

progress that has been made. It is remarkable and very encouraging to see how SAZARC zoos work together for the common good. This is true even in circumstances where there might be some political differences or other disparity between the countries where the cooperating institutions come from.

India, with large advantages in its scale of operation and in economic and scientific terms, has 150 or more regulated zoos. This substantial progress is a beacon for South Asia in terms of the welfare vision, strategy and legislative framework promoted by Dr. B.R. Sharma, Member Secretary of the Central Zoo Authority (a statutory body) and his predecessors. This vision was developed in close dialogue with the zoo community and the Ministry of Environment & Forests of the Government of India in New Delhi, currently presided over by Dr. Manmohan Singh. I recently read with great pleasure the Central Zoo Authority publication *Zoos in India: Legislation, Policy, Guidelines and Strategy*. This was first published as a landmark document in 1998 and has since been regularly updated (Jan 2001, Nov 2004 and Feb 2007). I am pleased to see that the most recent

edition incorporates sections from *Building A Future for Wildlife*. The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy [the 'WZACS' of WAZA, 2005, achieved with considerable input from SAZARC].

In particular, the CZA (2007) document promotes chapter nine of the WZACS concerning ethics and animal welfare. I thoroughly recommend that conference delegates should read and familiarize themselves with the CZA publication and apply it to their own particular circumstances; and also obtain a copy of the WZACS from SAZARC. For those delegates who prefer their reading to be brief or who wish to have a short summary to pass on to, say, a government minister then I suggest obtaining a copy of *Understanding Animals and Protecting Them* (WAZA, 2006, edited by CEO Dr Peter Dollinger). Also available through SAZARC, this publication contains (p. 9) a section on ethics and animal welfare in conservation.

In conclusion, I offer my best wishes for a productive and enjoyable SAZARC conference. I very much look forward to hearing about the outcome!

**A Hearty Welcome to SAZARC participants and Guests
from SAZARC President* and SAZARC Director**, January 2008**

Thank you for coming to the Fifth Annual CBSG/RSG meeting and/or the Eighth Annual SAZARC meeting. We are happy to have you here in India again. Last year (actually 2006) our 7th meeting of a small group of us was held in Vietnam with the South East Asian Zoo Association, conforming to a practice of celebrating their major anniversaries with them. In 2007 we planned to meet in November, December but municipal elections in Ahmedabad took precedence and here we are in early 2008.

Let us establish the serious objectives of our meeting. In SAZARC we wish to focus on **zoo regulation** but coming from the zoos themselves, before an animal welfare group takes hold and convinces our various country governments to pass extreme welfare legislation drafted by persons who are not familiar with the potential and problems of zoos. India has led the way in this regard by self-regulation in an act passed in 1991 setting up a Central Zoo Authority. In 1992, Norms and Standards were passed as well and since then Zoo Policy and a draft of Guidelines and Amendments as the new legislation was tried and found to need supplementation or correction.

In SAZARC we are not trying to force any specific path on our member countries. Every country is different but every country has zoos and wants to improve. Thus SAZARC's responsibility is to make sure all the countries have all information they need about legislation, standards and inspection of zoos.

SAZARC is a member of WAZA and we also have to continue to earn our membership by continuing to try and improve zoos that need improvement and to bring our zoo community in line with international standard, as appropriate with our economic, cultural and ethical milieu.

Also, we are proud to be associated with WAZA and its courageous attempt to address the issue of "zoos needing improvement" around the world. It is not easy for an association to come out and say "some of our members need improvement", but better we say it than others. And if we say it, then we have to do something about it. WAZA now has a protocol for zoos which have good technology and expertise as well as some financial resources to spare to assist zoos that need & want improvement in any aspect.

At the same time, SAZARC wishes to keep up with the world's zoos and their conservation concerns to the extent possible. The recent ones are the **Amphibian Crisis, Gharial Crisis and Global Warming**. WAZA has passed resolutions on all of these and has a special project for Amphibians which you all have heard about. In fact, recently we showed that we could keep up with the best by having a series of innovative, high profile amphibian education programmes conducted in connection with Leap Year just entering the new year : Bangladesh (4 zoos), Nepal (1 zoo), Sri Lanka (1 zoo) and India (4 zoos). We want to discuss the Gharial Crisis since that is our own region and Global Warming since that applies to everyone and come up with Action Items and a Resolution of our own. So we have a full schedule of activities with lectures, working groups, presentations and outings in this most interesting city of Ahmedabad. We hope you all have a good time, learn a lot, eat a lot, spend a lot of money and make a lot of new friends.

*** R. K. Sahu, President/Host, and Director/
Organiser Municipal Corporation of Ahmedabad /
Kamla Nehru Zoo**

**** Sally Walker, Director, Zoo Outreach
Organisation, President, Wildlife Information
Liaison Development**