

IUCN was founded in 1948 out of the concern that within the turmoil of all the reconstruction activities going on at that time, nature might be one of the latest victims of World War II. People and organisations joined forces to contribute to the conservation of our natural heritage and to the resource base for the future. Although we have achieved many things to be proud of, we still have to conclude that with every crisis in the world, be it violent or financial, the less scrupulous of the world community turn to nature's richness for a short-term personal gain at the expense of our common future. Contributions to the conservation of nature by all reasonable means therefore remain an absolute priority. Our rewards come *in the first place* through the effective conservation in the field of species and of ecosystems. This necessity to contribute to the work of CEM does not always seem to be a major concern to every individual member of our commission. When less than 10 % of the members of a thematic group or of a region respond to an appeal made by their Thematic Group Leader or their Regional Vice Chair, then that is simply far too low. The more and the better our contributions to CEM's programme of activities are, the higher the stature of CEM as an international network of professionals volunteering their energy and time to further the cause of conservation, the more influential we will be, and the higher the esteem we as members of this commission will receive from the outside world. Such a balance between personal contributions to CEM and benefits from CEM I want us to strive for.

CEM matters:

The next steering committee meeting will take place from the 20th to the 22nd of September in Amsterdam, where we will be kindly hosted by The Netherlands Committee of IUCN. If you have any specific item that you would like us to discuss, please contact the Steering Committee member that is the focal point for your region or thematic group, or contact Pat Hawes or me directly. Our addresses you can find on the IUCN website.

Miss Dominique Noome has been employed to assist me with my work as the Chair. Some of you have already received email messages from her.

- Our regional Vice Chair for North East Asia, Shoichi Kawano, has kindly offered to organise a get-together for the CEM-members that are participating in the COP-10 for the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan. The Japanese government is promoting an interesting programme on community-based ecosystem management entitled Satoyama. It would be great if our members could enrich this new concept with their thinking and expertise.

Satoyama (Satoyama landscape is a traditional Japanese socio-ecological production landscape and an example of multi-functional land use wherein residents employ agricultural practices and natural resource

- *management techniques that optimize the benefits derived from the local ecosystem.) This Japanese-government led initiative “**Satoyama Initiative – Advancing socio-ecological production systems for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being.**” (www.satoyama-initiative.org) aims to revitalize and promote the sustainable management of satoyama and similar landscapes by forging common strategies and cooperative frameworks.*

From the Thematic Groups

CEM-member Henk Tennekes has received international acclaim for his news-breaking article on the impacts of a new generation of insecticides (neo-nicotinoids) on bees and other insects. Together with the sponsors of his study and SSC, we are planning follow-up activities.

Richard Kensington is our newly appointed Thematic Group Leader on Coastal Ecosystems. He has invited the members of his group to come forward with concrete ideas for a CEM-programme on coastal zones.

Keith Bowers, our TGL for Ecosystem Restoration, is also a leading person in the Society of Ecological Restoration International. SERi organises a/o international conferences where Keith invites our members to be actively involved.

From the Regions

A meeting on the Mexican Gulf Oil Spill was organised by our RVC for North America, Steve Edwards. The spill will be affecting the functioning of the Gulf's ecosystems and will a/o be impacting species and communities. Steve got a small group together with representatives from other IUCN-commissions and IUCN's secretariat. The main topic on the agenda was an IUCN-broad activity in response to the concerns about the future of the Mexican Gulf and deep-water oil drilling in general. I attended the meeting and I would like to express my thanks to Steve and his team for the inspirational meeting, and to the IUCN-US office for their support.

At the occasion of the opening of the Brazil office of IUCN, I spoke with a number of high-ranking officials of that country, including the Minister of Environment herself. Thanks to an introduction by Keith Wheeler (Chair of CEC) and Frits Hesselink, I also could participate in a meeting with a four-star general in charge of all the army's involvement in (re-)construction work, in Brazil itself and elsewhere (a/o in Haiti). All partners met expressed their interest in CEM-involvement in environmental opportunities in Brazil. My thanks go to Antonio Herman Benjamin, the Deputy Chair of CEL, and the new Head of the IUCN office, Mr. Luis Merico, for making this visit a success.

Karen Sudmeier is mobilising the Thematic Group on Disaster Relief around the Pakistan flooding. I like to congratulate her on this initiative, as it is another and excellent way of showing the added value of our expert volunteer network that can be mobilised at relatively short notice in response to emerging problems and opportunities.

Masse Lô, our Steering Committee member for Africa, is planning a CEM-contribution on the Ecosystem Approach in the Pan-African session of the LEAD-conference on Eco-Health, to be held in Dakar next month.

Nestor Windevoxhel, our former RVC for Meso-America, continues to be our ambassador in that region. He is leading the Caribbean large Ecosystem Project that is now planning to set up a workshop in Panama on Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management for which he invites CEM to participate.

Other IUCN matters

Neville Ash, Head of the Ecosystem Management Programme, has become a father again. I congratulate his daughter Kitty with her excellent choice for such a nice family to be born into.