

PRESERVING CLEAR WATERS AND GREEN MOUNTAINS

CLEAN
WATERS
AND GREEN
WATERS

IUCN IS READY TO HELP PAKISTAN ADOPT AND BENEFIT FROM CHINA'S EXEMPLARY ECO-CIVILISATION MODEL, WRITES ABAN MARKER KABRAJI.



The Environment Session, titled Clear Waters & Green Mountains, is underway. Seated (L-R): Former Minister of State for Environment Malik Amin Aslam, IUCN Regional Director Aban Marker Kabraji, Global Change Impact Studies Centre Executive Director Dr Tariq Banuri and IUCN China Programme Manager, South China, Cheng Zhang.

THE International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) sees the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as one of the most important developments in not only Asia, but also in the world. As both the Chinese and Pakistani governments get busy with the task of realising the planned projects under the CPEC, it is imperative that this development is sustainable in nature so as to benefit not only this generation, but those that will follow.

IUCN, by virtue of its global network, and as a Membership international union, where both Pakistan and China are State Members, is uniquely placed to facilitate the governments, industries and civil society involved in the development projects, not only in China and Pakistan, but in whichever countries the BRI extends to, in order to mainstream environmental concerns into the initiative.

Stretching from the oasis city of Kashgar in China

to the port city of Gwadar in Pakistan, the CPEC promises to bring about development at a scale not yet attempted in Pakistan. At the moment, the planned infrastructure projects could have a significant impact on biodiversity, particularly in Pakistan's already fragile mountain ecosystems. With the appropriate environmental safeguards in place, these projects could not only boost economic growth, but also promote a model of sustainable development which is in keeping with China's own espousal of the concept of 'eco-civilisation', creating a win-win situation for all its stakeholders.

China's policy of eco-civilisation is reflected succinctly in President Xi Jinping's own words. In a speech given at the United Nations Office in Geneva in early 2017, he said: "We should make our world clean and beautiful by pursuing green and low-carbon development. Man coexists with nature, which means that any harm to nature will eventually

come back to haunt man. We hardly notice natural resources such as air, water, soil and blue sky when we have them. But we won't be able to survive without them. Industrialisation has created material wealth never seen before, but it has also inflicted irreparable damage to the environment. We must not exhaust all the resources passed on to us by previous generations and leave nothing to our children or pursue development in a destructive way. Clear waters and green mountains are as good as mountains of gold and silver. We must maintain harmony between man and nature and pursue sustainable development."

As the United States distances itself from the global climate change agenda, China seems set to take the lead in ensuring that the hard-won Paris Agreement is not swept aside. Given this overall policy framework, IUCN wishes to provide a means of facilitation between the industries involved in

the development projects and the Pakistani government and civil society in order to ensure that this development takes place in a manner that is conducive to nature conservation.

IUCN can provide policy advice in the form of sustainable development strategies which are developed in consultation with, and are implemented by the governments and people of the countries that request it. It can provide the knowhow to help design and build institutions. Through its access to global networks on sustainable development, it can bring the latest knowledge into countries, and transmit lessons from the field into international dialogue.

Looking to the future, IUCN hopes to help Pakistan adopt and benefit from the best of China's exemplary model of eco-civilisation. ■

The writer is Regional Director, IUCN Asia.

PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF ECO-CIVILISATION

IUCN EXPERTS CALL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS ALONG THE CPEC ROUTE.



Malik Amin Aslam

MAKING CPEC A MODEL OF CHINA'S ECO-CIVILIZATION

PAKISTAN is at a development crossroads in the sense that it is on the one hand witnessing massive development taking place under the CPEC, while on the other hand its environment continues to be inching towards a point where reversing the disastrous effects may not be entirely possible. We are talking about an environment characterised by un-breathable air, undrinkable water, choking cities, belching coal power, mountains of waste and a shift from green to grey. With CPEC, we are observing massive development in infrastructure,

power generation and transport but so far these seem to be at the cost of our environment. There are imminent manifestations of our wilful ignorance of the environment. This can still be pre-empted.

