

Of course, the first thing to say at the beginning of a new year is to express my gratitude for all the efforts from CEM members to promote the conservation and sustainable management of our planet's ecosystems. I would also like to wish all of you, your families, friends and colleagues a very good 2010, both personally as well as professionally. May the International Year of Biodiversity bring what the conservation community hopes it will bring. After the frustration and disappointment of "Copenhagen" we cannot afford a second high-level environmental event to fail.

"Nagoya" has to be a success, and we from CEM will do everything to make it live up to our expectations!

CEM matter

Many CEM-members were present in Copenhagen. Our Deputy Chair, Angela Andrade, was there to represent the leadership of CEM. It was very rewarding to note that she was also asked to be a member of the delegation of the Government of Columbia and played a key role in the negotiations as well as IUCN's efforts during the event. CEM was involved in the publication of a brochure on Ecosystem based Adaptation (EbA) to Climate Change (CC), produced by IUCN. It advocates a clear message on the value of EbA to CC by summarizing the lessons learned from a number of case-studies. It is a very professional communication tool, perfectly adapted to the delegates attending Copenhagen that did not have time to go through large packages of paper. I like to compliment the initiators with this result. See http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_eba_brochure.pdf

From the Thematic Groups

An inter-commission task force has been created on cultural affairs and biodiversity conservation. This task force will be headed by Mr. Bas Verschuuren of WCPA. I nominated Mr. Dashka Tserendeleg from Mongolia as our focal point in this task force. Dashka has a strong background in ecosystem management projects in his country, and is member of a family with a long history in Mongolian culture. For those CEM-members that are interested in contributing to this task force, please contact Dashka through our secretariat (cem@iucn.org).

The Chair of the Commission on Education and Communication came to IUCN Council with a young expert that was appointed to further the integration of young professionals in CEC. This young man offered his services to coordinate the task of strengthening the representation of young professionals in all our commissions. In particular he liked CEM's idea to have a young professional co-chairing and assisting every RVC and TGL. Dolf de Groot of the Ecosystem Services Theme was one of the first TGLs to pick up on this and he will forward me a name shortly.

From the Regions

Steve Edwards has agreed to be our Regional Vice Chair for North America. Steve has a long history with IUCN, including as the Head of the Ecosystem Management Programme and the organisation of WCC in Bangkok. Knowing Steve for his knowledge, motivation and drive, I am very pleased with his availability to promote the Ecosystem Approach in his region.

General IUCN matters

In November I attended IUCN's Council meeting. It was preceded by a meeting of the Commission Chairs. The Chair of CEESP, Mrs Aroha Mead, organised it this time and she did it very well. Thanks for that Aroha! Unfortunately I was down with the flu, but I managed to attend most of the meeting.

Thanks to our president, Dr. Ashok Khosla (CEM-member!!), this council works in a very pleasant and constructive atmosphere. Difficult and sometimes sensitive issues are openly discussed and decided upon. Council decided that our next World Conservation Congress should be held in Korea, which –after Nagoya – puts another challenge to our members of the North-East Asian region.