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**PEOPLE AND ANIMALS DRINK WATER ALIKE WHICH IS
NOT EVEN DRINKABLE: JUSTICE JAWAD S. KHAWAJA**

LAHORE, JUNE 21, 2014:

Mr. Justice Jawad S. Khawaja of the Supreme Court of Pakistan expressed his concern over the social disparities and said that language and water are tools of class system in Pakistan. His Lordship was addressing at a One Day Conference on “Water and Environmental Justice” held at Punjab Judicial Academy, today. Hon’ble Judges of Lahore High Court, Lahore, all the District & Sessions Judges and Senior Civil Judges in their capacity as Green Courts of Punjab and Judicial Officers of Lahore District Judiciary attended the Conference.

The conference was organized by the Committee for Enhancing Environmental Justice (“CEEJ”) with collaboration of International Union for Conservation of Nature (“IUCN”), Pakistan Chapter. Mr. Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali of Supreme Court of Pakistan is the Chairman of CEEJ while Honorable Judges of the High Courts are its members. CEEJ is the decision-making forum for the implementation of the “Building Capacity for Environmental Prosecution, Adjudication, Dispute Resolution, Compliance and Enforcement in South Asia” project undertaken by the IUCN.

Hon’ble Justice Jawad S. Khawaja said that poor segment of the society is deprived of potable water and in remote areas people as well as animals drink water from same source. Justice Khawaja said the Courts can play an important role in providing justice to the nature. He said, Language depicts classification of the people. Elite class opts for English. Pointing to the gathering, he said that here is no foreigner in the auditorium but we are still communicating in English. His Lordship lamented that the “English have left but English is still here”. He said, I prefer writing judgments in Urdu and Punjab Judicial Academy, being a seat of learning, should follow the suit. Hon’ble Justice said everybody should promote the National Language. Mr. Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Chairperson CEEJ underlined the need for effective and prompt system of environmental justice. He hoped that the knowledge and expertise gained from the Conference will give a boost to the Green Benches functioning in the province of Punjab. Mr. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah of the Lahore Court, also Member CEEJ, highlighted the importance of Green Benches and said that these were not like ordinary courts as they have to protect the nature which is not a party to the case. His Lordship urged the Green Benches to have a broader sense while adjudicating environmental cases in order to ensure salvation of the nature. He highly spoke of the utility and importance of the Conference aimed at disseminating the critical information regarding basic needs of human beings. He said this was the first Conference on this issue

while such more conferences will be held in rest of the provinces and thereafter a National Annual Conference will be convened for promoting the cause of nature. He sought input and assistance from the NGOs, Civil Society and Government for strengthening the working of Green Courts. Later, he along with Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali gave away shields to the speakers. Earlier, Mr. Sohail Nasir, Director General of the Academy, said that we welcome the valuable suggestions of the Hon'ble Judge of the Supreme Court, Mr. Justice Jawad S. Khawaja and will play our due role in strengthening the Green Benches. Chairman IUCN, Mr. Mahmood Akhter Cheema, Senior Water Expert IUCN Dr. Shahid Ahmed, former Secretary Irrigation and Agriculture Arif Nadeem, MD NEC Pakistan Azharuddin Khan, Chairperson PIEDAR Syed Ayub Qutub, Advocates Ahmad Rafay Alam and Jawad Hassan, District & Sessions Judge Rawalpindi, Mr. Abdul Sattar and Senior Civil Judge (JSCC) Lahore, Mr. Muhammad Sher Abbas (Green Judges) read their papers regarding problems of water and environment and also gave suggestions for better water management and improving the administration of environmental justice with respect to water. **(MEDIA CELL)**