

## **IUCN COMMISSION ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (CEC)**

**Bhaskar Nath**

*European Centre for Pollution Research, London, UK*

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### **Summary**

In this chapter the mission, objectives and activities of the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), which is one of the six commissions of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), are described. As a knowledge-based global network, CEC's mission is to involve people in learning and change towards more sustainable development.

Accordingly, using knowledge and communication as strategic tools, the CEC strives to involve people in the bottom-up fashion to seek global sustainable development. Consequently, education for sustainable development (ESD) is increasingly a major preoccupation of the CEC. It is argued that CEC's excellent efforts to guide people to a more sustainable future would be significantly enhanced by acknowledging that neither global environmental sustainability nor global sustainable development can be achieved without effectively addressing the central question of how to reduce relentlessly rising production and consumption of goods and services increasingly to supply the profligate "wants" of the affluent between and within nations.

### **1. The CEC — Its Vision, Mission and Objectives**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which has its headquarters at Gland, Switzerland, is an organization of its members

currently (2004) numbering 1032. Of these 730 are national non-governmental organization (NGO) members, 112 government agency members, 80 state members (the Islamic Republic of Iran being the latest state member), 77 international NGO members, and 33 affiliate members. The IUCN is financially supported mainly by donations from its West European and North American members, multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and NGOs and foundations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Ford Foundation.

The Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) is one of the six commissions of the IUCN whose vision is to help create “a future where social institutions and groups are enabled and engaged to create a just world that values and conserves nature” ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)). Every four years both CEC mission and objectives are agreed by its members at the World Conservation Congress, also held every four years. The 2000-2004 CEC mission approved by its members at the World Conservation Congress 2000 is:

“To champion the strategic use of communication and education as means to engage in learning and empowering stakeholders to participate in achieving IUCN’s mission to influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable” ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)).

The CEC is a knowledge-based network concerned with involving people in learning about, and making progress towards, sustainable development through prudent management of biodiversity and natural resources. As such, both dissemination of essential knowledge and raising public awareness are important strategic elements of CEC activities. Currently the knowledge-base of the CEC comprises over 600 experts, drawn mainly from governments, NGOs, international organizations and academia of more than 90 countries. They provide essential knowledge inputs to IUCN managers and policy-makers for both framing policy and realizing policy objectives.

The 2000-2004 CEC Work Programme is targeted at realizing the following objectives ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)):

1. The CEC network is constituted, managed, funded and capacity enhanced to implement the CEC program so that IUCN members, commissions and IUCN staff
  - Recognize the need to manage and integrate education and communication in programs, projects and policies;
  - Can effectively manage and integrate education and communication to influence perceptions, engage stakeholders, build skills, undertake marketing, manage networks and relations in their work;
  - Are advised on the basis of managing knowledge in appropriate ways to meet the needs of learning in IUCN including the development of skills;
  - Are advised on how to manage learning within organizations and in communities.
2. Major conventions and international agreements relevant to IUCN’s mission are

supported through advocacy for and training in effective management of communication and education.

3. Support the development of education programs relevant to IUCN's mission for influential sectors.

CEC's mission and objectives during 2005-2008 is under preparation and will be approved by the IUCN members at the Third World Conservation Congress to be held in Thailand. CEC's strategic planning for the program of work during this period includes the following steps ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)):

- External stakeholder analysis;
- Framing recommendations from the analysis;
- Feedback from CEC members on the main areas of CEC work;
- Strategic planning meeting with the Steering Committee; and
- Consultation on the draft program with the Steering Committee, staff and commission members.

IUCN's strategic priorities for 2005-2008 are to ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)):

- Work with the Conventions, particularly in advocacy for CEPA (Communication, Education, and Public Awareness) and education for sustainable development;
- Work with IUCN programs and IUCN members and Commissions to improve participatory approaches to empower groups and institutions to play their roles in conservation and sustainable development — capacity development;
- Work on supporting IUCN to tailor its knowledge and experiences towards priority audiences in a virtual university to develop leadership for sustainable development.

## **2. Organization of The CEC**

The CEC is headed by a voluntary Chairperson, elected every four years by the World Conservation Congress which is the Assembly of the IUCN members. The Chairperson, who is initially elected for a four-year term, is eligible for re-election for a second term. The Chairperson is a member of the Governing Body of the IUCN, called the IUCN Council, to which he or she reports on the management of the CEC and its activities in between the World Conservation Congresses held every four years.

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to select a Steering Committee, with the approval of the IUCN Council, composed of Regional Chairpersons, Chairpersons of Product Groups, and advisors from partner organizations and the IUCN Council. Meeting annually, the Steering Committee is responsible for guiding the CEC Programme of work. If or when deemed necessary, a smaller group meets in between the annual meetings of the Steering Committee.

## **3. CEC Involvement in IUCN Work Programmes**

Acting in collaboration with the CEC, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and others as appropriate, IUCN pursues its

objectives with programs of work that fall under two broad headings: CEPA (communication, education and public awareness) and ESD (education for sustainable development). The CEC is involved in both CEPA and ESD, and also in United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014.

### **3.1. Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA)**

Under this heading IUCN undertakes a program of work, which has three distinct elements, for the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):

*Program Element 1:* The goal of this element is to create a global communication, education and public awareness network that is organized both regionally and globally and which is increasingly based on the internet. Specific activities under this element include stimulating debate on issues of biodiversity, providing access to relevant projects and publications, and creating access to standards of good practice. “The CEC is potentially a valuable network to the CBD Parties providing access to know-how on planning and implementing effective communication and education strategies, as well as about how to manage knowledge and learning processes” (www.iucn.org).

As for IUCN, it is ready to assist the CBD Parties to, among others:

- Access expertise from the CEC network of specialists world-wide in response to requests from the CBD Parties;
- Access examples, case studies and resources on or relating to biodiversity education and communication;
- Solicit advice from the CEC network of experts on how to manage specific CEPA projects and activities;

*Program Element 2:* The purpose of this element is to exchange knowledge and expertise — specifically to provide problem solutions, based on education and communication, to the CBD Parties as well to practitioners and the stakeholders. Dedicated workshops and publications are the main instruments of choice with which this program element is executed.

*Program Element 3:* This element is concerned with capacity-building for communication, education and public awareness working in collaboration with UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, UNITAR and WWF. The focus of capacity-building is to introduce new concepts, ideas and practices into nature conservation organizations with a view not only to transferring up-to-date knowledge to them but also to making their management structures and systems more robust and efficient. As for communication in CBD, the focus of this element is to promote the “wider landscape approach” to biodiversity conservation management in which people are at the heart of management issues so that the exercise becomes one of managing people (www.iucn.org). This contrasts with the conventional one-way approach to communication using press releases, brochures, websites and publications.

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### Biographical Sketch

**Professor Bhaskar Nath** received his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India, in 1960, followed by the Ph.D. degree from the University of Wales, UK, in 1964. In 1983 he was awarded the D.Sc. degree by the University of London for his outstanding original research (according to citation) in numerical mathematics. In 2001 he was awarded the *Doctor Honoris Causa* (Dr.H.C.) by the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy, Sofia, Bulgaria, for his contribution to environmental education.

After having taught at the University of London for more than 27 years, currently Professor Nath is Director of the European Centre for Pollution Research, London; Executive Director of International Centre for Technical Research, London; Editor of *Environment, Development and Sustainability* published by Springer; visiting professor to several European universities, and consultant to a number of international companies and organizations. Professor Nath's research interests include Numerical Mathematics, Elasto-Hydrodynamics, Philosophy, Environmental Economics, Sustainable Development, and Environmental Education. He has more than 100 scientific publications in these and related areas including 13 books.