



REGIONAL
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IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for Europe, North and Central Asia

Rotterdam, 1-3 July 2019

Draft conference report



Preface

Held every four years, the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for Europe, North and Central Asia is a key opportunity for the IUCN Constituency to prepare for the next IUCN World Conservation Congress and to ensure that regional matters are embedded in the IUCN key decision-making. The 2019 Regional Conservation Forum took place in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 1- 3 July.

On the first day, the wider conservation community and renowned experts were invited to join discussions on the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework and share their knowledge in eight parallel thematic sessions. During the following two days, IUCN Members and Commissions discussed the draft IUCN Programme for 2021-2024, regional work plans and concrete actions, gearing up for the 2020 IUCN Congress in Marseille, France. IUCN Members learned about the IUCN governance reforms and the updates regarding the Members Assembly, to be held as part of the next IUCN Congress, where they will elect the IUCN Council, approve the IUCN Programme, adopt Motions defining the general policy of IUCN and amend IUCN Statutes.

The outcomes of the discussions from all three days will help to find solutions to safeguard biodiversity while addressing the complex societal challenges of our time. The contributions of the Forum participants will be instrumental to steer IUCN's strategic direction in both regions for the period 2021 – 2024. Conclusions will be taken to the IUCN Congress in Marseille, France, and the CoP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China, in 2020 to help governments shape a new plan – the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework.

We are grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and the Province of Zuid Holland for their financial support to make the Regional Conservation Forum happen in the Netherlands. Our colleagues from the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands have been instrumental in organising the Forum and we are most obliged for their hard work. Our Member organisation Natuurmonumenten organised four wonderful excursions halfway through the program, which allowed participants to not only see and learn about their important conservation work in the Netherlands but also to recharge our batteries with green energy. Many thanks to the organisers and rangers!

Our Members, friends and partners have organised 18 inspiring side events and displayed more than 10 posters introducing their work, contributing greatly to the richness of the programme. We are grateful to all that took this opportunity!

Last but not least, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all participants, Members, Commission experts and non-IUCN Members, for joining us in Rotterdam and contributing to the discussions. We hope to see you again at the IUCN Congress in Marseille!

Luc Bas

Director IUCN European Regional Office

Boris Erg

Director IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe,
North and Central Asia

Monday, 1 July 2019

Official opening

Jaap Smit, Kings Commissioner, South Holland, opened the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum, by stating that biodiversity preservation is a matter of life and death. Biodiversity provides for a healthy and attractive environment important to residents, as well as the green landscapes that are attractive to companies already in or thinking of locating in South Holland. This area in the Netherlands is densely populated and there is a high demand for housing and infrastructure, but it is crucial to create space for nature and water. The Province's goal is to have one of the most fair and attractive living environments by 2050, in which nature and landscape are in harmony with living, recreation and economic activities. "Challenges we face need to be tackled in an integrated way with residents, governments, companies, farmers." Mr Smit presented the example of [Green Circle Heineken](#), which aims to create a climate neutral brewery, sustainable economy and pleasant living environment.

As **Johan Osinga, Director General of the Dutch Ministry of Nature, Fisheries & Rural Affairs** highlighted in the opening words of his speech the recent publication of the IPBES's Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has provided the biodiversity debate with renewed momentum; drawing on the importance of understanding our relationship with nature and provoking thought across all levels of society; from policy makers to the general public. Nature-based solutions can address both climate change and biodiversity loss effectively and efficiently. "As a union of governmental and civil society members, IUCN is well positioned to initiate societal involvement and bring it to the next level." Mr. Osinga referred to the Delta Plan for Biodiversity Recovery, a project that aims to restore various species, ecosystems and landscapes so that nature can thrive. The plan unites science, agriculture, nature protection and the private sector acknowledging and rewarding contributions to biodiversity, stimulating cooperation to promote conservation within, around and between conservation areas.

Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Acting Director General, underlined that the Regional Conservation Forum comes at a crucial time in preparations for the 2020 'super year' for biodiversity, during which many events related to nature and climate change will be taking place. "Humanity needs to set a course that makes economic and social development compatible with the conservation of nature. It will be at our joint benefit to demonstrate the links between nature and the well-being of people." With the commitment of IUCN's Membership which includes over 1300 governmental, non-governmental and indigenous peoples' member organisations, we can deliver a concrete outcome, which will serve as the roadmap for the upcoming decade.

High-level panel discussion: Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework

The opening high-level panel discussion, moderated by **the IUCN European Regional Director, Luc Bas**, recognised the regional successes and potential pitfalls of the upcoming framework and identified what factors were most pressing, which actions should be implemented with the most urgency and what policy changes needed to be made. **Daniel Calleja-Crespo, Director General, DG Environment, European Commission**, called for immediate action and transformational change. "All the reports confirm that what we are doing today is not enough - the economy and ecology have to go in the same direction, and this should be our task in the coming months." During Mr. Calleja Crespo's speech many of our urgencies, challenges and current opportunities were accentuated. He reminded participants about the interconnectedness between biodiversity loss and climate change. Transformational change is urgent more than ever, and without precedent. Our economy and ecology have to go in the same direction and we need a green transition that leaves no one behind. The global Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework needs a comprehensive and participatory development process, and for that to take place, the EU and other sectors must commit to going beyond their present targets, including ambitious but realistic objectives in the post 2020 framework. Above all, the framework must show that transformational change is possible and include strategies on circular economy and plastics as well as biodiversity recovery. Crespo suggested a 170% increase of today's LIFE Programme (2021-2027). The EU Directorate General believes that change is possible, but for it to happen the Global South has to be engaged and count with Europe's support.

Similarly to Mr. Crespo, **Hans Bruyninckx, Director of the European Environment Agency**, referred to the need for sustainability to be taken seriously calling participants to reflect deeply on what we will do in the next 11 years that we haven't done in the last 27, since the adoption of the [Agenda 21](#), to overcome the major barriers to ecosystem prosperity in Europe: landscape fragmentation, chemical pollution, food and production waste and habitat protection. Protecting 20% of Europe's territory is simply not enough. "We need to keep in mind the interconnectedness of ecosystems and environmental issues we face. It is not only about tackling climate change, resource management or biodiversity, we have to tackle all the challenges, otherwise, if we fail in one we fail on all." Mr Bruyninckx concluded by emphasizing the need to fully embrace natural capital as the foundation capital for the planet, while acknowledging and addressing the fact that we are over-using, depleting and polluting the only planet we have.

