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Creating the Institute for Biosphere and Society: First row, from left: Frederico Major, UNESCO; Thomas Lovejoy, the Smithsonian; Columbia Provost Jonathan R. Cole. Second row: Pierre LeSerre, UNESCO; Graciela Chichilnisky, the first director of the Institute for Biosphere and Society; Peter Eisenberger, vice provost of Columbia's Earth Institute.

Smithsonian and UNESCO Join the University To Protect Environment While Humans Prosper

By KIM BROCKWAY

Columbia, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Smithsonian Institution have formed a consortium to address what promises to be one of the key issues in the coming century: how to expand the economy and improve the human condition while protecting and nurturing the environment.

Representatives of the three institutions gathered June 23 at Columbia to sign an agreement establishing the Institute for Biosphere and Society. The mission of the Institute is to develop methods of valuing, managing and financing the sustainable use of the biosphere to promote global economic and social progress that conserves the ecosystem and is

compatible with human prosperity.

The Institute draws from the research and experience gained in Columbia's Earth Institute and its Graduate School of Business; the Smithsonian's Institute for Conservation Biology, and UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme and the UNESCO-Cousteau Ecotechnie Programme. It will focus on developing methods for evaluating biosphere services and resources; designing new instruments for financing biosphere conservation and for making efficient use of biosphere services; and promoting knowledge and understanding of new methods among decision makers in governments and international organizations. The new Institute will ensure that best-practice techniques for valuing the biosphere and for financing its

conservation are made available locally and nationally.

The Institute for Biosphere and Society will be part of the Columbia Earth Institute and will be headquartered at Columbia. The Earth Institute's Program on Information and Resources focuses on policy, North/South issues, and the interaction of the human/physical systems. Last year it became the site of the UNESCO Chair in Mathematics and Economics, held by the Program's director, Graciela Chichilnisky. The Chair's goal is to find solutions to complex global programs related to the Earth and the environment that we will face in the 21st century. The Earth Institute, and Columbia, are, then, appropriate headquarters for the Institute for Biosphere and Society. Chichilnisky will serve as its first director.