Protected Areas (Agenda Item 13.4)

Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Hyderabad, India, 8-19 October, 2012

Summary of Recommendations
IUCN recommends COP11 to:

Aichi Target 11

✓ Call on the Secretariat, supported by IUCN, to provide Parties with specific guidance regarding the kinds of areas that count towards the achievement of the area coverage element of Target 11 and that should clarify that areas that do not, and will never qualify as protected areas, should not be included;

✓ Call on Parties, when considering the application of the terms of Target 11, not to restrict their interpretation to the spatial indicators of percentage coverage, representativity and connectivity, but also to take into account the qualifying terms for "effectively and equitably managed" in the design, implementation and reporting on the achievement of Target 11;

✓ Recommend that Parties conduct specific assessments at a national scale to ensure that national targets and indicators address the under-representation of specific ecosystems, and that this consideration is extended through regional consultation to ensure that global targets can be achieved for ecosystems that straddle national boundaries;

✓ Urge Parties to use the best available datasets, and incorporate them into their planning for expanding and connecting protected areas systems; noting that IUCN is addressing the need to include areas of particular importance for biodiversity in filling protected area system gaps through consolidating the standards for identifying these areas;

✓ Recommend that Parties incorporate connectivity into protected area system planning and management and Call on Parties support the development of an objective measure of connectivity for protected area systems to support the attainment of Target 11; and

✓ Urge Parties, when fulfilling their targets, to increase the percentage of protected areas subject to management effectiveness assessment, to consider piloting approaches to meeting an international minimum standard for well-managed protected areas (i.e. the IUCN Green List of Well-Managed Protected Areas currently being developed).

Enabling equitable governance

✓ Encourage Parties to actively apply the IUCN WCPA Best Guidelines on Assessing Protected Area Governance, through convening national protected area governance assessments and reporting on these in due course.

Developing professional capacity

✓ Recommend that Parties contemplate cooperation, including with IUCN, to outline an internationally recognized and accredited curriculum, competence and qualifications standard that can be offered to educational and training institutions.
Introduction

Protected areas (PAs) are recognized as essential and effective instruments for achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals. The successful achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 not only relies on the attainment of Target 11, it also relies on the contribution of protected area systems to other Aichi Targets including environmental awareness (Target 1), biodiversity for development (Target 2), natural habitats (Target 5), coral reefs (Target 10), threatened species (Target 12), ecosystem services (Target 14), landscape restoration (Target 15), national policies (Target 17), participation and respect of indigenous and local communities rights (Target 18) and finance (Target 20).

In turn, protected area systems that are effectively planned, managed, governed and integrated will contribute to people’s livelihoods and well-being, and will provide ecosystem services essential for water supply, food production, climate change mitigation and adaptation, public health and reduction of the risk and impacts of natural disasters.

The key to the realization of these values is the full and effective long-term implementation of the activities contained in the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) through PoWPA national action plans integrated within National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

IUCN has been working with the CBD Secretariat and Parties, including through a series of regional workshops to prioritize actions, develop professional capacity and mobilize implementation. Together with UNEP-WCMC and the CBD Secretariat, IUCN has been monitoring progress towards the attainment of Target 11, and will publish the first edition of the Protected Planet Report in 2012. IUCN is developing and providing guidance to protected area agencies and managers regarding the key skills and processes needed for enhanced implementation. For example, IUCN together with its expert Commissions and other organizations, has just completed new guidance on Ecological Restoration in Protected Areas and on Protected Areas Governance in response to requests by Parties for advice on implementation. Several new initiatives are in progress.

IUCN notes the excellent progress outlined in UNEP/CBD/COP/11/26 regarding the preparation of PoWPA national action plans and progress towards the attainment of Target 11, and congratulates all involved in addressing the requirements of CBD decision X/31 and related decisions.

IUCN remains committed to implementation of the PoWPA, its integration into NBSAPs, and to fostering the attainment of the Aichi Targets. In particular, IUCN stands ready to meet the requests made of IUCN, IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and IUCN’s Global Protected Areas Programme in the Draft Decision on Protected Areas contained in the Executive Secretary’s Note.

