

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your message regarding IUCN's collaborative agreement with Rio Tinto. As with all IUCN activities, this is part of our Union's ongoing commitment to achieve our mission: 'to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.'

Society does of course include the business sector. IUCN is therefore entering into this relationship based on the requirements of its mission and on principles of engagement with the private sector called for by recent IUCN Congresses and approved by the IUCN Council. We are fully cognizant of IUCN's long history and credibility as the world's foremost democratic environmental member organization in order to encourage business practices to have greater respect for biodiversity and people who are dependent on it.

We believe that IUCN can have the greatest impact by working with companies that have a large footprint to change their ways. We expect that working with leading companies within a sector will also influence other companies within that sector.

As a result of the lengthy due diligence process that IUCN undertook, we feel that there is a strong chance that the relationship with Rio Tinto can be beneficial to people and nature and would not be in any way 'green washing'. Rio Tinto is the only company to have publicly committed to make a 'net positive impact on biodiversity', and aspires to lead the mining sector in this area.

I assure IUCN Members that we will strictly adhere to IUCN's mission and values in all our interactions with Rio Tinto, as we do with all members of society including governments, civil society and business. We will be providing regular information about our interactions with Rio Tinto on the Business and Biodiversity webpage (http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_our_work/rio_tinto/) and will be grateful to receive advice from our Members about issues that need to be addressed in their countries or regions.

The democratic nature of IUCN provides opportunities for Members to express their opinions about the Union's activities and we respect such processes. I can guarantee that your messages and concerns will be listened to and acted upon, if warranted. All communications with Members about this relationship will be posted on the Members' webpage (<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/members/>).

I sincerely hope that, with the cooperation of our Members, we will begin to see a positive difference in the way business operates and that IUCN therefore can continue to influence societies to use nature in more sustainable and ethical ways in the future. This in my view is the true value proposition of our Union.

With kind regards,

Julia Marton-Lefèvre

IUCN Director General