

**Embargoed until October 7, 2008**

## Rewarding Ecosystems....Rewarding People

### **Background:**

Do people really have an economic interest in ecosystems? And are people really interested in protecting them? These questions will be raised during the ***Rewarding Ecosystems in West Asia*** session on 7 October during the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The session talks about the benefits exchanged between ecosystems and people, focusing on conditions in West Asia.

A number of approaches developed in the region will be presented such as EMPOWERS—participatory planning for natural resource management, stakeholder dialogue and concerted action (SDCA), Waqf (Islam-based endowment funds for conservation and development) and Hima, a traditional approach to ensure protection and conservation of protected areas.

### **Key Issues:**

*“The session showcases the attempts to come to win-win situations by emphasizing the socio-economics of ecosystem services. It will explore our reasons behind the need to reconcile ecosystems and people’s livelihoods”* said **Peter Laban**, Regional Programme Coordinator for the IUCN West Asia/Middle East (WAME) Regional Office. *“However, this situation will not be achieved without genuine participatory approaches and strong facilitation.”*

### **Where:**

- 7 October 2008, 11:30-3:00, CCIB, Room 127, Barcelona

### **Spokespersons:**

- **Peter Laban**, IUCN West Asia/Middle East (WAME) Regional Office, [peter.laban@iucn.org](mailto:peter.laban@iucn.org)  
Spanish Mobile: 0034 617541546.

### **Materials for the Media:**

For more information, please visit [www.iucn.org/wame](http://www.iucn.org/wame)

**Media team: Rania Faouri**, Communications Officer, IUCN West Asia, Middle East Regional Office, mobile +962 777888522, e-mail: [rania.faouri@iucn.org](mailto:rania.faouri@iucn.org)

### **About IUCN West Asia/Middle East (WAME) Regional Office**

IUCN West Asia/Middle East (WAME) Regional Office was established in October 2004 to launch a new and challenging phase of IUCN work in the region. The establishment of the WAME regional office is considered a turning point in the environmental movement in the region, through linking the environmental work with the development aspects; economical, social and environmental. The new West Asia/ Middle East region covers 13 countries which include: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Iraq and Iran. IUCN WAME works through four thematic programmes including: the Regional Water Resources & Drylands Programme (REWARD); Protected Areas Programme; Poverty, Equity & Gender Programme, and Marine Programme. [www.iucn.org/wame](http://www.iucn.org/wame)