

**For immediate release: 8 October, 2008**

## Diversity and biodiversity in East Asia: a call to action for protected areas

**Background:** IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) are delighted to announce the launch of a Regional Action Plan for the Protected Areas of East Asia. The Action Plan offers a blueprint for establishing a representative and well-managed network of protected areas across the nine very diverse countries of the region.

### **Key Issues:**

- The Plan builds on a strong history of national efforts to improve protected area planning, establishment and management in a region faced with rapid change. *“Protected areas across East Asia are faced with a range of new threats from rapid development, habitat fragmentation and climate change,”* says **Dr Xie Yan, WCPA Regional Vice-Chair for East Asia**. *“However, with change comes new opportunities for protected areas to position themselves as the core of healthy ecosystems which are so essential for prosperity.”*
- The Action Plan offers a focused and unbiased analysis on the problems and achievements of protected area management in the region. East Asia has made tremendous strides in developing wide ranging and diverse protected area systems, but many weaknesses in managing and protecting existing reserves continue to threaten the region’s biodiversity. *“For protected areas, IUCN hopes the Regional Action Plan heralds a new era of enhanced cooperation across national boundaries,”* says **Peter Shadie, Head of IUCN’s Regional Protected Areas Programme**. *“The Plan will be a vehicle to support sharing of capacity, experience and learning on tackling protected area challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The countries of the region are so environmentally, culturally, economically and politically different, yet there exists a common purpose to implement the strategic directions under the Plan.”*
- The Action Plan, generously supported by Japan’s Ministry of the Environment, has been developed through a long process of consultation driven by IUCN and the WCPA, the East Asia network of protected area experts.
- The Plan has been published in English, Japanese, Korean and Chinese to ensure it engages across a broad cross section of protected area practitioners. *“The plan links strongly to national level obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for protected areas, and identifies a number of key actions and projects requiring further regional and/or national attention,”* says **Dr Xie Yan, WCPA Regional Vice-Chair for East Asia**. *“The Government of Japan has been a solid, long-term supporter of protected areas in East Asia. This support highlights their unflagging commitment to protected area management and sets the regional scene for the next Conference of Parties (COP 10) meeting on the CBD, to be held in the City of Nagoya, Japan, in 2010.”*

**Where: October 8, 2008, 13:00-14:00** in the book store. Book launch of Regional Action plan for the Protected Areas of East Asia.

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