

For immediate release

A one-day National Workshop titled 'Moving Towards Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles in Pakistan'

Pakistan, 19 May 2010 (IUCN)

IUCN Pakistan, Pakistan Clean Air Network (**PCAN**) and Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities Center (**CAI – Asia**), in collaboration with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, Ministry of Environment and United Nations Environment Programme's project Partnership for Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles (**PCFV**), organized a one-day National Workshop titled 'Moving Towards Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles in Pakistan' at Islamabad today.

The purpose of the workshop was to highlight the importance of low sulphur fuel and to develop a road map for the introduction of cleaner fuels and vehicular technology in consultation with the major stakeholders and setting up of concurrent vehicle standards to improve air quality in Pakistan.

The workshop brought together relevant stakeholders including governmental institutions, civil society organizations, private sector, international organizations, academia and experts.

In the welcome remarks Mahmood Akhtar Cheema, Manager IUCN Islamabad Programme Office said that Air pollution has emerged as one of the major environmental issues in Pakistan. He mentioned that according to some estimates, air pollution costs Pakistan around Rs.365 billion annually or Rs.1 billion per day.

Muhammad Javed Malik, Secretary, Ministry of Environment in an inaugural address said that things are much more serious on the environmental front and the pace of degradation is very high for which we need to take drastic preventive measures. He lamented that for saving the cost of production the industries do not make necessary investment in the pollution control thus they shift this cost to the government in the form of higher health budget. He said that Pakistan is the fastest urbanizing country in South Asia. The economic development in Pakistan has been accompanied by various environmental problems one of which is the urban air pollution. He also mentioned that over 22,000 deaths per year are caused by urban air pollution in the country. He appreciated the efforts of IUCN Pakistan for organizing and hoped that the recommendations made today will help the government to take them forward.

Kamran Lashari, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources said that Clean Air is most important than other types of pollutions as it directly affects the people. In his speech, he mentioned that the government has initiated a project to promote public transportation including providing 10,000 CNG buses in cities to tackle the air quality issue. He said that ensuring air quality is not responsibility of a single institution but rather a responsibility of each and every individual. We therefore need to join hands together for the sake of our future generations. He suggested to draw out the policies needed and other issues required to develop a roadmap for better quality fuels and vehicles.

Mr. Herbert Fabian, expert from CAI-Asia shared the regional and global experiences with the participants. He informed that there is explosive growth of vehicles in Asia. He feared, if the growth rate will remain same it will become difficult to address this issue. While sharing the facts and figures he said that level of air pollution is higher in the Asian cities. He further mentioned that higher rate of exposure to air pollution cause higher morbidity and mortality.

A large number of people from government agencies, environmental organisations, academia and experts participated in this workshop. At the end of the session the participants made recommendations for setting up the road map achieving the targets for better air quality.

At the closing ceremony, Mr. Asif Shuja Khan, Director General, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency thanked the participants for their valuable recommendations and hoped that both the Ministries, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Petroleum will benefit from these recommendations. It is important that these

discussions took place these issues have come out in the open. He realize that this needs a continuous process that all stakeholders need to support

Notes to editors:

The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in September 2002 by a group of committed partners from governments, international organisations, industry, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), The PCFV, whose Clearing House is based at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, started working in February 2003. PCFV has over 90 member organisations including governments, civil societies, private sector, international organisations and institutions of higher learning.

The Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia) Center based in Manila promotes better air quality and livable cities by translating knowledge to policies and actions that reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from transport, energy and other sectors. Since October 2008, PCFV and CAI-Asia Center have been working together on a project to help three Asian countries: Vietnam, Philippines and Pakistan to develop roadmaps to move towards cleaner fuels and vehicles particularly to low sulphur diesel and gasoline fuels for transportation.

For more information or to set up interviews, please contact:

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Photo Captions:

Workshop1: from left to right – **Mr Kamran Lashari - Mr. M.A. Cheema – Mr. Muhammad Javed Malik**
Workshop2” from left to right – **Mr. Ahmad Saeed – Mr. M.A. Cheema – Mr. Muhammad Javed Malik – Mr. Kamran Lashari**

About IUCN

The world's oldest and largest global environment network, IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, envisions a just world that values and conserves nature. IUCN helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and developmental challenges. It supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world and brings governments, non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practice. The Union's headquarters are located in Gland, Switzerland.

IUCN Pakistan is part of the IUCN's Asia Regional Programme based in Bangkok, Thailand. Established in 1985 to assist in the preparation of Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy, IUCN Pakistan has grown to become the largest country programme of IUCN. Together with its partners and members, it is implementing several conservation initiatives across the country through institutional strengthening, policy advocacy and field work. Currently there are 27 active members of IUCN in Pakistan, including the Government of Pakistan as the state member, six government agencies and 20 NGOs. Over 100 volunteers from Pakistan work in IUCN's six specialised commissions.