In addition to previous speeches, **Hilde Eggermont, Coordinator of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform and IUCN Regional Councillor West Europe**, emphasized that the success of Post-CBD relies on engagement and ownership by a variety of actors. "IUCN's diversity and convening power has an important role to play in framing the Post-2020 Agenda which will need to be underpinned by science, vision, targets and action." The targets could be disaggregated, adapted to sectors and scalable, while the multiple scales i.e.: local, regional, national, international, communities of practices, would all have a say when proposing ways to tackle the drivers of biodiversity loss. Other important points which Ms Eggermont addressed were the need to keep communicating urgency of biodiversity loss and the fact that IUCN should use its

official UN Observer status to advocate for a framework for all society, connecting it with the SDGs and other biodiversity related frameworks.

From the private sector perspective, **Peter Bakker, President and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development**, accentuated that business has moved from the corporate social responsibility to integrating sustainability in core strategies. “We should radically simplify language and how we communicate, look at what each of the actors can do to turn actions into scale and improve inter-sectoral collaboration”. He suggested a need for a system transformation in the private sector. For this change to happen, civil society needs to put pressure on business to improve their risk management. Mr. Bakker’s hope for Marseille is to push forward a science-based target to improve conversation with business.

Change has been incremental but not transformational stated **Ester Asin, Director WWF European Policy Office**, during her speech. “Political will is what makes the difference to take courageous decisions and oppose vested interests that want to keep the status quo.” A global movement for nature could be building public pressure, mobilisation and hope. A hope that could be contagious! WWF will continue to invest in education and youth engagement, advocating for citizen accountability and implementation action whilst still funding science based policy and legislation.

Hannele Pokka, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment of Finland and EU Council Presidency, stressed EU’s role - seeing it as a strong operator in the world politics for climate change, circular economy and biodiversity. The new Finish Government also has an ambitious plan: to be carbon neutral by 2035. “The importance of civil society, now more than ever awake and aware of the climate change, is growing and its role is pivotal.” She expressed her hope for a clear and ambitious Post-2020 Framework with concrete implementation actions.

Carl Amirgulashvili, Head of Biodiversity and Forestry Department at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, called for stronger support and presence of the international community in developing countries. “We cannot talk about nature and biodiversity needs if society is poor – tackling poverty is a priority issue in the developing world. Adequate financing needs to follow political commitments on nature conservation.” By highlighting the need for appropriate communication and support for implementation in budgeting Mr Amirgulashvili sees the need for working with neighbouring countries because nature has no boundaries. He pointed out how important communities living in areas of high biodiversity, are for conservation (e.g. rural populations and people living in forests). These actors need financial support and an intelligent and well-thought communication strategy.

“It’s not just Europe that needs to change its policies and practices: countering the trend of biodiversity loss requires a global effort. Europe has the opportunity to set the right example and strive for an ambitious agenda. We hope that the messages sent from the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum in Rotterdam will be loudly heard in Kunming, reaching it via the IUCN Congress next year,” stressed **Luc Bas, Director of IUCN Regional Office for Europe**. Giving a specific focus on production, consumption patterns and volume, he stressed that these have to be addressed if we want transformative change. For Mr Bas, what is politically feasible is environmentally irrelevant and in consequence, beyond bold actions have to take place. The sub-national governments have a very strong role to play in this change and engaging with them directly is urgent.

Parallel thematic sessions

Rowing together in the same direction is the only solution for environmental challenges; and the main aim of IUCN's efforts. These Parallel Sessions addressed the current key priorities for nature conservation, by engaging the main stakeholders in discussions to find joint ways forward for society.

Looking towards a sustainable farming future

In the past century, Europe has been the scene of major changes in agricultural systems and of a growing concern to ensure food security for all its citizens. The objective of policies was clear: to feed all Europeans and sustain rural communities. While it achieved these, the European agricultural system has also led to several adverse effects on the environment and consumers' health. Participants were reminded that current agricultural practices are far from sustainable. They are also responsible for one tenth of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe, threatening many habitats and species. Agro-diversity is an essential part of biodiversity, and political will is needed to incentivise farmers to protect it, through funding in Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Consumption patterns should also be considered as a potential problem, and a "quality rather than quantity" approach should be communicated more effectively. It was acknowledged that farmer associations should be involved in discussions on the future programme of financing. Furthermore, they should also understand what they could do, and how, to protect biodiversity. Finally, IUCN is seen to be best positioned to develop tools and best practices for sustainable farming, and to facilitate the dialogue between farmers, civil society, governance and business sectors.

Natural Capital - a game changing concept for better or for worse?

At the 2016 IUCN Congress in Hawaii, IUCN Members passed a motion calling for the Union to develop a natural capital policy. Since then, IUCN has surveyed its Members and Commissions, as well as conducted in-depth interviews thanks to the support it received from the Dutch government. During this thematic session, it was broadly agreed by the speakers and the attendees that there is a need to bring people and nature together. This would require crucial collaboration between businesses, civil society and governments. In order to do so, communication must be focused on the explanation of the "the why", considering both monetary and non-monetary aspects. In parallel, it was underlined that in order to have a systemic change it is necessary to set the rules of the game to determine who owns the asset, the corresponding return on capital and who gets the benefit. Most of the attendees agreed that the EU should take the lead in this field, by taking responsibility, leading by example and re-coupling sustainable production and consumption. In addition to this process, IUCN is continuing to engage in natural capital issues, including through the EU-funded [We Value Nature](#) campaign, which is focused on business uptake. This and other efforts in conjunction with IUCN partners are helping to inform the development of the IUCN draft policy on natural capital, which is expected to be considered at the 2020 IUCN Congress.

Turning Nature-based Solutions into action - knowledge, finance and non-conventional partnerships

There is rapidly growing evidence on the positive effects of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and an active community aiming to demonstrate their impact on a range of societal challenges. Further momentum can be achieved by engaging relevant sectors such as food, water, urban development and health in systematically incorporating NbS into their decision making processes and mobilising investment for upscaling their use. This can be achieved more effectively with robust standards and guidelines and the formation of new partnerships to develop pioneering approaches to restore natural processes that conserve nature's landscape. Ecosystem restoration is a very profitable opportunity as currently we are losing trillions of dollars by letting ecosystems collapse. For example rewilding landscapes through unconventional partnerships creates space for nature and can help restore the connection between people and nature. Nature-based economies create an attractive landscape that is less vulnerable, storing more carbon and offering new opportunities for local income generation. It is key to assure the exchange of experiences across networks and making tools available, such as the [European Wildlife Bank](#), [Urban Nature Atlas](#) or [Greener Land](#). NbS is one of the areas funded by the EU H2020 to promote using nature to address societal challenges and benefiting nature – it resulted in a community of practice with currently 19 projects that test and demonstrate NbS addressing climate and water related issues. It is important to keep in mind that the relationship between ecosystem restoration and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is fundamental, and the [IUCN Global Nature-based Solutions Standard](#) that is currently being developed.

