

## *Modular Capacity Building Programme - greening the development*

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is supposed to play a vital role in development process in Pakistan. It has become mandatory for all development projects through legislation - Pakistan Environmental Protection Act (PEPA) 1997 and decisions of various decision-making forums, like Pakistan Environmental Protection Council (PEPC) and Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC). Realising the need for developing capacities of government officials in environmental assessment, particularly of those working in non-traditional sectors, Pakistan Environment Program (PEP) designed and implemented a 'Modular Capacity Building Programme' for a select group of senior and mid-career government officials. This programme aimed at sensitising the participants with fundamental concepts of environmental assessment (EA) as a fundamental and enabling tool for sustainable development.



Group photo of the participants of module I at Bhurban

The programme included background research on relevant topics, presentations and case studies, group-work, discussion sessions and field visits to different hotspots of environmental concern. It encouraged intellectual interaction amongst participants, providing an opportunity for experiential learning. Leading national and international resource persons were engaged for this programme. These resource persons included practitioners, visionaries, leaders in sustainable development and professional trainers specialising in environmental assessment.

The programme was delivered in three modules. The first module was held in September 2005 in Bhurban, focusing on exploring the principles and concepts of natural resources and the human relationships. Mr. Reinoud Post, Technical Secretary of the Netherlands Commission on EIA was the guest speaker. The second module, held in November 2005 in Karachi, focused on understanding the concept of environmental impact assessment. Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director IUCN Asia and Mr. Javed Jabbar, Vice President of IUCN were among the guest speakers at the occasion.

The third and the final module of Modular Capacity Building Programme titled, Strategizing Sustainable Development, was held from 16-18 February,

2006 at the National School of Public Policy in Administrative Staff College, Lahore. The overarching aim of this module was capacity development for implementing the National Conservation Strategy for sustainable development and providing orientation to the participants for carrying out EIA at project proposal and planning stages.

The module focused on the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and its significance for implementing proposed policies, plans, programmes and groups of projects at a strategic level to encourage environmental good practices throughout the planning process. Participants gave group presentations followed by a group discussion on policy vision called "Vision 2030".

The programme has succeeded in engaging senior and mid-career government functionaries in dialogue and discussion on issues of sustainable development, focusing on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). In addition it has been able to sensitize and create awareness on environmental issues. This programme has networked a group of key government officials. This cohort would now be able to act as a constituency for promoting environmental assessment in Pakistan.