

Enhancing the contribution from Protected Areas to Biodiversity Conservation – The role of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA)

Convention on Biological Diversity
Fourteenth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA14, 10-21 May 2010, Nairobi, Kenya) and Third Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI3, 24-28 May 2010, Nairobi, Kenya)

Summary of main recommendations:

1. Strategies to strengthen implementation

At the national level

IUCN calls on SBSTTA14 to recommend that COP10 calls on Parties to:

- ✓ Ensure that National Gap Analysis of Protected Areas (PAs) employs best practice by fully datasets (e.g. IUCN Red List) and methodologies (e.g. key biodiversity areas);
- ✓ Enhance national PA systems based on the implementation of relevant existing plans;
- ✓ Ensure that PA plans and strategies are integrated into national economic and development plans;
- ✓ Promote further communications on the values and benefits derived from biodiversity and PAs to society; and
- ✓ Ensure full involvement of indigenous and local communities in PA management structures.

At the regional level

IUCN invites Parties to:

- ✓ Consider using regional initiatives to promote transboundary cooperation and the design and implementation of connectivity conservation approaches; and

IUCN calls on donor countries to:

- ✓ Provide funding for regional technical networks, such as those associated with IUCN to further support POWPA implementation.

At the global level

IUCN calls on SBSTTA14 to recommend that COP10 calls on Parties to:

- ✓ Recognize the need for the integration of global and regional databases (e.g. those of IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, IABIN, POWPA-CBD, EEA, RedLac), and provide resources for this, to support effective monitoring and reporting of POWPA implementation.

2. Issues that need greater attention

Biodiversity conservation

IUCN strongly recommends that SBSTTA14:

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- ✓ Prioritize the expansion of PA coverage to include areas supporting threatened species and to increase the protection of key biodiversity areas.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

IUCN calls on SBSTTA14 to recommend that Parties:

- ✓ Continue to urge strongly for establishment of new MPAs and MPA networks in under-represented coastal and marine environments both within and beyond national jurisdiction; and
- ✓ Welcome and strongly encourage international collaborative efforts for implementation of the POWPA in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

IUCN recommends that donor countries, the GEF and other multilateral and bilateral donors:

- ✓ Support Parties to establish new MPAs and MPA networks and to develop the necessary capacity for their effective management.

Sustainable finance

IUCN strongly recommends that SBSTTA14:

- ✓ Considers exploring lessons learned and options to increase the use of market-based incentives for biodiversity conservation, such as Payments for Ecosystem Services; and
- ✓ Explores options for innovative financial mechanisms involving the private sector as well as for obtaining additional support from non-traditional sectors, such as public health, in order to support the implementation of POWPA.

Climate Change

IUCN calls on SBSTTA14 to:

- ✓ Further promote greater understanding and recognition of the important role that PAs can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies; and

IUCN recommends that SBSTTA14 calls on Parties to:

- ✓ Source additional funding for PAs management, including the use of national and international funding options dedicated to implement national climate change strategies and action plans where PAs contribute to the implementation of such strategies and action plans.

Urban Conservation Planning

IUCN calls on SBSTTA14 to:

- ✓ Explicitly recognize the interconnectedness between cities, urban people, PAs, other areas of importance for biodiversity and nature in general as an opportunity to foster biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration and poverty reduction.

Target and timetable issues

IUCN calls on SBSTTA14 and WGR13 to encourage Parties to:

- ✓ Consider in the post 2010 CBD Strategic Plan, IUCN's proposal for Target 11: *By 2020, all terrestrial, freshwater and key biodiversity areas have been protected through representative networks of effectively managed protected area systems, integrated into wider land and seascapes, and the total global coverage of recognized protected areas (according to IUCN categories) is at least 15%.*

Introduction

Protected areas (PAs) are recognized as critical instruments in achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals.

PAs are the world's most cost effective tool for biodiversity conservation, while also contributing to people's livelihoods, particularly at the local level, thus assisting in poverty reduction. PAs are at the core of efforts for in-situ conservation of nature and provision of ecosystem services that are essential for water supply, food production, public health and reduction of the impacts of natural disasters. Their role in helping mitigate and adapt to climate change is also increasingly recognized; it has been estimated that the global network of PAs stores at least 15% of terrestrial carbon.

