

At this moment I am preparing my annual presentation on CEM-achievements and challenges to the IUCN-councillors. Last year I concluded that CEM was gaining momentum. These days, our work on the Red List of Ecosystems, Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change and Disaster Response is making headlines; CEM-members are invited as key-note speakers to conferences and seminars; we are asked to provide expertise for IUCN and non-IUCN-task forces and delegations, etc. As members, we all benefit from the strength, status and credibility of our Commission thanks to the work of our active members. This more prominent presence of CEM on the international scene is also providing new challenges since we cannot always live up to expectations. In this last year before the next World Conservation Congress we need therefore to take stock. We have to decide where to consolidate, and where to develop our products and services further. Are there areas where we should pull out, leaving things to others that may have more means to perform better than we can do in our respective fields of expertise?

CEM matters

We have decided that the next Steering Committee meeting will take place in North America. Steve Edwards, our active Regional Chair, has found a place in Washington State named *Moscow* (of all places) where between the 8th and the 11th of September the event will take place.

From the Thematic Groups

Olivier Hamerlynck, our Thematic Group Lead for the Ecosystem Approach, was invited as a key-note speaker at the last Sibthorpe Conference in London (UK). Ed Maltby, CEM's first Chair, is the leading person behind "Sibthorpe". At the first Sibthorpe Conference, Ed's innovative thinking on ecosystem management led to the formulation of the Sibthorpe Principles which formed the basis for the 12 Principles of Ecosystem Management endorsed by the CBD. Ed also developed the first concept of the Red List of Ecosystems, but in the late 1990s, the world wasn't yet ready for such an initiative. I am pleased that Ed is still active in ecosystem management and that Olivier is associated with Sibthorpe as a CEM-representative.

The next UNFCCC meeting will be in November 2011 in Durban, South Africa. Angela Andrade will be part of the IUCN-delegation. CEM will also be present in other ways: Hillary Masundire, our Regional Chair for Southern and Eastern Africa, is mobilising "his" CEM- membership for a side-event on ecosystem management; Masse Lô, our Steering Committee member for Africa, is organizing a side-event with the LEAD organization.¹

The French leading newspaper "Le Monde" interviewed "our" Karen Sudmeier at the occasion of a large international conference on disaster management, preparedness and response, in Geneva, Switzerland. Karen's message of strengthening ecosystems functioning in order to cope better with disasters was very well picked up by the audience, including Le Monde's journalist.

From the Regions

Guy Williams is the new Regional Chair for Oceania. He works throughout the Oceania region as a consultant in the area of community led sustainable land management. He is also involved in the development of international standards and networks aimed at supporting environmental management and ecosystem conservation.

Bernal Herrera, our RC for Meso-America, has concluded an agreement between the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Network (ELAN) of the Ecosystem Management Programme of the secretariat of IUCN and Bernal's organization CATIE on 'guidelines for practitioners and policy makers for implementation of Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change'

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¹ The mission of LEAD Africa is to promote leadership and change for sustainable development in Africa.

Dominique Noome and I visited the French National Committee of IUCN. Their bimonthly newsletter on ecosystem management makes recommended reading. For those that master the French language, you may contact Marion Péguin: marion.peguin@uicn.fr. For our French members it is good to know that there is (limited) funding available to enable French experts to participate in international events on ecosystem management.

Dhruba Gosh, our RC for South-Asia contacted the Ramsar Bureau to safeguard the East Calcutta wetlands (a Ramsar site) against pollution and human encroachment. I like to thank Anada Tiega, the Director General of “Ramsar” for his prompt reaction to Dhruba’s request. It illustrates the added value of being an integral part of international networks.

General IUCN-matters

In the second half of 2011, IUCN will organize a series of Regional Fora where the future intersessional programme for the Union will be on the agenda. This should lead to a proposal to be discussed, amended and adopted by the WCC at Jeju (Korea) next year. Commission members are invited to attend these fora. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to pay for travel and lodging but if CEM- members have the opportunity to participate, please do!

IUCN has put a task force together to coordinate the activities of the Union leading up to “Rio +20”. Gill Shepherd, CEM’s special advisor on the ecosystem approach, has accepted to be member of this task force on behalf of CEM. Her candidacy was enthusiastically received by IUCN.