

Protected Areas (Agenda item 4.7)

Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP9), Bonn, Germany, 19-30 May 2008

Recommendations

IUCN urges COP 9 to:

- ✓ **Call** for a renewal of global political commitment to strengthen protected areas as a critical tool for conserving global biodiversity and for supporting sustainable development;
- ✓ **Call** for countries to continue and expand efforts to assess the management effectiveness of protected areas, including system level management effectiveness evaluation;
- ✓ **Consider** the potential for promoting new voluntary commitments and regional challenge initiatives to support the establishment and management of protected areas;
- ✓ **Recognize** the benefits of protected areas to their national economies and well-being of local populations, and fund their protected area system accordingly, as a contribution to sustainable development;
- ✓ **Encourage donors, including the GEF, to:**
 - increase their funding for protected areas at national levels and give priority to support sustainable financing initiatives;
 - Support a “plan of action to strengthen capacity for national PoWPA implementation”, by providing funding for professionalizing protected areas management and for the delivery of a strategic set of regional catalyzing workshops, technical clinics, and ongoing knowledge exchange;
 - enhance their commitment to fund voluntary national commitments and regional initiatives;
- ✓ **Call on** parties, other governments and supporting organisations to support particular needs for implementation of the PoWPA by:
 - calling for enhanced efforts to fully apply provisions on the CBD to address the failure to increase the number of Marine Protected Areas in the High Seas;
 - promoting protected areas as an important element of Climate Change strategies and ensure that climate change is integrated in PoWPA; Call for countries to integrate the full recognition of the rights and roles of indigenous and local communities in protected areas and protected area systems, and to explore and recognize innovative governance mechanisms for areas;
 - encouraging better linkages between relevant Conventions and the CBD to ensure they are more mutually supportive. In particular, effort needs to be made to harness World Heritage sites as launching pads and pilot sites for the PoWPA;
 - recognizing the Global Islands Partnership (GLISPA) as an effective platform to accelerate the implementation the PoW on PAs and Islands.

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Introduction

IUCN would like to highlight the need for a greater sense of urgency to respond to the current crisis of biodiversity loss. The 2007 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species now includes 41,415 species of which 16,306 (39%) are threatened with extinction. Protected areas are an essential tool to address this crisis and its role must, therefore, be better recognized and supported within the CBD.

Protected areas constitute one of the world's major land uses as they currently cover over 11.63% of the earth's terrestrial surface.¹ During the last decade, the number of protected areas grew significantly, in particular in developing countries and within terrestrial ecosystems. Nevertheless, IUCN is concerned that significant gaps remain in relation to the coverage of protected areas, particularly in the marine, freshwater and coastal ecosystems.

A carefully planned and managed system of protected areas is essential for achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives. IUCN considers that the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) adopted by Parties to the CBD in 2004, which incorporates key recommendations from the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress², places protected areas at the heart of efforts by national governments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Need for renewal of political and financial support for protected areas

Renewal of political support to enhance management of protected areas is crucial and particularly so given current pressures on protected areas such as impacts associated with climate change, increased urbanization, rapid changes in land-use and deforestation, mass tourism, invasive alien species and other negative factors.

In this context, IUCN would like to express its disappointment of the little result achieved at the second CBD Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Protected Areas (WGPA-2). This meeting was of particular importance as it was tasked to renew the Programme of Work on

¹ World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) 2006 indicates that there are over 100,000 protected areas covering over 19.6 million sq km, over 11.63% of the world's territorial area (terrestrial and marine).

² This meeting was held in Durban, South Africa in September 2003. It was the largest protected areas event in history and involved 5,000 protected areas specialists

Protected Areas for after the COP10 in 2010. IUCN notes with great concern that Parties failed to reach agreement on (a) the review of the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas; and (b) options for mobilizing financial resources for its implementation.

CBD COP 9 represents an opportunity to lay the groundwork for protected areas policy through 2010, when the Programme of Work on Protected Areas will be renewed. This opportunity was also underlined during the Durban+5 Meeting held from 8 to 11 April 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa.³

The Durban+5 meeting brought together 80 internationally renowned experts in protected areas to discuss progress in implementing the key recommendations adopted at the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress. Participants at Durban+5 meeting noted that there has been considerable progress in the establishment and management of protected areas in many countries and that the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas has a vital role in stimulating action and progress.⁴ Finally participants established the framework and process for the next IUCN World Parks Congress which it is anticipated will be held in 2014.