The way towards a greening CPEC is to learn from China's eco-civilisation concept. China has introduced a wide-ranging set of ecological reforms in a bid to develop what the government calls an 'ecological civilisation'. The reforms address major environmental issues. The thrust is on protection of natural resource rights; establishment of a national parks system; protection of arable land and water resources management; establishment of a green financing system; and improvement of environmental compensation mechanisms.

Similarly, in Pakistan, what must factor in a comprehensive Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of CPEC as a whole. IUCN introduced the concept of SEA in Pakistan and is well-placed to provide assistance in this regard. This should then narrow down to a focus on key biodiversity hotspots and establish a biodiversity corridor. The need to internalise the full environmental costs (CBA) and mitigate impacts through rigorous monitoring is also critical.

Finally, what is proposed is a Pak-China Charter of Environment which should lead the way towards making CPEC a model for China's eco-civilisation. CPEC would be better if it was China Pakistan (Green) Economic Corridor.

The writer is Global Vice President, IUCN and a Former Minister of State for Environment.



Prof. Ma Keping

BRI TO REFLECT CHINA'S 'GREEN' COMMITMENT

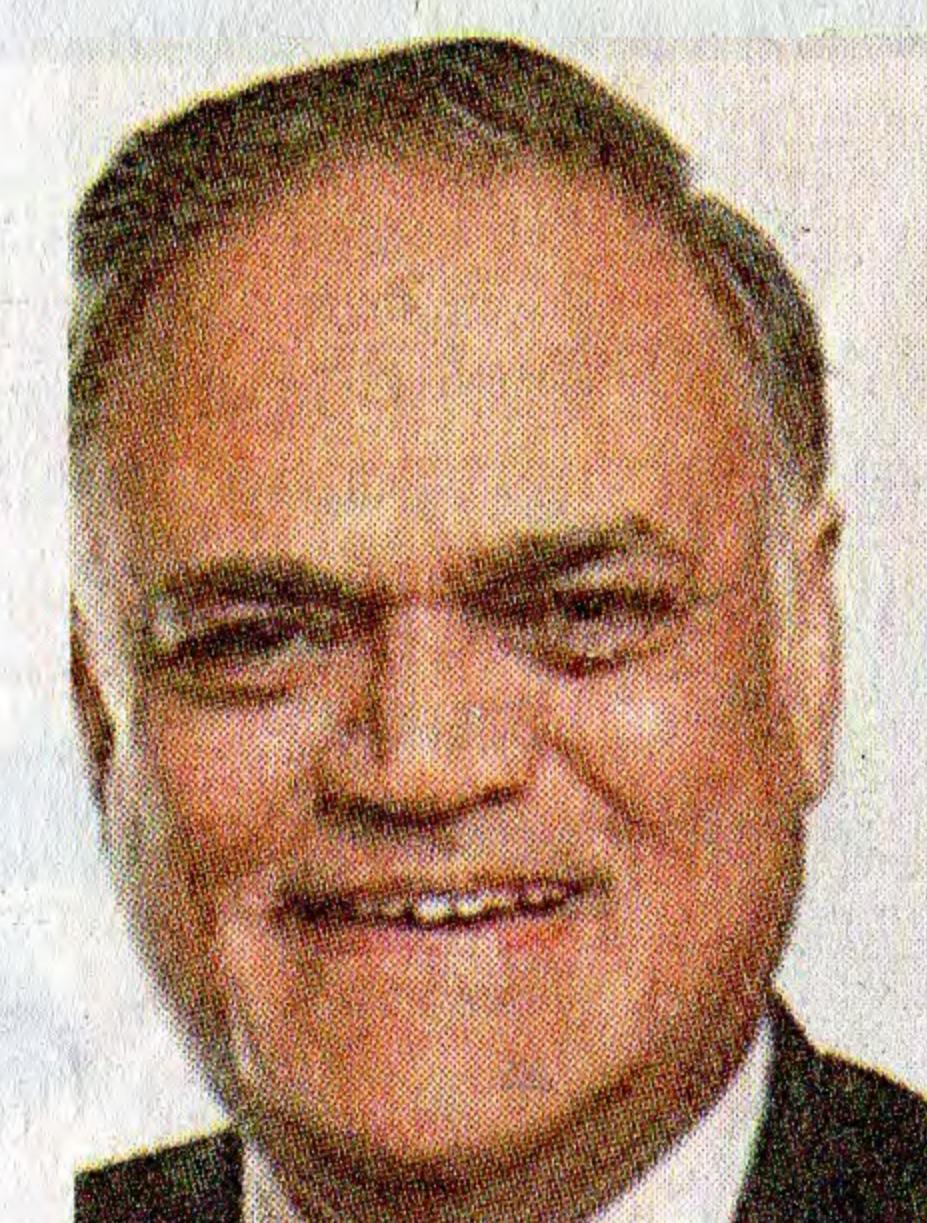
THE Chinese government has been placing special emphasis on environmental protection, adopting a series of major measures in promoting sustainable development. Since the turn of the 21st century, China has been vigorously progressing sustainable development from both theoretical and practical perspectives with remarkable achievements.