Measuring the pulse of biodiversity in Europe, North and Central Asia

A challenge for the post-2020 biodiversity discussions is how best to incorporate the Red Lists in a quantifiable target in the future policy framework. As this target will likely still be highly reliant on extinction risk, Red List assessments will continue to play an important role. However, besides the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, there are also other biodiversity indicators such as the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems. IUCN and the scientific community should work on a simple overarching system of biodiversity indicators, while not oversimplifying to the extent that it becomes meaningless. In addition, in order to keep its relevance for informing policy the IUCN Red Lists need to respond better to the changing state of biodiversity, e.g. through more frequent reassessments. IUCN should also continue to improve how to incorporate national data into European and global assessments. The dependence on volunteers for much of this work is hampering progress in this regard, and IUCN should stress the need for increased funding based on the understanding that the science is fundamental for guiding efficient action. An additional challenge identified is the oncoming lack of taxonomists, which is due to lack of funding, lack of exposure to natural environments, absence of taxonomy in education, among other things. However, we need to acknowledge that in some cases the available information is robust enough

to take necessary action. EU Member States need to go from monitoring to conservation action on the ground. While the Nature Directives' listings are difficult to adjust, Red Lists can play a large role in softer policies, including guidance documents and financing, such as LIFE initiatives. DG ENV and other DGs have shown interest in ways of trying to become more sustainable. We should use the opportunity of the World Conservation Congress coming to Europe to drive some of these points forward and refocus on species and ecosystem conservation.

Towards a reduction of plastic emissions

Major environmental issues associated with plastic pollution persist to this day, even though the EU Plastics Strategy -launched in January 2018- together with the recently approved Single-Use Plastics Directive have been crucial recent milestones. Its disposal remains unsustainable and contributes to the degradation of our environment. 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enters the ocean every year. This is the equivalent of one garbage truck full of plastic waste entering the world's oceans every minute. Tackling the plastic challenge will surely include banning some products (Single-Use Plastics for example) but of course banning all plastics is not the solution. Plastic is a fundamental material for an array of industries, and its low price has also helped to make our societies heavily dependent on it. But while its disposal being an issue, the production is still increasing, and it is expected to continue growing in the next years. As a society, we need to take drastic actions fast if we are to stop the environmental damage. There is generally a consensus on the need to close the plastic tap. The opportunity is visible, now we need to change the system and to agree on terminology by defining good and bad plastics. We should ensure that systems are in place to incentivize collection of materials to recycle, while increasing the price of virgin plastic. All actors should be mobilized in order to bring the plastics economy towards a more circular one: for this purpose, IUCN's convening role (environmental organisations, governments, socio-economic sector) could be helpful.

Tools to improve the management and governance of Protected Areas in the region

IUCN should attempt to include more local stakeholders in the selection and designation of Protected Areas through approaches such as inclusive conservation. Partnering with stakeholders from the beginning will encourage cooperation and long-term management motivation. IUCN should also support capacity-building of site managers, particularly in Eastern Europe where there is a lack of locally-translated guidance documents available. The IUCN Green List can aid in this capacity-building by giving governance and management advice to site managers, but should not be thought of as an award for 'outstanding' sites, as the European Diploma of Protected Areas does. Finally, IUCN should encourage climate adaptive



management of Protected Areas, thereby increasing the motivation of Member States because they can mitigate the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss simultaneously.

The value of nature for a sustainable urban future

An increasing proportion of the world's population is living in cities, with ongoing urbanisation driving habitat loss. However, rich biodiversity can still be found in cities and urban nature can offer solutions to multiple challenges, including climate change. It is therefore essential that action is taken to reduce the negative impacts of cities on biodiversity and to integrate nature into urban design and planning. This parallel session on the value of nature for a sustainable future focused on aspects of measuring and assessing urban nature, incorporating biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban design, and engaging citizens and empowering them to take action. Assessing their natural assets allows cities to develop and implement science-based targets and to identify and address challenges. However, it is important that urban nature indices are not misused, do not divert attention from taking action on the ground, and are flexible enough to be adapted to cities with different contexts. Incorporating nature into urban design requires protecting and connecting existing green spaces of sufficient diversity, using native species, and providing appropriate crossings for roads and other linear infrastructure. Examples of cities that are advanced in protecting urban nature would help to inspire other cities to take action and raise their level of ambition. Engaging citizens in understanding the value of urban nature and contributing to its protection is an important driver for change. There are many examples of citizen science and grassroots action that should be further empowered. Communications campaigns around local iconic urban species are an important component of raising awareness of urban nature amongst citizens. Through the actions of the IUCN Urban Alliance, cities will be supported to value nature and protect biodiversity and ecosystems, starting with a platform for knowledge exchange and debate, for catalysing new projects and partnerships. In addition, a new IUCN knowledge product – the Urban Nature Index – with the aim of helping cities to measure, value and conserve nature within and beyond their boundaries is being developed.

Strengthening nature to tackle Climate Change

The 2021-2024 IUCN Programme, has the historic opportunity to influence and support the implementation of a bold and transformative suite of activities to ensure that the world steers a clear course towards 2030. The goal of its Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programme Area is to simultaneously reduce the risks posed by climate change to the world's natural systems and responsibly harness the full potential of these natural systems in achieving a low-greenhouse gas emission, climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich future in support of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. By 2030, ecosystem-dependent communities and vulnerable ecosystems will be made more resilient to climate change, and nature-based solutions will be fully integrated within the climate mitigation and adaptation policies and actions of every country in the world. It is clear that biodiversity

and climate reinforce one another and should be integrated. Still, climate financing is currently insufficient and we need to develop new and adequate business and financing models. We should stop looking at Nature-based Solutions (NbS) as single values, and see them as a new asset class where those values are stacked. The way forward would be to incorporate this understanding into our economic thinking and find ways to de-risk the capital that goes into NbS. Governments are considered as convenors and best positioned to provide direction and financial support. One of the biggest tasks for IUCN will be to translate the science into practical actions.

