to environmental law. We have created the new category of junior member in an effort to actively engage younger environmental lawyers and students who wish to become involved with IUCN. Corresponding members will be members appointed by me to be the focal point for the Commission in relation to a State or States or an institution.

If you would like to express interest in Commission membership, please fill the Membership form herein attached and send it back to us along with your CV (short one please – not more than 2 pages) to the following address: adina.tomasi@idea.org.py You should also obtain the support of a Commission member, which at this stage only includes Steering

Committee members and honorary members appointed by the Steering Committee at its first meeting. Since we are in the process of reconstituting the Commission's membership in accordance with the Statutes, you are welcome to submit your application for membership with the support of a former member of the Commission. A full list of these individuals is available on the IUCN Environmental Law Programme (ELP) website, www.iucn.org/themes/law.

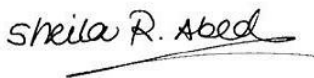
Since being elected in November 2004, we have been busy building the new Steering Committee, visiting key institutions and donors and developing the strategic directions for the Commission over the next four years. We are very keen to ensure full geographic representation and gender equity within the Commission and to translate as many of our materials as we can into the three official languages of IUCN and, wherever possible, into other United Nations languages as well.

At its first meeting, in addition to adopting our new Bylaws, the Steering Committee also reviewed all Specialist Groups. We have retained many groups as they remain critical to the Commission's new Mandate, abolished a few that are no longer required, and created several additional groups to address emerging issues. A full list of the Specialist Groups is attached. We have also taken steps to ensure membership of these groups reflects geographic representation and gender equity. Further details on the Specialist Groups will be posted on the ELP website shortly.

The new Steering Committee is off to an exciting start. At our first meeting we have finalized the Commission's key documents and put our strategic directions in place. We are looking forward to building an exciting, active and engaged Commission and we will be communicating directly with Commission members on a regular basis.

On behalf of IUCN, we would like to express our most sincere thanks to you for being a part of the Commission over the last Intersessional period (2001 to 2004). Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact our Liaison Officer, Ms. Adina Tomasi (adina.tomasi@idea.org.py).

Sincerely yours,



Sheila Abed

Chair



Michel Prieur

Deputy Chair

6 July 2005