

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am pleased to present the Judicial Training Materials on Environmental Law developed by UNEP in close collaboration with a team of distinguished judges from around the world representing many legal systems and geographical regions. It has been developed pursuant to the UNEP Governing Council decision 22/17 B to support *“the improvement of the capacity of those involved in the process of promoting, implementing, developing and enforcing environmental law at the national and local levels such as judges, prosecutors, legislators and other relevant stakeholders, to carry out their functions on a well informed basis...”*

UNEP will continue to fulfill its abiding commitment to implement this decision and ensuring that this impressive publication contributes to engaging judicial officers and other legal stakeholders at regional and national levels to the further development, application and enforcement of the rapidly growing field of environmental law. This publication is a comprehensive resource which includes a set of ten presentations and an accompanying CD Rom containing the texts of several UNEP Environmental Law publications. I have no doubt that these materials would also be useful in the teaching of environmental law, especially at university level.

UNEP’s Global Judges Programme was conceived in the context of strengthening the Rule of Law in the area of sustainable development. The Rule of Law comprises an intricately inter-linked chain of fundamental ideas including equality before the law, the independence of the judiciary, transparency, consistency and accountability in the administration of law and the notions of equity, justice and fairness. The Rule of Law is also essential for the realization of sustainable development, which itself is founded on equitably balancing environmental, social and economic considerations in decision-making at all levels. The judiciary - as the universally recognized guardian of the Rule of Law - plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development through the application, interpretation and enforcement of environmental law. As this publication eloquently demonstrates, courts of many countries have already shown sensitivity to promoting the Rule of Law in the field of environment and sustainable development.

On behalf of UNEP, I should like to express our deep appreciation to the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway and Belgium that have supported this programme with financial resources and call upon all our partners-governments, UN agencies and bodies, international and regional organizations - to join in a collaborative partnership with UNEP in strengthening the capacity of judges and legal stakeholders in promoting the realization of sustainable development through the Rule of Law.

Achim Steiner
Executive Director