National governments have dedicated important efforts to establishing more than 120,000 PAs worldwide covering near 14% of the Earth's terrestrial land surface. This represents a substantial global land use commitment to biodiversity conservation. It is therefore encouraging to witness the serious attention that the CBD POWPA has received, making it one of the most successful CBD's programmes of work (POW). IUCN now urges further efforts for its full implementation.

IUCN, particularly through its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), has actively supported the implementation of this POW. Whilst overall progress in its implementation is encouraging, there are still many challenges to address as noted in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/5 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/5/ Add.1. These reflect the state of play in relation to implementation of POWPA and are consistent with the recommendations from the "Futures Workshop" organized by IUCN and the SCBD on the future of POWPA (Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, September 2009).

IUCN is pleased to report, as recommended in COP Decision VII/28, IUCN/WCPA has developed revised Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories (IUCN 2008). IUCN/WCPA has also developed guidelines on Connectivity Conservation Management. The IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC), working in collaboration with members of the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) and WCPA are completing a Protected Areas Legislative Guidelines which will lay the foundation for legislative reform on PAs. Technical guidelines on ecological

restoration and adaptation and mitigation to climate change will be shortly developed.

1. Strategies to strengthen implementation

At the national level

For IUCN, POWPA is a catalytic tool to enhance PAs planning and effective management. We therefore recommend that Parties' efforts be mainly focused on enhancing national PA systems by strengthening the implementation of existing plans and developing new plans only when absolutely necessary in order to maximize the limited human and financial resources available for PAs.

The effective implementation of recommendations resulting from National Gap Analyses (NGA) based on best practice through utilization of existing datasets (e.g. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species) and methodologies (e.g., key biodiversity areas) is essential. In this context, Parties should prioritize the establishment of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) where this would better conserve marine biodiversity. Consideration should also be given to establishing PAs in other under-represented biomes, such as freshwater ecosystems, tropical and sub-tropical coniferous forests and temperate grasslands. At least 20% of threatened species, and more than half of key biodiversity areas, remain wholly unrepresented in PAs, and filling these gaps should be a high priority.

IUCN supports the integration of POWPA action plans, where they already exist, into national biodiversity strategies and climate change mitigation and adaptation plans. IUCN supports the linking of PAs through connectivity conservation initiatives involving multiple stakeholders to develop large scale integrated conservation across significant areas of land and sea.

Priority should also be given to the integration of PA strategies into national economic and development plans, to minimize impacts on biodiversity and carbon sequestration within PAs from development projects. Impacts from projects potentially affecting remaining wilderness areas, key biodiversity areas and other areas of significant conservation values, or those identified for the establishment of new PAs should be avoided. In doing so IUCN strongly encourages inter-sectoral dialogue between PA managers with economic sectors to reduce existing and emerging

use conflicts, and protect ecosystem health and services.

IUCN fully supports actively fostering networks of engaged individuals and organisations in national level “Friends of POWPA” to support POWPA implementation; however, it is essential that increased representation of civil society is included in these partnerships, in particular, of local communities and indigenous peoples’ organizations. This can further contribute to the implementation of POWPA Goals 2.1 and 2.2, which, despite their crucial importance, are lagging behind at national and global levels.

A key focus of work for enhanced national level “Friends of POWPA” engagement should be on developing and implementing national and sub-national capacity building programmes for supporting implementation of POWPA. Whilst capacity building workshops are important at the global level, IUCN considers that they are essential at national and sub-national levels, where POWPA is actually implemented. Experience shows that the level of integration of current PA thinking in institutions and communities at these levels is currently very limited.

At the regional level

IUCN fully supports the development and implementation of regional initiatives aiming to improve regional conservation under-represented biomes and other key biodiversity areas. IUCN urges Parties to protect key transboundary areas, where possible using these initiatives to promote transboundary cooperation. Through the design and implementation of connectivity conservation projects, IUCN urges Parties to contribute to biodiversity conservation both within and outside PAs, to maintaining ecosystem integrity and support climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Donor countries and bilateral and multilateral organizations are also urged to support the effective functioning of regional technical support networks, such as those associated with IUCN. These play a major role in capacity building and in fostering innovation and science-based approaches for the development of regional initiatives.