Welcome reception at the Natural History Museum Rotterdam



Photo : Sean Southey

Tuesday, 2 July 2019

IUCN Programme 2021-2024

The draft IUCN Programme was presented by **Boris Erg, Director IUCN East Europe, North and Central Asia Regional Office**. He stressed that we are entering the next decade in 2020, a decade that is crucial in many ways. “We can provide credible and trusted knowledge through our six expert commissions, and as IUCN we are able to convene parties from all levels, assuring the global to local reach - let us use our position and knowledge to set the course of conservation action.”

Calling for engaging and constructive discussions **Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Acting Director General** reminded that the planning of the next cycle of IUCN Programme will set the tone for nature conservation globally. “IUCN members provide crucial regional perspective which helps us all make sure IUCN’s programme is relevant to the whole world”

Jan Olov Westerberg, IUCN Regional Councillor West Europe, Chair, programme and policy committee reminded that we should understand IUCN as a matrix of different relationships trying to influence the world together. “The programme we are developing does not cover everything - it should be used as our framework, a guide for all components of our beautiful Union - Members, Commissions and Secretariat.”

Luc Bas, Director of IUCN Regional Office for Europe, gave a presentation on the evaluation of the current European Work Plan, and as such the conclusions to draw from it for the future. He highlighted the fact that the IUCN Programme, with its four key thematic areas, will act as a base for the European Plan, and also that all input from RCF discussions will be carefully considered during the development of the IUCN Programme.

Participants agreed that the new Programme has to:

- be inclusive and ensure the involvement of younger generations;
- apply new technologies and innovations; and
- have a strong emphasis on communication, education and gender equality.

IUCN Regional work plans 2021 – 2024

Conclusions of the interactive sessions - group discussions on the four Programme Areas

Europe

Healthy Lands and Waters

There is a need to focus on biodiversity, ecosystems and freshwater (e.g. reinforcement of RAMSAR). In particular, we need a stronger consideration of the related European Directives – Nature Directives, Water Framework Directive, Environmental Liability Directive. Secondly, IUCN should be outcome/action orientated, gathering multiple actors, stakeholders and resources and work out what they can all deliver, and not just pushing out messages to persuade others. Restoration should also be a higher priority – through connectivity/ecological corridors, and a metric that can assess the intactness of an ecosystem. In terms of sustainable agriculture, IUCN could strive to inform policy for more a more environmental approach for the EU funding for agriculture. In this context, it is important to focus on the value chain and the circular economy: keeping in mind that the value chain should consider wildlife products as well as farming products. Finally, the use of genetic tools available should be promoted – more connections with the research field to explore existing tools from other sectors to answer our questions (e.g. about impact of infrastructure on species).



Photo: Peter Paul van Kempen

Healthy Oceans

Governance of oceans remains one of the greatest challenges. This can be addressed through intersectoral consultation and ecosystem based management. IUCN could provide tools for governance

and monitoring of the status of seas. It was raised several times that IUCN should reconsider its focus on plastic. This issue should be dealt with by 'closing the tap', which would need a dialogue with the entire value chain. Plastic could be anyway seen as removing the core element of this discussion, which is ocean degradation. Hence IUCN could also support the development of cutting edge marine science. More work is needed on fisheries, which would benefit from an ecosystem approach. In this context, IUCN could look into playing a stronger role in the Common Fisheries Policy reform, and determine the impact of climate change on fisheries. It was suggested to keep a more focused approach, more work on less areas towards a greater impact. A stronger focus on Marine Protected Areas was also suggested. Finally, it was seen as important to consider a knowledge sharing approach with the members, as well as to carry the voice where the members are not present.



Photo: Peter Paul van Kempen

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

IUCN could support governments in smaller countries with their long-term planning and capacity building for climate change to create pathways for action that go beyond political mandates. It was also proposed to increase the role of forests in initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors as well as their incorporation in relevant policies and financial mechanisms. Moreover, it is important to ensure through guidance and regulation that forestry restores the natural functions of the forest, as climate change is now used for unsustainable activities such as cutting and large scale plantations. To avoid the impact of invasive alien species (i.e. Eucalypt), more focus is required on species that can provide multiple benefits and functionalities as part of strategic green infrastructure. It was also suggested that IUCN's influence should be focused on combating climate change at the city level and mainstreaming climate change and biodiversity through Nature-based Solutions. This influence must be executed on many levels, both politically (top-down), ensuring a stronger presence of biodiversity at UNFCCC COP and within EU and national policy; and at field level (bottom-up). Providing support to insurance, re-insurance and finance sector (as a major area of impact) to assess risk and identify how investments can benefit society and the environment was also considered important; as well as linking green infrastructure and the finance sector – and promoting innovation (in line with UNFCCC objectives) that attracts investment for creating a carbon free economy, and supporting start-ups and companies that focus on developing carbon solutions to develop economic opportunities for expanding carbon storage in trees and nature. IUCN could use its

capacity to raise public awareness by explaining action that individuals can take, by connecting at grass root level through the networks of IUCN Member organisations. This would include strengthening the role of social scientists, as change requires influence of civil society. Other issues considered in the discussion included:

- Incorporating climate change in all curricula of education programmes from primary school to university across all study courses.
- Creating attention for the impact of the EU in other parts of the world through labeling, and develop climate rating for products and services.
- Connecting local agriculture (i.e. genetic diversity, local species) to increase resilience and climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Mobilising funding beyond grant schemes to create new green finance and insurance opportunities would be key to moving subsidies away from fossil fuels.
- Protecting existing protected areas and restoring wetlands and forests as part of strategic green infrastructure to adapt and mitigate climate change, and ensuring the resilience of ecosystems and connectivity of protected areas.
- Ensuring that every government has NBS integrated in their NDCs to respect the Paris Climate Agreement.



Photo: Peter Paul van Kempen

Equitable Governance of Natural Resources

As there is some confusion with the term 'equitable', it was recommended to replace it with 'optimal', for example. Stakeholder and general public engagement requires a bottom-up approach. It was concluded that we need to think outside of the box to reach and motivate civil society, the business sector and youth. It is important to improve communication of 'best practice' strategies for natural resource acquisition, as well as improving consumer understanding of 'ecological footprint' through education and communication. Moreover, encouraging Member States to put more emphasis on the Red List of Ecosystems to better evaluate the status of natural resources and the effects of their extraction was also mentioned. Finally, an increase in the efforts against unsustainable natural resource practices, as well as further inclusion of local communities and indigenous peoples in these discussions, including at forums such as the RCF, was agreed among participants as a relevant conclusion from this discussion.



