

World Congress on Justice

by Dr. Wanhua Yang¹

Honourable Chief Justices,

Honourable Justices, Senior Judges, and Senior Counsels,

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be here in Bhurban, Pakistan and to address this distinguished audience.

I would like to join others speakers earlier to thank Honourable Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, for his vision, leadership and personal commitment which have brought all of us there in Bhurban today. I would also like to thank the entire Supreme Court of Pakistan, ADB and IUCN Pakistan for organizing such a successful Conference. UNEP is very pleased to be a partner.

UNEP has long been actively engaging with the judiciary on theme of environmental law. In 2002 in Johannesburg, UNEP organized the Global Judges Symposium on Sustainable Development and the Role of Law, on the eve of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Symposium was built a series of sub-regional dialogues among the judiciary on the same subject, and led to the path-breaking Johannesburg Principles on the Role of Law and Sustainable Development adopted by 120 senior judges from around the world.

Based on the success of that Symposium, UNEP is now planning to organize a similar conference, the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability to be held on 18-19 June this year on eve of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as Rio+20). The World Congress is a follow up to the Global Judges Symposium and also built on various activities under UNEP's Global Judges Programme after the Global Judges Symposium, which facilitated the sharing of experiences and knowledge, and built capacity among the judiciary worldwide.

The World Congress will bring together Chief Justices and Senior Judges, Chief Prosecutors and Attorneys-General, Auditors-General and other legal stakeholders from around the world to contribute to the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference and to share its findings and recommendations with the Rio+20 Conference.

The overall goal of the World Congress is to foster a common vision and principles among key stakeholders on how to transform discussions into action and how to use justice, law and governance to promote sustainable development through the outcomes of Rio+20 and beyond. Thus, the World Congress will directly contribute to the Rio+20 Conference by focusing on the legal aspects of the two themes of the Conference: 'Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication' and 'Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development'. It will also outline the future actions required by national and

¹ Programme Officer, United Nations Environment Programme.

international legal stakeholders to promote sustainable development in the 21st century founded on the rule of law and effective governance.

The World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability is expected to:

- Promoting the further evolution of international and national environmental law, including the fundamental principles underpinning them as well as their effective implementation and enforcement;
- Promoting effective national and international environmental governance;
- Strengthening the nexus between social justice and environmental sustainability; and
- Providing a global platform that institutionalizes the engagement and cooperation of key players at a national level including judges, prosecutors, auditors as well as parliamentarians with the support of intergovernmental institutions and processes.

There are two Preparatory Meetings for the World Congress. The **First Preparatory Meeting was already held on last** October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, The Meeting endorsed the Kuala Lumpur Statement as an outcome, which contained important indications for the way forward to strengthen the justice, legal and governance dimensions of environmental sustainability.

The Second Preparatory Meeting is schedule for 23-24 April in Buenos Aires, Argentina. An official announcement will be made tomorrow in New York.

The South Asia Conference on Environmental Justice today definitely adds the momentum of the preparations towards the **World Congress as regional inputs. The outcome here**, together with the outcome of the ASEAN Roundtable for Chief Justices on Environment took place last November in Jakarta will definitely contribute to the World Congress and the Rio+20 Conference.

The judiciaries in South Asia, as demonstrated at this conference, have a very impressive record of promoting the implementation of environmental law and spearheading innovative perspectives on how law can promote sustainable development.

Your experiences, lessons, recommendations outlines in the common visions will be very valuable contribution to the World Congress.

As Honourable Justice Antonia Benjamin already announced yesterday, UNEP would like to officially invite the representatives of the judiciaries in South Asia to participate in the World Congress. The official invitation letter will be sent shortly. We look forward to your active participation.

We also welcome and appreciate ADB's firm support to the Congress. Together with ADB, IUCN and other partners, we look forward to work closely with all of them to ensure the recommendations put forward today get implemented.

Thank you