IUCN considers that CBD COP 9 should call for renewing a global commitment to strengthen protected areas as a critical tool for conserving global biodiversity and for supporting sustainable development. This message of renewal should:

³ This meeting is the follow up of the recommendations adopted at the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress held in 2003

⁴ Participants also noted that many challenges remain and that climate change represents the major overarching issue facing protected areas in the 21st century. It was also discussed that 6,300 protected areas have now had their effectiveness assessed in line with the IUCN Best Practice on Assessing the Management Effectiveness of Protected Areas and that this list of protected areas could form the basis for a "green list" of protected areas. Durban+5 also noted the important initiatives in involving Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in protected areas and, in particular, highlighted the growth in the recognition of Community Conserved Areas as a significant achievement; but it also noted that in most countries significant progress needed to be made in the recognition of the rights of indigenous and local communities and the integration of the full range of governance types of protected areas in ways that are respectful of the knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities. More information on this meeting may be found at <http://cms.iucn.org/what/issues/protected/index.cfm?uNewsID=831>

- ✓ include an adjustment to the timeline for targets, to reflect the realities of national implementation;
- ✓ maintain the focus on a limited number of key themes, such as management effectiveness, governance, equity and impacts on livelihoods, and sustainable financing which need to be continuously addressed;
- ✓ emphasize the importance of adaptive management of protected areas, and the need to ensure their ecological connectivity, in the face of global climate; and
- ✓ establish more explicit mechanisms to support national implementation, including an emphasis on strengthening national plans of action as mentioned above.

IUCN would also like to use this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to assist national governments, NGOs and other key stakeholders, in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

IUCN urges COP 9 to:

- ✓ **Call** for a renewal of global political commitment to strengthen protected areas as a critical tool for conserving global biodiversity and for supporting sustainable development;
- ✓ **Call** for countries to continue and expand efforts to assess the management effectiveness of protected areas, including system level management effectiveness evaluation;
- ✓ **Consider** the potential for promoting new voluntary commitments and regional challenge initiatives to support the establishment and management of protected areas;
- ✓ **Recognize** the benefits of protected areas to their national economies and well-being of local populations, and fund their protected area system accordingly, as a contribution to sustainable development.

The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA)

a) Review of implementation

IUCN recognizes the following elements as important to improve implementation of the PoWPA: (a) strengthening the elaboration and implementation of the “*plan of action to strengthen capacity for national PoWPA implementation*” in order to include technical training activities at national and sub-national levels, and encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience, between and within countries. Definition of themes and delivery of content should reflect local needs and should be led by regional and national partners. It is crucial that Parties request donors to fund these activities. (b) organizing further regional workshops, as they play an important role in stimulating and catalyzing action in relation to the implementation of the PoWPA. Further development of regional workshops should be encouraged by the CBD COP 9; (c) enhancing capacity building and awareness raising in relation to the PoWPA, particularly in relation to strengthening:

- National awareness, including local governments and communities as well as private sector and key stakeholders, regarding overall PoWPA elements, goals and targets.
- Implementation of element two (Governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing), which is crucial and yet among the least effectively advanced
- Knowledge on availability and application of a wide variety of available tools to assist in the implementation of the different elements of the PoWPA.
- National data collection, accessibility and verification/quality control processes that ensure more accurate and globally comparable data, including on socio-economic issues.

IUCN stands ready to support the design and delivery of a “plan of action to strengthen capacity for national PoWPA implementation” in its final years, through a set of regionally-lead catalyzing workshops, technical clinics, and ongoing knowledge exchange. IUCN is also ready to offer its expertise through IUCN/WCPA to undertake a systematic analysis, in collaboration with Parties, the CBD Secretariat and NGOs, of the impediments and factors of success that is resulting in implementation of the PoWPA.

IUCN/WCPA is prepared and willing to play a key role in assisting the Secretariat and Parties to the Convention in designing and implementing this process of renewal.

b) Options for mobilizing adequate and timely financial resources

Adequate and sustainable financing is essential if protected areas are to achieve their objectives of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Donors need to increase their support to ensure long term and sustainable implementation of protected area systems, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

There is considerable guidance available on protected area financing, including through the work of the Conservation Finance Alliance, and through the wealth of material delivered at the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress. It is recommended that this information be translated in as many languages as possible, widely distributed, strongly promoted and efficiently applied. In addition, IUCN has recently published its latest guidance: "Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas; A Global Review of Challenges and Options"⁵ (available at <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/guidelines.htm#susfinance>), which sets out some key challenges for the future of funding protected areas.

