

Year in Review 2016

Energy and Climate Change Specialist Group

by Richard Ottinger, Chair Emeritus

The Energy and Climate Change Specialist Group continues its focus on the mitigation of climate change as essential to IUCN's mission. Reducing air pollution coupled with promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency are the main components of the work of the SG.

The Co-Chairs are nearing completion of the [Beijing-Los Angeles Air Pollution Study](#). This is a major study on combating air pollution, comparing the efforts made in Los Angeles California and those being undertaken in Beijing, China. It is hoped that the lessons learned from these two studies will serve as a guide to assist all communities everywhere suffering from hazardous air pollution to understand measures that work best in their clean-up endeavours. A number of members recently contributed WCEL expertise to authoring and editing the publication of the [UNEP Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Laws](#).

With a high presence at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i, the SG hosted a Knowledge Café involving WCEL, the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC), Brendan Mackey (Chair, IUCN Climate Change Task Force), Professor David R. Hodas (Widener Law School, USA); and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The Café focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy investments as vital contributors to economic development; toward achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 7 regarding energy for all; and for mitigating climate change so important to the conservation of nature. Emphasis was especially placed on the economic advantages of these nature-based solutions. Café presenters included Shakeel Hussein Kazmi (Professor of Practical Legal Studies, NYU University Abu Dhabi); Tumai Ruombo (Associate Professor, Witwatersrand University and Director of the Mandela Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa); Koh Kheng Lian (Professor, National University of Singapore and Honorary Director, Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL)); Luce Meini (Head of Environmental Policies of the Italian utility, ENEL - a leader in renewable energy -); Li Wei (Associate Professor and Director of the Institute of Energy Law at Henan, China), Robert Percival (Robert F. Stanton Professor of Law and Director, Environmental Law Program, University of

Maryland Law School); and Lee Paddock (Associate Dean for Environmental Law Studies at George Washington University).

Encouraging energy-based solutions to climate change, the SG is happy to report that it successfully worked with IUCN Members to pass resolution 089 “Energy efficiency and renewable energy to promote the conservation of nature”. Herein, Members are urged to encourage transition to renewables and to phase-out subsidies for fossil fuels, while WCEL is requested to expand its collaboration with IRENA to advance legal frameworks for energy efficiency and renewable energy systems. Following the Congress in Hawai‘i, the Chair was appointed as the only non-Council Member to the newly created IUCN Climate Change Task Force and subsequently invited by the Government of Tonga to join the Advisory Board of the Oceania Energy & Climate Change Initiative. These combined efforts point the SG in a good direction to continue supporting the laws requisite for successful renewable and efficient energy programs. Efforts should focus toward building partnerships with IRENA by assisting project initiators and implementers to adopt legal platforms.