At the global level

Finding innovative ways to increase awareness of the crucial role of PAs to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is urgently needed in order to enhance commitments and support

from policy and decision makers as well as from civil society as a whole.

Urgent attention should be given to develop a framework, standards, tools and indicators for social assessment of PAs, and to include such indicators in assessing the effectiveness of PA management. It is also recommended that information from social assessments be included in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).

Recommendations from management effectiveness assessments should be implemented and integrated into other assessments of POWPA (e.g. sustainable finance). Additional resources should be allocated for: a) Parties to implement recommendations from management effectiveness assessments at national level as well as in specific PAs, and b) enhancing the WDPA to include full and up to date information from management effectiveness assessments.

It is also essential that global and regional databases (e.g. those of IUCN / UNEP-WCMC WDPA, IABIN, POWPA-CBD, EEA, RedLac.) are integrated to improve coherence and effectiveness in the use of these data and information. Parties are urged to provide financial support for this. This effort should be assisted by aligning national PA classifications with the revised IUCN System of Protected Areas Management Categories to facilitate reporting and monitoring of POWPA.

IUCN emphasizes the need to coordinate POWPA implementation with other environmental conventions, agreements and programmes (RAMSAR, UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention, UNESCO’s MAB Programme, UNFCCC, UNCCD), as well as with other CBD Programmes of Work to improve effectiveness of actions.

IUCN also encourages Parties to participate in and support the forthcoming 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress and to use this opportunity to jointly and critically review progress on POWPA and the contribution of PAs to the objectives of the CBD, and in particular the implementation of the post 2010 CBD Strategic Plan.

2. Issues that need greater attention

Biodiversity conservation

Global gap analysis reveals that at least 20% of threatened species are wholly unrepresented in PAs. Expanding PA coverage to safeguard these species is a very high priority.

Over the last 30 years, extensive national level work has been conducted to identify sites of global biodiversity conservation significance, based on global standards and criteria (currently termed “key biodiversity areas”). A joint IUCN Species Survival Commission- World Commission on Protected Areas taskforce has been convened to consolidate these global standards.

Meanwhile, these national processes have already identified many unprotected sites of conservation significance. For example, only one-third of sites identified by the Alliance for Zero Extinction are currently protected.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

The review of progress of POWPA highlights that extremely little progress has been achieved towards protecting the marine environment through the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Results and recommendations from the “Futures Workshop” strongly affirmed that this is one of the issues which requires high priority urgent action at all levels.

Continuing to explore options at the United Nations for establishing MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction is a pressing priority. At the same time, priority should be given to establishing new MPAs and MPA networks in under-represented coastal and marine environments. Results from comprehensive gap analyses have shown that many areas remain under-represented and that there is both a great need and high potential to establish new MPAs (and MPA networks) in a number of countries.

The term “territorial waters” refers to waters within 12 miles from shore. There is a critical need to address the gaps in MPA coverage to also include continental shelves, open ocean areas and deep sea areas under national jurisdiction and control. In terms of specific textual changes to the CBD recommendations for SBSTTA14, IUCN recommends modifying the language in paragraph 16 of UNEP/CBD/SBSST/14/5/Add.1 to avoid limiting the implementation of POWPA to ‘territorial waters’ only, and instead implement across the broader area of “waters under national jurisdiction and control” IUCN also feels that Parties should be ‘urged’ to increase their efforts rather than invited and so the word ‘invite’ should be replaced by “urge”.

Sustainable finance

IUCN agrees with the request to Parties on sustainable finance in UNEP/CBD/

SBSTTA/14/5/Add.1. Whilst IUCN notes that additional funding to implement POWPA could be difficult to obtain owing to, among other factors, long-term effects of the international financial crisis, IUCN strongly recommends increasing where possible the levels of funding provided by the GEF for PAs.

In addition, recommendations in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/5/Add.1 should explicitly promote the need to explore options for innovative financial mechanisms to strengthen financing for PAs. These include market-based mechanisms for ecosystem goods such as carbon and water, as well as to better use the LifeWeb Initiative. It is also essential to involve non-traditional sectors such as public health for obtaining additional support. IUCN commends for further and wider consideration the experience gained from the “Healthy Parks – Healthy People” initiative pioneered by Parks Victoria in Australia.