Following on the recommendations contained in the draft decisions emanating from the SBSTTA 15 and 16 and WGRI-4, IUCN has the following further recommendations to make in respect of decisions before the 11th Conference of the Parties.

1. Interpretation of Target 11

Target 11, involving protected areas, invokes the definition of a protected area contained in the text of the CBD, as a “geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives”. IUCN’s definition includes specific safeguards as: “A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values” (Dudley, 2008).

This definition states clearly that nature conservation is the primary role of protected areas as recognised by IUCN. For IUCN, only those areas where a principal purpose is to conserve nature can be considered protected areas. This can include many areas with other goals, at the same level, but in the case of conflict, nature conservation will be the priority. IUCN believes this definition to be consistent with the CBD definition and with the intent of Target 11.

IUCN believes this to be an important consideration in the application of Target 11, so that areas that contribute to the achievement of the percentage target, should in all cases either meet (i.e. be existing protected areas) or have the potential to meet...
the definition of a protected area. The 6 IUCN protected area management categories and 4 governance types provide broad scope for the recognition of a wide variety of forms of protected areas as contemplated in Target 11. This includes areas under governance types that are not currently legally recognized by Parties in their national legislation, e.g. certain Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and Territories, Locally Managed Marine Areas, etc. IUCN maintains that those “other effective area-based conservation measures” that contribute to Target 11 should be subject to evaluation as to whether they meet the effectiveness criteria for protected areas and therefore whether they qualify as “effective” in conserving biodiversity. If biodiversity is not at least one of the principal considerations, with adequate safeguards for their long-term persistence, they should not be factored into the % target, and their role may be limited to other qualitative functions, e.g. in contributing to the connectivity of the protected area system contemplated in Target 11.

IUCN thus recommends COP11 to:

✓ Call on Parties, when considering the application of the terms of Target 11, not to restrict their interpretation only to the spatial indicators of percentage coverage, representativity and connectivity, but also to the qualifying terms for “effectively and equitably managed” and that these are taken into account in the design, implementation and reporting on the achievement of Target 11.

Representative systems of protected areas

Current levels of protection in protected area systems may over-represent certain ecosystems and under-represent others. The achievement of representative systems may require Parties to set aside more than 17% terrestrial/inland waters and 10% marine/coastal of their national territories to meet targets for under-represented ecosystems. A priority is to determine, through systematic conservation planning and gap analysis, those ecosystems which require extra measures and where these could be achieved.

Furthermore, the achievement of representative coverage at a global scale may require cooperative action among Parties, where ecosystems straddle national boundaries. An analysis of where the responsibility for meeting global targets is shared should be undertaken and advice provided to those Parties regarding their complementary responsibilities for meeting global targets.

IUCN suggests that the well-established global analyses for ecoregions (Olson, et al. (2001) for terrestrial; and Spalding, et al. (2007) for marine) be used as the basis to calculate percentage figures for representativity.

IUCN calls on COP11 to:

✓ Recommend that Parties conduct specific assessments at a national scale to ensure that national targets and indicators address the under-representation of specific ecosystems, and that this consideration is extended through regional consultation to ensure that global targets can be achieved for ecosystems that straddle national boundaries.

IUCN recommends COP11 to:

✓ Call on Parties, supported by IUCN, to provide Parties with specific guidance regarding the kinds of areas that count towards the achievement of the area coverage element of Target 11. This should clarify that areas that do not, and will never qualify as protected areas, should not be included. Specific guidance should be provided to Parties to ensure that areas that meet the requirements, but which are not currently recognized or reported, are recognized appropriately, including those “other effective area-based conservation measures” that qualify.

Complementary achievement of the terms of Target 11

The many terms contained in Target 11, require that both quantitative (e.g. coverage, well-connected) and qualitative terms (e.g. effectively and equitably managed) must be achieved as outlined in the Executive Secretary’s Note. It is important to emphasize that even though these terms can be considered separately in terms of their interpretation and measurement, the achievement of Target 11 requires that these terms are met in a complementary and complete way.

