

ENVIRONMENTAL LIAISON CENTRE INTERNATIONAL

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Summary

In this chapter a general description of the Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI) is given including its various activities to protect the unique natural endowment of Kenya and the region aiming at sustainable development. Salient features of ELCI's work include its robust campaigns on a variety of environmental issues and problems, and its ability and willingness to take governments to task over their policies with potential or manifest adverse consequences for the natural environment.

1. The Environmental Liaison Centre International — Its Vision, Mission and Objectives

The Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI), which is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, was established in 1974 to act as an international network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and civil society. Acting as an international networking instrument, ELCI's function is to strengthen cooperation and communication among its member NGOs and CBOs that campaign for environmental issues and/or work on environmental problems and projects. It also provides liaison between NGOs and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which is also based in Nairobi. A major function of ELCI is to build the capacities of environmental NGOs in developing countries and to encourage the advisory role of NGOs through the international environmental conventions and organs of the United Nations.

ELCI's policy decisions are made by a regionally balanced Board of Directors comprising 14 elected and up to 5 co-opted members that meets annually. Under a new

constitution, adopted in 1995, a Congress of ELCI members is held every three years with the aim of closely involving them in making policy and decisions.

With a relatively small staff of 30 and an administrative budget of 750,000 US dollars for 2002-2003, currently (2004) ELCI has a broad global membership of 800 NGOs and CBOs. It is financially supported by bilateral and multi-lateral donations, private foundations, and revenue generated from membership fees and sale of publications (the *Ecoforum*, which is a quarterly publication and various newsletters on biological diversity and conservation). The main contributors are development agencies in Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom; UNEP, Action Aid, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries, Worldview International, and the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (www.greenyearbook.org).

The vision of ELCI is “enlightened societies in ecological abundance”, and its mission is to “make information a useful tool to measurably improve the environment”. Its objective is to create “a strong, effective and credible civil society working towards a healthy environment” by (www.elci.org; www.greenyearbook.org):

- Promoting sustainable environmental projects and programs;
- Bringing local perspectives on environmental issues and problems to global environmental policy-making forums;
- Involving NGOs and CBOs in issue-based seminars and workshops;
- Facilitating access of NGOs and CBOs to relevant information, and facilitating exchange of information and experiences among them, with the aim of building, upgrading and updating their capacity;
- Building capacities of environmental NGOs in developing countries; and
- Encouraging NGOs and CBOs to take an advocacy role in international environmental conferences.

2. ELCI's Links to and Relationship with International Organizations

ELCI has a consultative status with the following international organizations — a status that enables it to bring its members' perspectives on local environmental issues and problems to the policy-making processes of those organizations (www.elci.org):

- The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
- The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations;
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and
- The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

Because of its consultative status with these key international organizations, ELCI is able to work on local-global linkages to bring policy and ideas to the grassroots level on one hand, and on the other to convey the experience, views and local perspectives of its members on environmental issues and problems to the decision-makers. This applies especially to UNEP with whom ELCI has close links. However, the focus of ELCI's work continues to be communication, and generation and dissemination of information on environmental protection and prudent and sustainable use of natural resources.

In addition, ELCI is accredited to a number of important international decision-making bodies, notably the following, to which it brings local and regional perspectives of its members on relevant environmental issues and problems (www.elci.org):

- The International Negotiating Committee on Desertification;
- Meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- The Montreal Protocol for the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer;
- United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS); and
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The following examples illustrate how ELCI makes inputs to important decision-making fora on behalf of its members. In the preparatory process leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) at Johannesburg in 2002 and during the Summit itself, ELCI worked in close collaboration with the CSD to coordinate and prepare the input of its NGO members to the multi-stakeholder deliberations that took place at the Summit. Also, at the request of the CSD, ELCI and its two partner organizations, the Third World Network and the Danish Forum for Sustainable Development (a coalition of 20 Danish NGOs working in the general area of environment and development), provided valuable assistance during the eleventh session of the CSD held in May 2003. In addition, working in close collaboration with IUCN, ELCI facilitates the active participation of civil society in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) program.

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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.