Ecological civilisation is a new concept in the development of human civilisation. It refers to material, spiritual and organisational achievements in following objective laws of harmonious human, social and natural development. Ecological civilisation means a real transformation of the growth model, which would represent a final break with the "pollute first, clean up later" policies of the recent past. It signals a paradigm shift - from a system that no longer protects or rewards polluters to a system that instead supports clean technology innovation and defends its natural ecosystems. Now with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is fully committed to the principles of conserving resources and protecting the environment and promoting its natural restoration with the understanding that environmental protection and economic development boost each other.

With BRI, China will promote green, circular, low-carbon development; preserve its geographical space; restructure industrial structure; and modify the ways of production; and change people's behaviour.

China continues to draw on reforms and scientific innovation as the basic driving forces, establishing a sound framework of institutions on ecological progress, and developing a long-term mechanism to ensure the progress of ecological civilisation. With BRI, China will stick to giving priority to cultivating ecological culture, incorporating ecological civilisation into the core value system of the public by strengthening publicity and education.

The writer is Chair, IUCN Asia Regional Members Committee, and Professor of Plant Ecology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.



Javed Jabbar

GREENING THE MEDIA TO GREEN THE PEOPLE

CPEC poses formidable challenges to the State of Pakistan at every level to conduct urgent and comprehensive reforms at the levels of local, provincial and federal governments. In terms of environment, there are six relevant groups: core group of government functionaries and decision-makers in the private sector; individual sector specialists; experts in the fields of finance and journalism; well-informed citizens; non-well-informed media persons; and the public at large.

While the media in Pakistan has certainly helped raise mass awareness on environmental issues, there is a need to go beyond 'garbage and waste disposal' and 'pollution' to really 'greening' the media, and thereby greening the people.

In the CPEC context Pakistan and China are so close yet so far in terms of media-content exchange. Content from China is either negligible or non-existent. This can be set right through the following steps:

- A 24-hour, real-time portal/website accessible to all along with a 24-hour dedicated CPEC TV channel and a CPEC FM radio channel network.
- Greater transparency and ready sharing of information on all aspects of CPEC.
- Regular dialogue with media proprietors, editors, content producers, content controllers to optimise their knowledge on CPEC projects.
- Capacity-building processes and events for media on CPEC issues.
- Regular visits by media representatives to sites of CPEC projects.
- Improving the quantity and quality of content exchange between China and Pakistan, including cultural content.
- Using IUCN's unique convening capacity to promote improved interaction.

The writer is a former Federal Minister and was former Global Vice-President, IUCN.

Clear Waters, Green Mountains

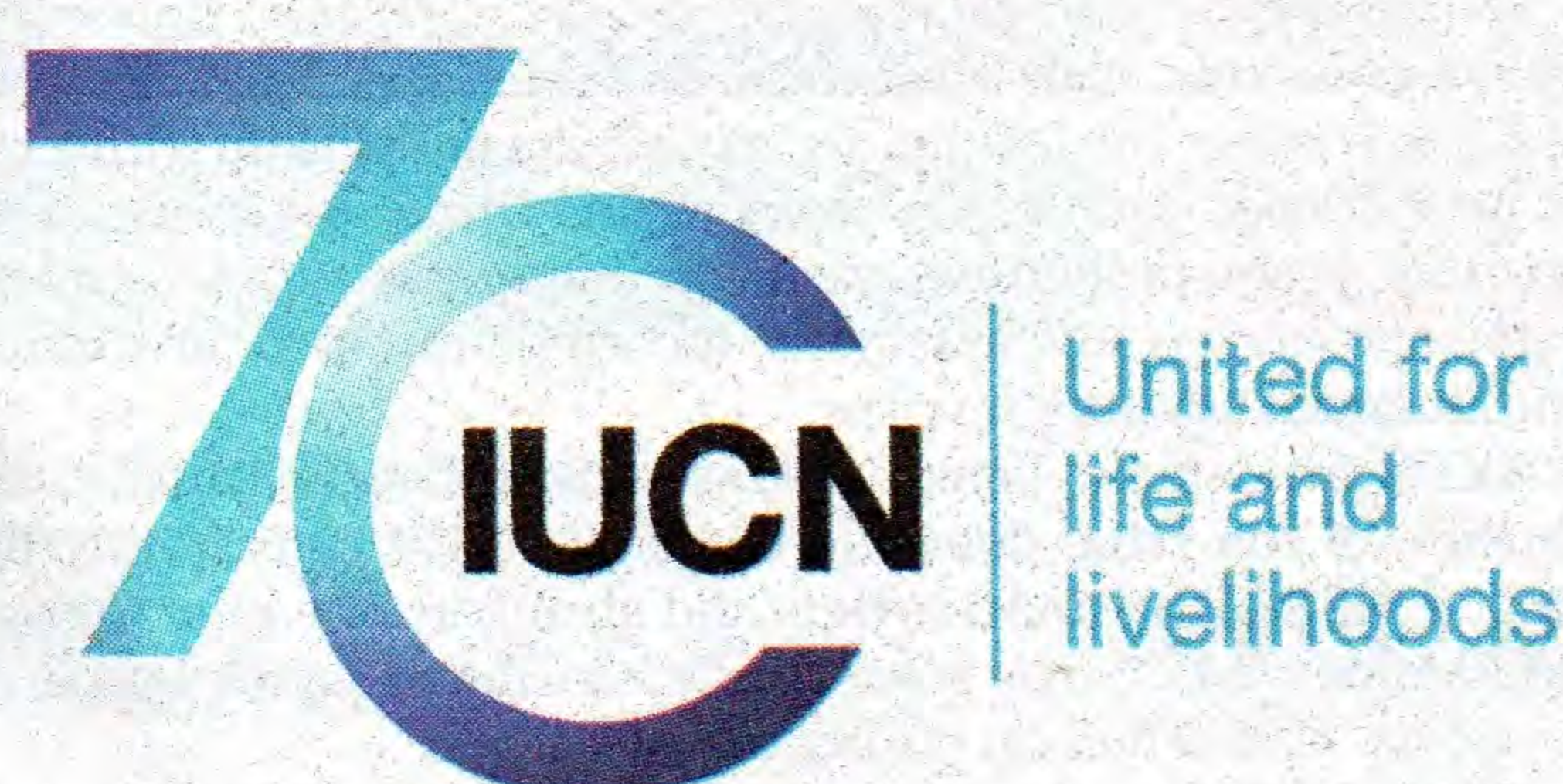
The China Pakistan Economic Corridor will launch Pakistan into uncharted territory. The country must decide between green growth, or economic development at the cost of future well-being. IUCN can help ensure the economy flourishes while the environment remains healthy.

IUCN is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,300 Member organisations and the input of more than 10,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

With 70 years of experience, vision and impact, IUCN's diverse Union can help Pakistan pave the road to a sustainable future.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

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