IUCN recommends COP11 to:
Protecting areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services

Aichi Target 11 calls for Parties to protect areas that are especially important for biodiversity and ecosystem services. IUCN is actively addressing the need to include areas of particular importance for biodiversity in filling protected area system gaps through consolidating the standards for identifying these areas, building from the success of such mechanisms as Important Bird Areas and Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, and broadening them to embrace other critical ecosystems and taxonomic groups. IUCN stands by to contribute the results of this extensive consultation process towards national implementation of target 11. Despite the incomplete status of global databases and standards for determining areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, IUCN calls on COP11 to:

✓ Urge Parties to use the best available datasets on areas of global significance for biodiversity, and incorporate them into their planning for expanding and connecting protected areas systems.

Well-connected systems of protected areas

Target 11 calls for protected area systems to be well-connected. Achieving connectivity requires the maintenance and expansion of sufficiently large core areas and the management of intervening areas to maintain functional connectivity. Achieving connectivity requires the involvement of a diversity of stakeholders, rightholders, including women and natural resource managers in the intervening landscape and seascape in new and equitable governance arrangements. It also demands the development and application of new skills and approaches to manage multiple agency and stakeholder processes, as well as land-use planning, regulatory and management arrangements. The attainment of targets for connectivity requires the development of a standard measure for ecological connectivity within protected area systems in support of Target 11.

IUCN recommends that COP11:

✓ Recommend that Parties incorporate connectivity into protected area system planning and management, by maintaining and expanding core areas, establishing linkages through working landscapes, and introducing natural resource management governance, regulatory and management practices in the wider landscape and seascape that contribute towards functional connectivity; and

✓ Call on Parties support the development of an objective measure of connectivity for protected area systems to support the attainment of Target 11.

Meeting standards for management effectiveness

The Executive Secretary notes the priority accorded by Parties to the mobilization of actions to conduct management effectiveness assessments for protected areas. The process of assessment is crucial to an understanding of whether appropriate measures are in place for achievement protected area outcomes, but the assessment process itself does not measure whether the objectives of protected areas are meeting minimum standards. IUCN is currently working with certain Parties to pilot and test an approach for determining and measuring protected area standards through what has been termed “The Green List of Well-Managed Protected Areas”. The intention is that areas that have been subject to a management effectiveness assessment could be further evaluated in accordance with a set of internationally agreed standards, effectively managed areas would be accorded Green List status, and Parties would be encouraged to seek this status, cumulatively including more protected areas onto the International Green List of Well-Managed Protected Areas.

IUCN and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre have been tracking results of assessments of management effectiveness as part of the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Project. Continued reporting of results of management effectiveness assessments is called for in the PoWPA as a basis for shared learning and continuous improvement of protected area management.

IUCN recommends COP11 to:

✓ Urge Parties, when fulfilling their targets, to increase the percentage of protected areas subject to management
effectiveness assessment, to consider piloting and testing approaches to meeting an international minimum standard for well-managed protected areas (i.e. the IUCN Green List of Well-Managed Protected Areas currently being developed).

- Encourage Parties to report regularly on the results of management effectiveness assessments as part of National Reports as well as directly to the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

2. Enabling equitable governance

IUCN has responded to the request by Parties to the CBD Secretariat to compile guidance on Governance Assessment for Protected Area systems. This guidance has been published in IUCN WCPA’s Best Practice Guidelines for Protected Area Managers Series, in conjunction with the CBD Secretariat, GIZ and the ICCA Consortium. The guide sets out a process for planning and undertaking governance assessments and evaluation for national systems of protected areas, and includes resources for those involved to be able to facilitate these exercises through multi-stakeholder committees and a participatory approach. This complements the efforts made by the CBD Secretariat to introduce these concepts in the series of regional workshops conducted since COP10.

