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**IUCN's Comments on the Revised Draft
Outcome Document of 22 July 2005 for the High-
Level Plenary Session of the General Assembly
(A/59/HLPM/CRP.1/Rev.1)**

IUCN welcomes the President's Revised Draft Outcome Document of 22 July 2005. IUCN is encouraged that the treatment of environmental and natural resource issues in the new draft represents stronger recognition of the role of environmental sustainability in development, though there remains scope for further improvement and strengthening.

IUCN supports the new text that has been added to the draft in paragraph 33 signaling the importance of oceans and seas, forests, sustainable production and consumption, and improved access to environmentally sound energy services. IUCN also welcomes the new language calling for the intensification of efforts to develop an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing to effectively implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the expanded text on science and technology for development in paragraph 37.

IUCN strongly endorses the reference in paragraph 8 which reaffirms UNGA Resolution A/RES/57/253 which declared that sustainable development is a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, in particular for achieving the MDGs. IUCN is concerned, however, that much of the following text appears to misinterpret the concept of sustainable development. As articulated in the *World Conservation Strategy* and the Brundtland Commission report, and as codified in the outputs of the Rio and Johannesburg Summits, sustainable development is itself an overarching concept which rest upon and integrates the social, economic and environmental pillars. Much of the negotiating text, however, appears to reduce the concept of "sustainable development" to only its environmental pillar. This is evident, for example, in paragraphs 9, 15, 16, 23, and the chapeau of 33. To help clarify this confusion, IUCN suggests addressing these specific paragraphs and re-branding section II as "sustainable development" and

reverting to the previous language for the title of paragraph 33: “sustaining our environment and natural resource base for development,” or simply using “environmental sustainability.”

IUCN also welcomes the intention behind the call for “integrating sustainable development into national development strategies” in the chapeau of paragraph 33. However, on close inspection, this formulation actually repeats the confusion. This could be clarified by changing the text to call for “integrating environmental sustainability into national poverty reduction and economic growth strategies.” This would be consistent with the understanding of sustainable development as part of the overarching framework, and of economic development, social development and environmental protection being the pillars of sustainable development.

IUCN also believes that the text can be further strengthened with respect to MDG7 on environmental sustainability in particular. In the chapeau of paragraph 33, IUCN suggests including language borrowed from *In Larger Freedom*, which encapsulates the interdependent nature of the MDGs: “We fundamentally depend on natural systems and resources for our existence and development. Our efforts to defeat poverty and pursue sustainable development will be in vain if environmental degradation and natural resource depletion continue unabated.” Alternatively, numerous governments, drawing on the recent findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, have described how the achievement of MDG7 on environmental sustainability is essential if other MDGs on poverty, health and gender equality are to be met.

Finally, IUCN notes that paragraph 33 describes many actions that are required to achieve the MDGs. Of the actions required for MDG7, only two of the three targets are adequately addressed in the text: Target 10: to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and Target 11: to have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. No specific direction is provided with respect to Target 9: to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. This is a concern in light of a recent study by UNDP which analyzed over 100 national reports on progress in implementing the MDGs, and found that MDG7 was less well reported on than MDGs 1-6, and that Target 9 in particular received the least amount of attention from governments among the three Goal 7 targets. That being the case, IUCN suggests that paragraph 33 should pay much greater attention to Target 9 in particular, and include a new bullet point calling for greater precision of the indicators and data collection methods to measure and report on the integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reversing the loss of environmental resources, as well as capacity building to enable governments to do this.

IUCN’s specific recommended amendments to the text follow below.

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IUCN is the world’s largest environmental knowledge network and has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN is a multicultural, multilingual organization with 1000 staff located in 62 countries. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland.