

# EDITORIAL

*Many jurists, especially the members of the International Council of Environmental Law, were greatly saddened to learn of the death on 14 August of their friend and colleague, Judge Taslim Olawale Elias (Nigeria), Member of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) since 6 February 1976 and President of the Court from 1982-1985.*

*Judge Elias was the holder of many international awards and distinctions, too numerous to list here, as well as being the author of a great number of respected publications. Suffice to say that he served as Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Chief Justice, of his country and was a past Chairman of the UN International Law Commission. Judge Elias was also a Member of the Expert Committee which drafted the Charter of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) in 1963, and Chairman of the Committee which drafted the Protocol of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration (1964). One of his best known publications is "The Modern Law of Treaties" (1974). But for us, the capacity in which we knew him best and appreciated him most, was as a former ICEL Governor, adviser and friend. It was therefore an honour for me to officiate at a short observance ceremony in the Peace Palace just after his death..*

*Mr. Bernard Noble, the ICJ's Deputy Registrar, speaking at the funeral ceremony in Nigeria, said that the appearance of Professor Elias over 20 years ago at the ICJ as an advocate was historical because "he made history by representing two entities at once - Nigeria and the Organisation of African Unity - the only person to date to have appeared in that capacity.... He symbolised the transition of Africa fully into international law". Other speakers spoke of Judge Elias' immense contribution to the evolution of modern international law, notably in the areas of treaty law, and as an advocate of the cause of the Third World and a new international economic order.*

*By resolution 708 (1991), the UN Security Council noted with regret the death of Judge Elias, and decided that in accordance with Article 14 of the Statutes which gives it authority to choose when an election should be held for a vacant seat, this would take place on 5 December, 1991.*

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*1991 is nearly behind us and has brought some movement in our sphere of interest, including new legally binding international instruments. For 1992 many are expecting similar developments. Most hopes are, of course, directed towards the successful conclusion of the climate change and biodiversity treaties. So rather than wish ourselves a successful 1992, we would like to reserve this sentiment for the negotiations !*



22 November 1991