

Nihal Welikala

Introduction

IUCN 's financial model has worked well over the present quadrennial. However, unprecedented geo-political and economic trends may well put pressure on the revenue model at a time when the organisation is embarking on a new 20-year journey. Council and Secretariat have agreed a financial strategic plan which will enable it to sustain adverse changes. The challenges now lie in the complexity of implementation and the management of change. My recent experience as IUCN Treasurer, coupled with deep knowledge and experience in multi-national and national organizations will allow me to support Council and Secretariat in making strategic decisions in the use of the organization's resources.

Background and Key Strengths

I was born in Sri Lanka and attended university there, graduating in law. Thereafter, I qualified as a Chartered Accountant in the United Kingdom, where I worked for 12 years. I am also a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka.

My work experience is broad, encompassing two geographies in the developed and developing worlds, two career paths in accounting and banking, employment as CEO twice, with a multi-national and a local bank. I have benefited immensely from exposure to different environments and corporate cultures, as well as from leadership experience over many years.

My key strengths include tracking and linking changing political conditions to long term business strategies, optimising institutional networking opportunities with regional banking groups and with multilateral agencies, ensuring timely implementation of strategic plans and managing key stakeholders (boards, senior management, employees, shareholders, funders and the government) across complex matrix relationships during periods of transformational change.

Treasurer IUCN

I became Treasurer in mid 2018, a position which I continue to hold. I have over this period acquired a good understanding of IUCN's financial processes and established sound working relationships with the Finance and Audit Committee and with senior management. In particular, I have been closely involved in the development of the organization's long term financial strategy and plans. All of this has enabled me to provide independent, constructive and regular advice to Council on financial outcomes and outlook.

Work Experience

- EY London. Seven years' experience in their audit and tax departments, dealing with large multinational clients and numerous mid-sized companies.
- Citibank Sri Lanka. I was appointed as the first local CEO and held that position for twelve years. During that time I worked on assignments with Citi in other Asian countries and in the Middle East.
- National Development Bank. I worked for nine years with NDB including seven years as CEO. During that period, funding from the multilaterals dried up for policy reasons. As funding dwindled, the bank had to undergo a rapid transformation from a government-owned development bank funded by multilateral organizations, to a commercial banking group with strong project finance focus. The bank became privately owned and was quoted on the stock exchange, with funding sourced from corporate and retail depositors and the capital markets. This was an extraordinary journey involving rapid changes in strategic direction and implementation. Transparent communication with key stakeholders underpinned the change process.
- After retirement, I worked on assignments for the IFC and for the Ministry of Finance in Sri Lanka. I also served as non-executive director on numerous boards in the financial sector.

Personal

My wife and I now reside in London. We have a son and a daughter who work in the astrophysics and biotech fields.