



扶輪基金保管委員會主委文告

## 更健康環境的禮物

在斯里蘭卡山區的蒼綠森林中長大，我時常回想起偉大詩人泰戈爾的話：「樹木是地球努力不懈向傾聽的天空訴說的話語。」

我們人類時常堅持打斷這個對話，真令人哀傷。

就想其他每種生物一樣我們只是大自然的一部份。可是我們也是唯一有責任為了未來世代保護環境的物種。新冠病毒疫情讓人比以往都更加明白環境惡化以及大眾健康威脅之間的關係。

幾年前，我祖國的國有電力公司計畫在斯里蘭卡東部興建第二座燃煤發電廠。它每小時會從一處海灣吸取 9,300 萬公升的水，而這處海灣正是脆弱的生態系與大海交會之處，也是抹香鯨在全球數一數二大的繁殖處。在經過處理之後，這些每小時 9,300 萬公升的水會排放至海洋，充滿會讓海洋生物瀕臨重大危險的有毒化學物質。

從第一個電廠造成破壞所學到的教訓中學習，由許多公共政策倡議者組成一個聯盟，包括扶輪社員。除了採取法律行動之外，他們舉辦宣傳活動，提醒媒體、大眾、及當地社區注意潛在的危險。在大眾一致譴責聲中，政府最後放棄興

建燃煤電廠的構想。

當我們團結一心，其利斷金。

當我們有些人提議把環境增加為扶輪最新的目標，我們這麼做是因為問題的迫切性。1990-91 年度，國際扶輪社長柯斯達 Paulo V.C. Costa 提出一項願景，今日我們要把這項工作提升到另一個層次。我們的時代對環境構成很大壓力，海平面快速上升、強烈暴風雨、消失的雨林及野生動物，以及超強破壞力的森林大火。氣候變遷影響我們每一個人，不分貧富。

我們將以有效策略面對這項挑戰，就像對於其他焦點領域一樣。事實上，六項焦點領域都仰賴這一項。因為如果我們受污染的環境會讓我們再次生病，對抗疾病又有什麼用？

扶輪基金會將是這項工作的關鍵。過去 5 年來，有超過 1,800 萬美金投入環境相關的全球獎助金。以此為基礎來保護環境，我們會為未來的世代帶來另一項扶輪禮物。今天你就可以參與這項行動。

**雷文壯 K.R. RAVINDRAN**

扶輪基金保管委員會主委



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

## The gift of a healthier environment

**Having grown up amid** lush green forests in the mountainous landscape of Sri Lanka, I always recall the words of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore:

“Trees are the earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven.”

How sad that so often we humans insist on interrupting this conversation.

Just like every other living thing, we are a part of nature. But we are also the only species that bears the responsibility of protecting the environment for future generations. The coronavirus pandemic has shed light as nothing has before on the relationship between environmental degradation and threats to public health.

A few years ago, the government-owned electricity company in my country planned to build a second coal power plant, in eastern Sri Lanka. It would suck 93 million liters of water per hour from a bay where fragile ecosystems meet the deep sea, the site of one of the largest spawning grounds for sperm whales in the world. After processing, those 93 million liters per hour would be dumped into the ocean, now loaded with toxic chemicals that put that marine life at great risk.

Learning from the lessons of the damage caused by the first plant, a coalition formed, made up of many public advocates, including Rotarians. They ran a campaign that alerted the media, the public,

and the local community to the potential dangers, in addition to taking legal action. The government eventually abandoned its coal plant idea after the resulting public outcry.

We can truly move mountains when we come together.

When some of us moved to add the environment as Rotary's newest cause, we did so because of the urgency of the problem. In 1990-91, RI President Paulo V.C. Costa set forth a vision, and today we will take this work to the next level. We live in a time of great stress on our environment, of rapidly rising sea levels, massive storms, disappearing rainforests and wildlife, and destructive forest fires. Climate change touches us all, rich and poor.

We will face the challenge strategically, as with the other areas of focus. In fact, the six other areas of focus depend on this one. For what good is it to fight disease if our polluted environment causes us to become sick again?

The Rotary Foundation will be central to this work. More than \$18 million has gone toward environment-related global grants in the past five years. Building upon this work to protect the environment, we will give yet another Rotary gift to future generations. And you can be a part of it today.

**K.R. RAVINDRAN**

*Foundation trustee chair*

*Illustration by Luke Wilson*