Photo: Peter Paul van Kempen

Conclusions of the interactive sessions - group discussions on the four Programme Areas

East Europe, North and Central Asia

Healthy Lands and Waters

Healthy Oceans

The discussions strived to identify priority gaps and issues in conservation action, governance, policy and knowledge in the region, ideally to be addressed by all IUCN constituents in the region. The Strategic Objectives of the IUCN 2021-2024 Programme follow a protect-restore-sustainably use logic. However, the Programme also envisions the Programme Areas and Strategic Objectives to be interconnected and complementary. Hence, the conservation actions to meet these different objectives should not be disjoint in conservation planning. This surfaced throughout the discussion themes, whereby a diversity of interventions were suggested across landscapes and across sectors.

Knowledge - Participants noted that despite many national Red Lists being present in the region, updating the Red Lists and aligning them with international standards would increase their potential to inform national policy. A basic knowledge gap on the status of natural diversity in the marine environment of the region was acknowledged. Marine litter was highlighted as an example of land-based impacts on marine life that would provide an incentive for expanding the knowledge and action on the marine environment.

Governance - While in many countries in the region governance structures for protected areas are based exclusively on state bodies, protected area effectiveness would benefit from governance diversification to include local communities, NGOs and private landowners. To reduce dependency on a single funding source, a diversification of funding sources would be necessary (e.g. tourism, state budget,

sustainable use, etc.), leading to more resilient funding. Care should be taken that protected areas that successfully acquire additional funding do not incur a decrease in state funding as a consequence. To this end, a financing plan would need to be included in the management plan. The management plan would also need to include monitoring of the effect of the management on natural diversity.

The lack of landscape-scale approaches was noted as an important gap in achieving healthy lands and oceans. Such an approach would enable better alignment of protected area management plans with spatial planning in the surrounding matrix, and could also lead to improved land management outside protected areas. To avoid or reduce impacts from linear infrastructure developments and poor freshwater management, the importance of ecological networks was highlighted, embedded in the landscape approach (including protected areas) with specific attention to freshwater basins and migratory routes.

Policy - In order to facilitate the landscape scale approach, mainstreaming of natural diversity in policies of other sectors was seen as imperative, and spatial planning was seen as an appropriate access point to many relevant sectors. IUCN was called upon to identify ways for members to communicate with decision makers in more economical terms (e.g. natural capital), as well as ways to lobby governments to provide more state budget for nature conservation and to encourage a suitable environment for NGOs to exist and operate.

Education - Environmental education on all topics was raised as an important prerequisite for generating political will for change. Education efforts should highlight the intrinsic and cultural values of existing natural systems, in general and in particular to indigenous people (e.g. in northern Asia). With increasing urbanisation and migration into cities, the conservation of natural diversity in and around urban areas was mentioned as a means to keep people with less exposure to natural areas engaged in conservation (especially younger generations).

Capacity - Participants indicated the need for enhanced capacity in protected area management and financing planning, in biodiversity monitoring, in mainstreaming natural diversity into other sectors, and the use of knowledge tools such as the Red List to enhance the knowledge base.



Photo IUCN/A.Nikodinovic

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Equitable Governance of Natural Resources

The discussion on climate change and equitable governance focussed on the specific context of the region, critical gaps and actions needed to address these two programme areas.

Climate change includes both mitigation and adaptation measures that particularly relate to the reduction of climate risks. For the ECA region, Members emphasised that regional and cross-border cooperation should be considered as a key challenge, but also solution to climate change induced impacts and pressures. IUCN could serve as a key facilitator for such cooperation. More needs to be done to build capacities on communicating the value of nature for climate change mitigation, utilising Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and general adaptation to changes. There are knowledge gaps on the risks and threats stemming from climate change and how these may change ecosystems and impact the biodiversity and humans in the region. The region is rich in natural ecosystems and biodiversity. The benefits of nature for climate change mitigation and value of preserving nature for adaptation should be assessed, so that the richness of forests, water resources, wetlands etc. can be preserved. Restoration of ecosystems provides one means of increasing connectivity and to also address cross-border issues. Some Members suggested to focus on protected areas and species. Protected areas have great mitigation potential. But this is underexplored in the region. Capacities and knowledge should be built aiming to emphasise and communicate the contribution of nature towards climate mitigation, which then may lead to an increase in coverage and greater management effectiveness. Generally, stronger links between climate change and biodiversity, including conservation efforts, should be forged. Members further indicated that a greater focus should be placed on building resilience for nature and local communities.

Equitable governance discussion centered around the legal and policy challenges faced in the region, focussing on questions who should be involved, when and how. Members specifically pointed to the region's socio-economic realities, which impact investments in nature conservation and management as well as the level of capacities. There is a need to better integrate nature conservation activities with socio-economic development goals. In the long-term, the engagement and communication with local communities in an effort towards co-governance should be increased. To address cross-sectoral challenges, better coordination between sectoral projects and different types of donors should be established (e.g. environmental and economic goals should be reconciled). In the ECA region, this is highly influenced by geopolitics. Due to the transboundary nature of many environmental issues and ecosystems, members proposed to establish more regional platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity building and decision-making. A great governance challenge is to ensure enforcement and compliance of existing frameworks, strategies, policies, laws, etc. A focus on existing tools and approaches, ensuring their availability and accessibility, may increase their effectiveness. Specific indicators should be employed to monitor and evaluate compliance and effectiveness.



Photo IUCN/A.Nikodinovic

Operationalising regional priorities

In order to respond to regional priorities identified by Members and Commission Members from the ECA region, it is important to consider how to structure the implementation of the IUCN Programme, both for the final two years of the current programme and in the next programme cycle. Ways to strengthen the internal IUCN networks in the region, i.e. through regional committees or other networking platforms, should be explored going forward. Members noted that the ECA region is highly diverse - in culture and language. Often, language is a major barrier, including for engagement and communication with the IUCN Secretariat. To improve collaboration between the IUCN Secretariat, Members and Commissions, it may be useful to appoint sub-region or country focal points. As a successful cooperation example, Members pointed to the Biodiversity Task Force of South-East Europe, which facilitates cooperation and joint decision-making of stakeholders from the Western Balkan region on biodiversity issues. Members indicated that cooperation with Members and Commissions should be given priority over cooperation within the Secretariat. This could be strengthened by establishing branch/country offices or specific focal points for each sub-region - Central Asia, South Caucasus, Western Balkans, etc. This would enable the development of country plans, increased exchange with Members and coordination at country level as well as allow the IUCN Secretariat to utilise best its convening ability at different levels. More effort should be made to engage new Members as well as grassroot organisations. There is a lot of potential to share knowledge and tools that are produced through IUCN more effectively in the region. Additionally, existing networks (e.g. EAZA) could be utilised strategically. Similar to comments under the governance theme, Members mentioned transboundary initiatives as an important area of engagement and cooperation. Members also mentioned the importance of country-to-country, peer-to-peer cross-fertilisation, in order to build capacities and strengthen regional cooperation. This would further enable cooperation beyond projects and instead engage in strategic discussions on challenges faced by the region.



Photo IUCN/A.Nikodinovic

Wednesday, 3 July 2019

Preparation for the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Marseille 2020

While introducing the IUCN World Conservation Congress, **Enrique Lahmann, Global Director of IUCN's Union Development Group** stressed that IUCN has seven decades of policy-making impact and influence, something we should be proud of. We have seen IUCN Congresses shaping the most important global conservation treaties and initiatives, such as the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The [IUCN Congress 2020](#) will take place 11–19 June in Marseille, France, under the theme 'One nature, one future', highlighting the need for a healthy natural world as a prerequisite for achieving the vision of a just and sustainable planet. Held every four years, the IUCN Congress brings together world leaders and representatives from governments, science, academia, indigenous peoples' groups, non-governmental organisations and businesses to help address the world's most pressing environmental and sustainability challenges. The IUCN Congress 2020 aims to mobilise all concerned actors a few months before the biodiversity COP15, to be held in China, which is expected to adopt a new international framework for the next decade.

The seven themes which the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020 will address are the following:

1. Managing landscapes for nature and people;
2. Conserving freshwater to sustain life;
3. Restoring ocean health;
4. Accelerating climate change mitigation and adaptation;
5. Upholding rights, ensuring effective and equitable governance;
6. Leveraging economic and financial systems for sustainability; and
7. Advancing knowledge, learning, innovation and technology

IUCN Governance Reforms

It is the duty of the IUCN Council to contribute to improving the governance of IUCN based on requests from the membership through the IUCN Congress resolutions, its own experience and challenges encountered in day-to-day governance (“learning on the job”). This session was prepared by **Hilde Eggermont, IUCN Regional Councillor West Europe and Tamar Pataridze, Regional Councillor East Europe, North and Central Asia** to present the topics that are currently under consideration in Council with the view of presenting solutions to IUCN Congress for discussion and adoption. Topics dealt with included:

1. Including subnational governments in IUCN’s membership, as a follow-up of resolution WCC-2016-Res-003 adapted in Hawai’i;
2. Election procedures and inclusiveness of dependent territories;
3. Establishment of an elected Indigenous Councillor position;
4. Modification of the term “Regional Councillor”;
5. Improvements to the motions process; and
6. Follow-up to the External Review of IUCN’s governance.

Process for nominating candidates from the region for the IUCN Council

This session informed Members about the process for nominating candidates for the IUCN Council as per the IUCN Statutes. **Luc De Wever, Senior Governance Manager, Union Development Group**, explained that IUCN Members eligible to vote in Categories A, B and C, who are up-to-date in the payment of their membership dues, may propose to Council names for the positions of President, Treasurer, Commission Chairs and Regional Councillors. Proposals for persons to be nominated should be sent to the Election Officer, Professor Denise Antolini, who will be overseeing the nomination and election process. Members were informed that the nomination process for Regional Councillors would be automated for the very first time, with the system allowing nominations to be made by 5 IUCN Members eligible to vote from the region concerned or 10 % of all such Members in that region, whichever is lower, with an emphasis that each Regional Councillor candidate must be a national of a State in the region concerned and be resident in that region.

Article 27 of the IUCN statutes provides that “The President, Treasurer and Chairs of the Commissions shall be elected by the World Conservation Congress on the nomination of the Council”. Members were

also reminded that nominations for the President may also be made by Members representing at least 1% of the global membership of IUCN, i.e. at least 14 IUCN Members or be made directly to Congress, by 40 Members eligible to vote from at least three regions, before 11 April 2020. Nominations for the Commission chairs may also be nominated by Commission members and the Commissions' ad hoc committees. Mr De Wever finished by informing the Members that the call for nominations will be opened in mid-July 2019. The deadline for submission of all nominations will be **11 December 2019 at 13:00 GMT/UTC**.

Presentation of new Council candidates

The below candidates expressed their interest to run for election and presented themselves to the Europe Members:

- Hans Friedrich for Councillor Position West Europe
- Jan Olov Westerberg for Councillor Position West Europe
- Hilde Eggermont for Councillor Position West Europe
- John Smaranda, Ministry of Environment, Romania for Councillor Position East Europe, North and Central Asia
- Carl Amirgulashvili, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia for Councillor Position East Europe, North and Central Asia
- Vilmos Kizsel, NGO Goncol Foundation, Hungary for Councillor Position East Europe, North and Central Asia
- Sean Southey for CEC Commission Chair Position

More information on IUCN Elections is available [here](#).

The IUCN Policy Cycle: Introduction to the Motions Process and Implementation of Resolutions and Recommendations

Motions, and the resulting Resolutions and Recommendations, are the mechanism by which Members guide the policy and Programme of IUCN. The 1300+ Resolutions and Recommendations that have been adopted at previous Congresses and General Assemblies are the basis of IUCN's general policy and have been the Union's most effective means of influencing conservation policy at the species, site, national, and global levels. Read about [the impact of IUCN resolutions on international conservation efforts](#).

Introducing this session, **Sonia Peña Moreno, IUCN's Global Policy Unit**, reminded that the submission of motions for the IUCN Congress 2020 has been open to Members and the IUCN Council since May 2019, and the **submission deadline is 28 August 2019**. Following a technical review and a meeting of the Motions Working Group, accepted motions will be discussed online from December 2019 to March 2020,



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after which most will be sent for electronic voting. Motions that are deemed to warrant debate at the global level or which prove too controversial to produce a consensus text will be forwarded to the Members' Assembly for further discussion.