In particular, IUCN notes: (a) the importance of showcasing social, cultural and economic benefits of protected areas and using this to justify increase financing for protected areas; (b) the importance of better demonstrating how protected areas contribute to poverty reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, human health, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals⁶; (c) that national voluntary commitments and country-to-country regional challenges for the creation and effective management of protected areas have demonstrated significant potential for encouraging and mobilizing actions.

⁵ World Commission on Protected Areas Best Practice Protected Area Guideline Series No. 13. Emerton, L., Bishop, J. and Thomas, L. (2006). IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. X + 97pp.

⁶ Report on protected areas: UNEP / WCMC 2007

IUCN encourages donors, including the GEF, to:

- ✓ **Increase** their funding for protected areas at national levels and give priority to support sustainable financing initiatives;
- ✓ **Support** a "plan of action to strengthen capacity for national PoWPA implementation", by providing funding for professionalizing protected areas management and for the delivery of a strategic set of regional catalyzing workshops, technical clinics, and ongoing knowledge exchange;
- ✓ **Enhance** their commitment to fund voluntary national commitments and regional initiatives.

c) Specific aspects of PoWPA implementation

Marine Protected Areas⁷

Current coverage of Protected Areas in the marine environment is less than 1% of the waters under jurisdictions of coastal States and virtually non-existent in waters beyond national jurisdiction. IUCN believes that the CBD should be of assistance in addressing this significant failure to increase the number of MPAs in the High Seas. Unless the rate of establishing Marine Protected Areas, including community conserved marine areas, increases significantly, the CBD goal of establishing a network of Marine Protected Areas representing 10% of the world's marine and coastal regions by 2012, would not be met before 2045 for areas within national jurisdiction of States and 2060 for areas beyond national jurisdiction.

IUCN, therefore, urges COP9 to:

- ✓ **call** for enhanced efforts to fully apply provisions on the CBD to address the failure to increase the number of Marine Protected Areas in the High Seas.

Protected Areas and Climate Change⁸

Biodiversity conservation must be clearly and functionally linked to climate change discussions. Climate change is an issue that will impact the future of protected areas as,

⁷ See also IUCN Position Paper on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity for CBD COP9, 2008

⁸ See also IUCN Position Paper on Biodiversity and Climate Change for CBD COP9, 2008

among other, it will influence the distribution of species and the composition and dynamics of broader ecosystems. Protected areas management must integrate climate change adaptation strategies and apply innovative models of protected area governance, particularly those which encourage landscape-scale management and conservation corridors.

IUCN urges COP9 to:

- ✓ **promote** protected areas as an important element of Climate Change strategies and ensure that climate change is integrated in PoWPA.

Protected Areas, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Protected areas have traditionally been perceived as serving a primary role in the conservation of biological diversity. Increasingly, they are also recognized as playing a critical role in protecting and enhancing the livelihoods of people, including those living in poverty, provided they are managed with or by such people. The role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in protected areas is critically important. The rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities must be respected in the context of protected areas establishment and management. IUCN takes notes of the concerns expressed by Indigenous Peoples representatives at WGPA-2 and urges Parties to ensure their full participation in discussions related to Protected Areas.

IUCN urges COP9 to:

- ✓ **call** for countries to integrate the full recognition of the rights and roles of indigenous and local communities in protected areas and protected area systems, and to explore and recognize innovative governance mechanisms for protected areas, in particular co-managed protected areas, community conserved areas (including indigenous protected areas), and private protected areas.

Protected Areas, the World Heritage sites and other related Conventions⁹

IUCN encourages Parties to the CBD to design and implement activities that promote synergies

and mutual support of biodiversity related conventions. International designations such as World Heritage (WH) sites, Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves have provided useful and effective tools for enhancing the establishment and management of protected areas. In particular, the WH Convention could play a stronger role in developing Protected Areas systems by serving as "learning platforms" and "flagships" for innovation and capacity building. More effort needs to be made to harness World Heritage sites as launching pads and pilot sites for the PoWPA.

IUCN urges COP9 to:

- ✓ **encourage** better linkages between relevant Conventions and the CBD to ensure they are more mutually supportive. In particular, effort needs to be made to harness World Heritage sites as launching pads and pilot sites for the PoWPA.

Protected Areas and Islands

IUCN notes the many threats facing biodiversity on small islands, including climate change and associated sea level rise as well as invasive species. In this context IUCN highlights the importance of the the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and believes Parties should support measures to strengthen its mandate and programme.

IUCN urges COP9 to:

- ✓ **recognize** the Global Islands Partnership (GLISPA) as an effective platform to accelerate the implementation the PoW on PAs and Islands.

⁹ See also IUCN Position Paper on Synergies for CBD COP9, 2008