Dr. Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin (1943-2013)

Françoise dedicated and devoted her life to advancing the field of environmental law and policy for nature conservation and environmental protection and to inspiring, encouraging and mentoring young lawyers, students, researchers, and scientists to do the same. The IUCN Council paid tribute to her life and work with the establishment of the Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin Fellowship in Environmental Law in February 2013. The purpose of the Fellowship is to build further on Françoise Burhenne’s legacy of achievements and to advance implementation of Resolution 8 of the 2012 World Conservation Congress (‘Increasing youth engagement and intergenerational partnership across and through the Union’) by helping to mentor the next generation of conservation leaders.

Over more than 40 years with the Environmental Law Programme, Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin began her career with IUCN in 1966, working initially for the IUCN Environmental Law Commission once she completed her Doctorate of Law at the University of Brussels. Then in 1970, when she married Wolfgang Burhenne, she became the first and sole Legal Officer working for the newly created IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC), and in 1973 was given the new title of Director of the Environmental Law Centre and Head of the Environmental Law Programme (ELP), a post she held until 1999, when she retired as Director of the ELC and Head of the ELP and agreed to continue as Senior Counsel to three consecutive Directors of the ELC.

Her achievements provide an exceptional array of accomplishments and a broad platform of rich and inspiring areas of work on which the Fellowship participants can continue to build and learn as part of the next generation of leaders in environmental law. Françoise’ lifelong vision and mission for the Environmental Law Programme was to advance four main goals: strengthen international environmental law, provide legal technical assistance, publish high-quality analytical studies, and improve environmental law information flows. In each of these areas, she provided tireless leadership, support, determination, and passion, with achievements that continue to provide the foundation for modern day environmental law. Among these, she was instrumental in drafting and promoting implementation of several treaties that remain landmark achievements today. These include the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), at the regional level the revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

She started and guided the Environmental Policy and Law Paper series, a high-quality, peer-reviewed series of analytical studies by environmental law experts in their fields. Today the series numbers more than 85 publications. Following her passion for information on environmental law, she initiated the Environmental Law Information System (ELIS) in the 1970s, presented it to the Stockholm Conference, and managed its growth and evolution over the years into today’s sophisticated online information system, ECOLEX, ‘The Gateway to Environmental Law’, a tripartite partnership between IUCN, FAO and UNEP.

Among her many recognitions, distinctions and awards, Françoise received the 1990 Better World Society ‘Medal for the Protection of the Environment’, the 1991 UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize (the UN International Environment Prize and one of the most prestigious in the field), the 1997 Environmental Law Institute Award, and the 2008 Elizabeth Haub Prize for Environmental Law. In 2005, Françoise and her husband, Wolfgang, were jointly honoured by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL).

The Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin Fellowship Programme is an important initiative to keep this legacy alive and to continue to build upon the many programmes Françoise developed and promoted, and to inspire, guide and encourage the next generation of leaders in environmental law and policy.
The François Burhenne-Guilmin Fellowship

Operating out of the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC) in Bonn, Germany, the Fellowship Programme is both professionally and academically beneficial for students of law and young lawyers aspiring to work in environmental law and policy. The Fellowship provides up to two participants per year with hands-on experience in a team setting with ELC's legal officers and staff, and WCEL members worldwide. It gives participants insight into and experience with the substance and operations of environmental law at international and national levels for a period of up to 3 months.

As part of the Fellowship programme, participants will:

- undertake research on a pre-approved legal topic relevant to biodiversity conservation and environmental law;
- be expected to produce by the end of the Fellowship a peer-reviewed, journal quality paper on results of the research for publication through the IUCN Environmental Policy and Law (EPLP) series or other mutually-agreed publisher.

While particular assignments are determined according to the specific skills of the participant coupled with the particular needs of the ELC at the time, participants are offered the opportunities to interact with the ELC legal staff and international experts who visit and work with the ELC. They will also have access to and use of the ELC library resources, which include extensive holdings on environmental law and policy as well as online resources through ECOLEX.

In addition, participants will receive a small stipend to help cover some basic costs for the period of the Fellowship. While IUCN is not able to offer remuneration, participants are provided with their own working space including computer with email/Internet access, essential Windows applications and full access to our substantial library collection. Individual support will be arranged on a case by case basis.

Eligibility

Candidates for the Fellowship must meet the following requirements:

- 35 years of age or younger at the time of application;
- Evidence of outstanding academic and professional performance;
- Thorough knowledge of English (written & spoken) and knowledge of another language, preferably French or Spanish;
- Graduate degree preferred;
- Eligible for obtaining a visa for Germany.

Application

Candidates should be recommended by their university, on a yearly basis, to be considered for the FBG fellowship. The Fellowship is limited to 2 candidates per university and selection is by panel.

Contact

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