Once adopted, motions become Resolutions and Recommendations, and the Union as a whole seeks to implement them. Efforts have been made to improve the planning, coordination, and reporting of activities that support implementation. This includes encouraging Members to provide details already at submission on how the implementation will be resourced, to assigning focal points to each Resolution and Recommendation, to providing an online portal for all IUCN components to report on any relevant activities. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, including a lack of financial resources, persistent external obstacles (e.g. political will), and coordination difficulties.

In response to Resolution 6.001 adopted in Hawai'i, IUCN has moved all implemented, obsolete, and superseded Resolutions and Recommendations to an online archive, thereby making the Union's current body of policy more relevant and accessible – which will aid Members in their consultations as they draft their motions for the IUCN Congress 2020.

More information about the motions process is available at <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/event/members-assembly/motions> and Members can contact the Motions Team at motions@iucn.org.

Members' proposals for Motions to the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Marseille 2020

At the RCF, Members were given the opportunity to [present their Motions](#). The below pitches were provided:

- **International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC):** Improvement of Management and Conservation of the Alpine Chamois
- **CIDCE (Centre International de Droit Comparé de l'Environnement):** Adoption of an International Convention for the protection of uninhabited islands
- **Carpathian Wildlife Foundation:** Connectivity Conservation: Global Action for Biodiversity and Climate Resilience
- **Enrique Díaz-Martínez, ProGEO, SGE, SEDPGyM and Geoheritage:** Conservation of natural diversity and natural heritage in mining areas
- **IFAW – International Fund for Animal Welfare:** Implementing International Efforts to Combat Wildlife Cybercrime
- **José Brilha, Geoheritage Specialist Group / WCPA and ProGEO:** Geoheritage, protected areas and Key Geoheritage Areas
- **Hans de longh, Leo foundation:** Law enforcement for the conservation of the African Lion
- **Margaret Pyke Trust and David Johnson, Chief Executive:** Toward sustainable conservation_Remove barriers to family planning
- **ArtDatabanken:** (1) Update the IUCN Red List Index; (2) Abolishment of a Blind Spot in the IUCN Red List System; and (3) Age Limit for IUCN Global Red List Evaluations
- **The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS):** (1) Ecosystem Intactness and the post-2020 framework; (2) Industrial Scale Developments in World Heritage Sites; and (3) Coral reef conservation and the post-2020 framework
- **EUROPARC Federation and RLKM:** (1) Youth Involvement: closer, wider, structural; (2) Integrate Cross-border-cooperation in the IUCN Working Plans 2021-2024; (3) Connecting UNCBD & UNFCCC; and (4) A higher ambition for our planet_From UN Blue Berets/Helmets to UN Green Berets/Helmets!
- **IUCN Primary Forest Task Team:** (1) Climate and Biodiversity Crisis; and (2) Bioenergy (with special attention to forest/wood-based biomass)
- **Zoltan Kun, WCPA Member and Frankfurt zoological society:** Wilderness in Europe
- **Piet Wit:** Exclusion of products from Red-listed species used by traditional medicine as early discarded by WHO
- **Aysegul Cil, Member of IUCN CEC:** Connecting nature through culture and art
- **IUCN French Committee:** (1) Implement a representative and coherent network of highly marine and terrestrial protected areas; (2) Ensure the compatibility of human activities with conservation objectives (with)in protected areas; (3) Deploy an adaptive management strategy for protected areas networks to cope with climate change; (4) Develop a network of wilderness areas in Europe; (5) Strengthening the protection of marine mammals through regional cooperation; (6) Rising organized wildlife trafficking to the level of serious crimes; (7) Strengthen

the across country Great Apes conservation in and outside protected areas involving local actors; (8) Fight against imported deforestation; (9) Increase biodiversity funding for developing countries; (10) Promoting forests sustainable management certification systems that proved their efficiency for forest biodiversity protection; (11) Strengthening the prevention of alien invasive pathogens and pests in forests; (12) Strengthening the protection of old-growth forests in Europe and facilitate old-growth restoration where possible; (13) Preservation of watershed first streams and hydroelectricity in Europe; (14) Halting the global crisis of plastic pollution in marine environments by 2030; (15) For an Ocean, recognized as Common Good of Humanity; (16) Maritime spatial planning and Biodiversity conservation; (17) Evaluate and reduce the cumulative impacts of human activities at sea; (18) Take greater account of natural cavities in nature protection policies; (19) Implementing Nature based Solutions in the Mediterranean region; (20) Protection and management of mangroves and tropical swamp forests, grassland and coastal marshes; (21) For the urgent global management of coastal and marine sand resources; (22) Reducing the impact of the mining industry on biodiversity; (23) For improved management of drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs); (24) Protection of herbivorous fish for improved coral community health; (25) Recognize Nature as a subject of rights; (26) For a global convention on environmental impact assessments (EIAs); (27) Fight against the artificialization of soils; and (28) Generalize alternative techniques to the use of pesticides.

The motion submission process for the 2020 Congress closed on **28 August 2019, 13:00 (GMT/UTC)**.

More information on Motions can be accessed [here](#).

On our way to Marseille

Marking the end of the Regional Conservation Forum, two high-level speakers representing the Netherlands and France took the stage.

Henk Ovink, First Special Envoy for International Water Affairs for the Kingdom of the Netherlands applauded the work of IUCN and its Members and encouraged the audience to stay active, make noise and organise tangible actions to prevent the Earth from further deterioration. We need an ambitious biodiversity action agenda since earlier agreements were not enough to preserve biodiversity. This is not just a political agenda, civil society support and demands is much needed and will be very powerful. He called on IUCN to act as a leader, create political will and put biodiversity on the agenda. “You discussed the lack of political will, yet IUCN is able to mobilise civil society, bring about a strong action agenda, and lead the collaboration needed to hold politicians accountable and to help them act, so we can together withstand the challenges we face as a society,” he said.

Global negotiations gain strength like the course of a river: springs become brooks, grow into winding streams, come together, gain momentum, until they end up as wide rivers, having the power to change the landscape of our consensus and push for action. Mr Ovink concluded his speech by handing over the

baton from the Netherlands to France, expressing his confidence that together we can move towards biodiversity as something which everyone supports.

