

**IUCN**  
**WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS**  
**5–14 October 2008, Barcelona, Spain**

**Report of Activities undertaken by Council to  
Review the Work of the Commissions**

**Action Requested:** The World Conservation Congress is requested to NOTE the Report on the activities undertaken by Council to review the work of the Commissions.

This report outlines the activities undertaken by Council to review the work of the Commissions during the intersessional period. The IUCN Statutes require a certain degree of oversight by Council of the work of Commissions.

The Buenos Aires Members Assembly endorsed the 1994 Strategy of IUCN, contained in the following decisions related to reviews of the Commissions:

“Reviews of the Commissions will be undertaken periodically, and should identify the minimum resources needed for efficient operation” (17); and

“The Council will consider how the reviews of the Commissions, mandated by the World Congress Resolutions can be undertaken in the most cost-effective way. Performance indicators will be developed, with emphasis on the effectiveness of the Commissions in advancing the Mission of IUCN.” (28)

It is within the context of the 1994 Strategy and the IUCN Statutes that the Council has undertaken its work to review the work of the Commissions.

### **Statutes Related to Reviews of Commissions**

The following Statutes and Regulations are pertinent the review of the work of the Commissions:

#### **Statute 46 (e)**

“The functions of the Council shall be *inter alia*:... (e) to review the work of the Commissions”

#### **Statute 74**

“The World Congress shall establish the Commissions and determine their mandates, which shall be within the IUCN Programme. The Council may propose to the World Congress the creation, abolition or subdivision of a Commission, or amendment of a Commission’s mandate. The Council may establish a provisional Commission, pending decision by the next ordinary or extraordinary session of the World Congress, provided that its mandate does not encroach on that of an existing Commission.”

#### **Statute 77**

“The Chair of each Commission shall present a report at each ordinary or extraordinary session of the World Congress and each year to the Council.”

#### **Regulation 70**

“Prior to each ordinary session of the World Congress, the Council shall review the terms of reference and the activities of each Commission. Any proposals by an IUCN member concerning the mission and terms of reference for any Commission shall be communicated to the members of IUCN at least one hundred and twenty days prior to the ordinary session of the World Congress concerned.”

### **Regulation 78 (c)**

“The President and each Commission Chair, in the presence of the Director General, shall undertake an annual appraisal of the performance of each Commission and its Chair in relation to the annual work plan and the mandate of that Commission.”

### **Mechanisms Employed to Review the Work of the Commissions**

As the work of the Commissions has become increasingly integrated under the *One Programme* concept, Council's role in reviewing their work has been combined with reviewing the work of the Programme, mainly through the Council's Programme and Policy Committee, as well as in the regular sessions of Council. The following describes Council activities during the intersessional period:

- Council heard presentations annually from Commission Chairs. The Commissions' work on climate change was discussed in a session led by the Commission Chairs at the 67<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Council. The 68<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council had a special session 'Focus on Commissions' which was organized in an interactive manner on the key change challenges facing IUCN and the Commissions as the entire IUCN family positions itself to implement the One Programme agenda. Summaries of these sessions are available in the reports of the meetings of Council.
- Revised mandates and end of intersessional period reports of the Commissions were received by the Secretariat for inclusion in Congress documentation and were available for review by Council. The reports and mandates are contained in the Congress documentation.
- Starting from evidence gathered for the External Review of Commissions 2004, a study was commissioned by Council in November 2007, to undertake a forward looking review of the Commissions, with an eye to renewal. This process was seen by Council not as a full review, but instead as a discussion paper, whose recommendations will be taken on board by the Director General's change management process.
- The work of Commissions was reported annually in the Progress and Assessment Reports. These reports are available at [http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/global\\_programme/index.cfm](http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/global_programme/index.cfm)
- The Commissions participated extensively in the preparation of the 2009-12 Programme and each developed a component programme outlining its proposed results for 2009-12. In most cases, the plans were developed jointly with the Secretariat. Commissions and their Secretariat counterparts are in the process of developing monitoring plans, including indicators to measure progress in implementing their 2009-12 component programmes.

The Council One Programme Working Group, established by Council in 2007, addressed, inter alia, the role of Commissions, specifically in the planning and delivery of the One Programme. This discussion will continue with the new Council. The March 2008 report of this Working Group noted that IUCN's Value Proposition will only be realized if IUCN can find ways for its three pillars (members, Commissions, Secretariat) to work in a more coordinated and mutually supportive fashion.

The Working Group also stated that the time is right to commence a process of re-invigorating IUCN, with the objective to re-establish members and Commissions at the centre of the work of the Union. The change process to achieve this will take time and require changes in individual attitudes and institutional culture if it is to be done well and if it is to stick within the organization.

### **Conclusion**

In keeping with the spirit of the response to the various reviews and studies that have been undertaken during the past intersessional period, it is hoped that the new Council, to be elected at the Barcelona Members' Assembly, will continue to work closely with the Commissions to ensure that they play the important role entrusted to them in Article 73 of the Statutes to develop and advance “the institutional knowledge and experience and objectives of IUCN.”