Columbia Scientists Working to Improve Health and Economy in South Asia

(Continued from Page 1)

working to help countries in the region take important steps in the fields of health, science and economics. In addition, Sachs and Nirupam Bajpai, senior research scholar at the Earth Institute, traveled to Sri Lanka to address the country’s severe drought problems.

“I think what we are doing in India and elsewhere demonstrates the depth and reach of Columbia’s intellectual leadership globally,” said Bollinger. “I am extremely pleased and proud that Columbia, as one of the premier research universities in the world, is able to provide both thought leadership, scientific expertise, and practical help to improve the lives of so many people. Both the Mailman School and the Earth Institute are true pioneers and will continue to play a key role in development issues around the globe.”

Sachs was also optimistic about Columbia’s efforts upon returning from the trip. “We’ll be able to play a pivotal role through the application of science, technology and good public policy,” he said.

The Mailman School of Public Health and the Earth Institute recently formed the Center for Global Health and Economic Development (CGHED) as a joint venture based at the Mailman School. The Center focuses on mobilizing global health programs to aid resource-poor countries in addressing poverty and the burden of disease. The approach is cross-disciplinary, incorporating the fields of earth science, biological science, engineering, social science and health science.

Bollinger, Sachs, and Bajpai, met in India with President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam along with the union minister of finance, minister of health, and minister of commerce and industry, among others. Rosenfield joined them and helped launch India’s new Commission on Macroeconomics and Health. Sachs and Rosenfield also pledged to have CGHED work with the new Commission—supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—in an effort to target health sector priorities in order to spur economic development.

India, the world’s second most populated country, currently spends far less on individual health care than that recommended by the World Health Organization. A report already released by the Commission, which was chaired by Sachs, titled “Investing in Health for Economic Development,” notes that improvements in health can translate into the ability to achieve higher incomes, create greater economic gains and reduce population growth. Bajpai is director of the South Asia Program for the Earth Institute’s Center for Globalization and Sustainable Development.

President Lee C. Bollinger, Jean Magnuson Bollinger, Earth Institute Director Jeffreyery Sachs, and Mailman School of Public Health Dean Allan Rosenfield visiting a village in Aria-hazar upazilla, Bangladesh, where the Columbia team is conducting a long-term field study of the origin and health effects of arsenic in groundwater.

I am extremely pleased and proud that Columbia, as one of the premier research universities in the world, is able to provide both thought leadership, scientific expertise, and practical help to improve the lives of so many people.’

—Lee C. Bollinger