There is now a need for a specific programme to use the assessment methodology in the national context, to test and refine the approach and to build capacity among all concerned to undertake this work with integrity and insight.

There is also a need to further develop the methods to undertake governance assessments at the level of individual protected areas, and to define parameters for inclusion in management effectiveness assessment and in the IUCN Green List of Well-Managed Protected Areas.

IUCN thus calls on COP11 to:

- Encourage Parties to actively apply the IUCN WCPA Guidelines on Assessing Protected Area Governance, through convening national protected area governance assessments and reporting on these in due course. In particular, donor organizations are encouraged to support projects in a diversity of regional and national situations, that include protected area governance assessment, and to make provision for the exchange of information and lessons learned so that the methods and resources can be enhanced and expanded.

3. Developing professional capacity

A priority for most Parties involved in implementing the PoWPA and meeting the Aichi Targets is to develop institutional and individual capacity to undertake these activities in a professional and accountable manner. These capacities include legal and policy enabling measures, organizational functions, and a wide range of individual professional skills. Most efforts to develop capacity have been at the level of education and training for protected area professionals. For example, IUCN, with support from the European Union and the ACP Secretariat is piloting activities in four regions in the BIOPAMA (Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Project) for specific capacity development priorities.

There remain as yet no internationally recognized curriculum and competence standards for protected area professionals that would lead to accredited qualifications to meet the skills requirements for undertaking the PoWPA. IUCN WCPA is currently working on the development of a framework curriculum and accredited competence standards for use internationally.

IUCN, WCPA and partner organizations are committed to working with the CBD Secretariat to further raise awareness of these needs, and the need for specific institutional and individual capacity development and to address these systematically throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

In this regard, IUCN calls on COP11 to:

- Recommend that Parties, while continuing to support capacity development on previously identified priorities, also contemplate cooperation, including with IUCN, to outline an internationally recognized and accredited
4. IUCN World Parks Congress 2014

The 6th IUCN World Parks Congress will be hosted by the Governments of Australia and New South Wales from 12-20 November 2014 in Sydney. Convened once in 10 years, this meeting of protected area professionals at a global scale has been highly influential in setting the international agenda, and in 2003 made a significant contribution to the development of the PoWPA. In Sydney, the 6th IUCN World Parks Congress is expected to engage this community once again to examine the role of protected areas in meeting the most serious challenges facing the planet, namely halting the loss of biodiversity, and at the same time, ensuring that global protected area systems meet the full requirements of Target 11, developing the professional capacity required at international, national, agency and site level to achieve the complex set of outcomes for effectively managed protected area systems, and contributing towards addressing global challenges such as climate change, food security, water provision, disaster risk reduction and the maintenance of human health and well-being.

IUCN invites Parties to take note of the date of the next IUCN World Parks Congress and undertake specific activities to guide its planning, invest in preparation for its major thematic streams and ensure that it makes a significant difference to the outcome of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and beyond. In particular, Parties and other organizations that contribute to international and regional meetings during 2013 and 2014 are encouraged to use these venues to initiate activities that will contribute towards the success of the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress.

5. Protected Planet Report 2012

IUCN together with UNEP-WCMC, and with support from Parties and the CBD Secretariat, has prepared the first ever Protected Planet Report in 2012. This report, based on the World Database on Protected Areas, summarises progress being made by Parties and the international community on key targets involving protected areas. In several regions, there is interest in preparing Regional Protected Planet Reports, to complement the global report.

While the Protected Planet Report indicates that extensive progress is being made, there are many areas where further efforts will be required to accelerate activities, e.g. in the protection of marine ecosystems.

IUCN recommends COP11 to:

✓ Call on Parties and other organizations to note the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Protected Planet Report 2012, and design activities that will address weaknesses, while providing feedback on how this report can be enhanced in subsequent editions; and

✓ Encourage Parties and other organizations to continue to provide information on key parameters of the World Database on Protected Areas to ensure that information summarized at the global scale is accurate and reliable, and to include reference to this in their national reports to the CBD on the PoWPA.

References:

