

EDITORIAL

Dr. Abdulbar Al-Gain, who for many years was one of the two Executive Governors of the International Council of Environmental Law, died suddenly on 21 April of this year during his guest tenure at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

H.E. Prince Fahad bin Abdullah Al-Saud, Assistant Minister of Defence and Aviation and responsible for the Meteorology & Environmental Protection Administration of Saudi Arabia (MEPA) has sent us the following summary of his life's achievements:

"Abdulbar Al-Gain was born in 1938 in the City of Medina in Saudi Arabia. He earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in Meteorology from the University of Utah and a Ph.D. in Arid Land Resources Science from the University of Arizona.

Throughout his early career Dr. Al-Gain rose through the ranks of the Kingdom's Meteorology and Environmental Protection Administration, finally serving as its President from 1988 until 1997 when he retired and served as the Dean of the Institute of Meteorology and Arid Lands at Jeddah's King Abdul Aziz University.

It was also during this period that Dr. Al-Gain's wit and intelligence gained recognition both for himself and for the environmental issues faced by the Kingdom. Both domestically and internationally he developed a reputation for creativity which he would carry throughout his career. He served as Secretary General for the Ministerial Committee on Environment, which integrated environmental management throughout the Kingdom's ministries.

Dr. Al-Gain was a major participant in international environmental organizations, both as a national representative to international bodies and serving within the bodies themselves. He served as the Kingdom's representative during the establishment of the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea Regional environmental organizations (ROPME and PERSGA), Head of Delegation to the Governing Council of UNEP.

He was a significant player in international organizations over the course of his career. He served as Vice President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Chairman of the UNEP "Governing Council Special Committee on the Brundtland Commission Report" (Our Common Future) and the Permanent Representative's Report concerning the Year 2004 and Beyond (1987); as a Vice President of ACOPS (Advisory Committee on the Pollution of the Sea); Member of the Global 500 since 1989; Member and Co-Executive Governor of the International Council of Environmental Law (ICEL); Co-Chairman of the Working Group on the Special Needs of Developing Countries at the Second World Climate Conference (1990);

Member of the Board of Judges for the Sasakawa Environment Prize (UNEP); Member and Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of WMO. International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC – a WMO & UNEP Joint activity).

In all of these positions, he advocated the position of environment and of the respective roles of industrial and developing nations. His passing marks a pivotal point for environmental matters in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as it moves into a new millennium."

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To me, Dr. Al-Gain was not only a member of the Advisory Board for the Journal, but a man whom I could always approach for expert, critical, and frank counsel whenever needed. ICEL also owes him a debt, so much.

I will miss him dearly, as he was my closest friend.

1 August 2000

- Wolfgang B. Sney -