Parties to the Convention are also encouraged to use results of ecological valuation studies such as The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study (TEEB) are particularly relevant to make a stronger and more practical case for increasing the national budget allocated to PA systems.

Climate change

IUCN strongly supports the recommendation to achieve target 1.2 of POWPA by 2015, through concerted efforts to integrate protected areas into wider landscapes and seascapes management, to address climate change impacts and increase ecosystem resilience. In this context, IUCN recommends the “Natural Solutions” publication (IUCN-WCPA, TNC, UNDP, WCS, WB and WWF, 2009) to further promote greater understanding on the role PAs can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. In addition, the publication “Connectivity Conservation Management – A Global Guide” produced through the WCPA Mountains Biome and Connectivity Conservation Theme (2010), provides practical guidance on how PA managers can assist with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Parties need to identify opportunities where PAs provide benefits for climate change adaptation and mitigation to determine eligibility for climate change funding, where appropriate through the implementation of the REDD mechanism.

However, IUCN believes that there could be more immediate and practical ways of procuring additional funding to support PA management by exploring options to use funding already allocated

by governments for national climate change strategies and action plans.

IUCN also recommends that the SCBD facilitates, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the profiling of pilot projects with benefits for biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation through the existing clearing house mechanisms provided by the LifeWeb Initiative, as well as facilitate the financing of these pilot projects by bilateral and private donors.

IUCN strongly supports the need to convene a special meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio conventions in 2011 aimed at ensuring that PAs are fully recognized as a key component of the joint programme on biodiversity and climate change. IUCN strongly believes that PAs represent an issue of common interest that can serve to enhance more needed synergies between these conventions.

Urban Conservation Planning

The world is urbanizing fast, and city dwellers have less and less contact with nature. This has important consequences for those concerned with PAs and who depend on urban based people for political and financial support. This interconnectedness is not widely appreciated. With very few exceptions, separate sets of people and institutions work on urban and conservation issues, in spite of the fact that some urban and peri-urban PAs contain important biodiversity values.

All cities have natural features which provide opportunities for ecosystem restoration. Poverty relief through the development and implementation of ecosystem restoration projects can be directly addressed in urban areas, providing significant ecosystem benefits for city management. WCPA, through its Cities and Protected Areas Specialist Group, will be willing to provide capacity building and technical guidance on this important issue.

Target and timetable issues

Aligning the targets and timelines of POWPA with the post-2010 targets agreed in the revised Strategic Plan of the Convention is essential as mentioned in IUCN's Position Paper "A New Vision for Biodiversity Conservation- Post-2010 Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity". Noting progress on the implementation of POWPA so far, Target 11 as proposed in

document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/10, is achievable. IUCN proposes an alternative target 11: *By 2020, all terrestrial, freshwater and key biodiversity areas have been protected through representative networks of effectively managed protected area systems, integrated into wider land and seascapes, and the total global coverage of recognized protected areas (according to IUCN categories) is at least 15%.*

Owing to the critical importance of this issue and the urgent need to effectively address increasing threats to biodiversity, IUCN makes several further observations:

- a. There is evidence to suggest that a much greater percentage of the total area of land and sea needs to be under some form of conservation management to achieve the long term survival of the biosphere and all life which depends on it. Therefore the proposed 15% target by 2020 should be considered a milestone towards achieving a far larger target in the long term.
- b. The terrestrial component of this target should be to achieve 20% of protection on the land by 2020. IUCN notes that a number of countries have achieved and even surpassed the original 10% target for protected areas in terrestrial ecosystems. Furthermore the results from a number of comprehensive gap analyses indicate that in some countries it would be feasible to achieve a target of protection of 25-30% of terrestrial ecosystems. In addition some countries have not yet recognized Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) and private protected areas in their national system. Therefore IUCN strongly believes that a 20% target for protection of terrestrial PAs by 2020 is achievable.
- c. The 15% global target (no 11) relates to fully established and effectively managed protected areas in all IUCN Management Categories (IUCN Categories I to VI). This is an essential requirement as many protected areas have just been established on paper with no provision of human and financial resources towards their effective protection and management.
- d. Finally IUCN would like to note that there are rare, large, and substantially less modified terrestrial systems where the goal should be conservation through sustainable management at very high levels of protection, where possible, over the whole system. This will be essential to protect these large remaining wilderness areas on Earth.