Philippe Lalliot, Ambassador of France to the Kingdom of the Netherlands congratulated the participants on their hard work over the past days in preparation for the next IUCN World Conservation Congress. “IUCN and France have a longstanding and trustful relation since IUCN was founded in Fontainebleau in 1948.” Mr Lalliot mentioned the multiannual partnership with IUCN since 2005 and how this, for example, led to the creation of a MOOC on biodiversity and the development of guidelines for improving the management of marine protected areas. Furthermore, France is supporting the creation of a momentum for biodiversity similar to the one on climate change, as requested by its President - various activities are supporting this, such as the French Nature Congress which took place in June 2019. In addition, France is adopting an ambitious biodiversity roadmap and a national strategy against imported deforestation, and has placed biodiversity at the top of the G7-Environment Summit, securing the central position of nature conservation on the global agenda, ahead of the IUCN Congress 2020 and CBD CoP 15.

France is looking forward to the IUCN Congress and is ready to make it an exemplary event. Mr Lalliot ended with expressing his confidence in everyone’s contribution to a successful World Conservation Congress as well as to the CoP 15 on Biodiversity.

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Main outcomes and next steps

The IUCN Regional Conservation Forum served as a great preparatory step towards the IUCN Congress 2020. Our discussions in Rotterdam provided a great opportunity for IUCN Members to learn about important updates regarding the Members Assembly at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille, where they will elect the IUCN Council, approve the IUCN programme for the next four-year period (2021-2024), adopt motions defining the general policy of IUCN and amend the IUCN Statutes. Moreover, the Forum opened a constructive dialogue, reminded the Union on governance rules and procedures, and offered a platform for its Members to share their proposals for Motions.

The outcomes from the IUCN European Regional Conservation Forum will contribute to steering IUCN's strategic direction in both regions for the period 2021-2024. Our conclusions will be taken to the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France, the world's leading biodiversity event, and the CoP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China, in 2020, to help governments shape a new plan – the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, known as the 'New Deal for Nature'.

Annex 1 includes some key recommendations from the RCF to the IUCN Program which have been shared with the Global Policy Unit as input into the draft IUCN Program 2021 - 2024.

IUCN Members and IUCN Commission members are invited to participate in the next phase of the development of the IUCN Programme 2021-2024. Please join the online discussion and provide feedback **before 30 September 2019**: <https://portals.iucn.org/union/node/21771>

The Regional Conservation Forum in Rotterdam was organised jointly by the IUCN Regional Office for Europe (EURO), IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) and the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL), and received financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the provincial government of Zuid Holland.

Annex 1

Conclusions from the Programme discussions

- IUCN should be outcome/action oriented: there is a need to get together relevant actors, stakeholders and resources and work out what they can all deliver. It is probably not just about pushing out messages to persuade others, but there is a need to get around the table and negotiate solutions that will work for others.
- Restoration should be a higher priority, through connectivity/ecological corridors, and a metric that can assess the intactness of an ecosystem.
- On sustainable agriculture, IUCN could strive to influence policy for more environmental funding from agriculture. There is also a need to focus on the value chain and the circular economy: the value chain should consider more than farming products, as also the wildlife products should be considered.
- It is also important to focus on freshwater, biodiversity and ecosystems (e.g. reinforcement of RAMSAR). In particular, a stronger consideration of relevant EU Directives – Water Framework Directive, Environmental Liability Directive – could be a positive way forward.
- More connections with the research field would be needed to explore existing tools from other sectors to answer our questions (e.g. about the impact of infrastructure on species).
- IUCN should maintain its focus on species and habitats (core business) and strengthen expert networks (taxonomy). We should also encourage Member States to put more emphasis on the Red List of Ecosystems to better evaluate status of natural resources and the effects of their extraction.
- IUCN could support governments in smaller countries in their long-term planning and capacity building for climate change to create pathways for action that go beyond political mandates.
- It would be positive to increase the role of forests in initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors as well as their incorporation in relevant policies and financial mechanisms.
- Mobilising funding beyond grant schemes to create new green finance and insurance opportunities is key and moving away subsidies for fossil fuels as well;
- A suggestion was to keep a more focused approach on the themes addressed by IUCN. More work on less areas in this sense can have a greater impact.
- There was confusion with the term 'equitable' (as in "equitable governance"). It was recommended to replace it with 'optimal', for example.
- Stakeholder and general public engagement requires a bottom-up approach: therefore there is a need to think outside of the box to reach and motivate civil society, business sector, youth, etc
- The need to improve consumer understanding of 'ecological footprint' through education and communication was identified as a priority.
- IUCN could also increase its efforts against unsustainable natural resource practices, and include local communities and indigenous peoples more in these discussions, including at forums such as the RCF.

- Some ideas about potential focus of IUCN's future activity included:
 - the governance of oceans, which remains one of the greatest challenges, could be addressed through intersectoral consultation and ecosystem-based management, and IUCN could provide tools for governance and monitoring of the status of seas;
 - it was raised several times that IUCN could shift its focus away from plastic. In any case, this issue should be dealt with by 'closing the tap', which consists in dialogue with the entire value chain. Plastic could be seen as removing the core element of this discussion, which is ocean degradation.
 - ensuring through guidance and regulation that forestry restores the natural functions of the forest, as now often climate change is used for unsustainable activities such as cutting and large scale plantations;
 - avoiding the impact of invasive alien species (i.e. Eucalypt) and focus on species that can provide multiple benefits and functionalities as part of strategic green infrastructure;
 - combatting climate change at city level;
 - mainstreaming climate change and biodiversity, both politically (top-down) and at field level (bottom-up) at EU and national policy level - ensuring a stronger presence of biodiversity at UNFCCC COP, especially through nature-based solutions;
 - providing support to insurance, re-insurance and finance sector (as a major area of impact) to assess risk and identify how investments can benefit society and the environment;
 - linking green infrastructure and the finance sector – and promoting innovation (in line with UNFCCC objectives) that attracts investment for creating a carbon free economy;
 - monitoring economic impacts of climate change;
 - supporting start-ups and companies that focus on developing carbon solutions to develop economic opportunities for expanding carbon storage in trees and nature;
 - raising public awareness through explaining action that individuals can take using the capacity of IUCN to connect with the grass roots level through the networks of IUCN Member organisations;
 - strengthening the role of social scientists, as the change that is needed requires influence of civil society;
 - incorporating climate change in all curricula of education programmes from primary school to university across all study courses;
 - creating attention for the impact of the EU in other parts of the world through for example labelling;
 - exploring how policies can complement each other, as the impact of nature serves multiple needs;
 - developing climate rating for products and services;
 - connecting local agriculture (i.e. genetic diversity, local species) to increase resilience and climate change adaptation and mitigation;
 - ensuring that every government has NBS integrated in their NDCs to respect the Paris Climate Agreement.



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