



Moving Toward a 2020 Vision for IUCN

A Global Union for Sustainability

IUCN Strategy 2009-2020

January, 2009

This strategy is a living document, which will continue to be sharpened and updated with inputs from the IUCN network and its partners and informed by the IUCN organizational development and change process initiated in 2007. It is hoped that Members and partners will help shape IUCN's longer-term vision. Strategic thoughts and comments can be sent to strategy2020@iucn.org.

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Preface

Since the first IUCN strategy was released in 1995 human society has changed dramatically in ways hardly imaginable. We live in an interconnected world – environmentally, financially and electronically and the challenges of the 21st century compel us to reassess our role as a union, our ‘value proposition’ and the demands from broader society. We need to determine how to evolve as an institution to better serve those demands: it is time for a new IUCN strategy.

The starting premise for IUCN’s 2020 strategy is to recognize that while we are already doing good and valuable work, there are now many other organizations working on similar issues, and that we need to change, building on our strengths, if we are to meet the challenges we face. This document is based on the solid foundation of earlier institutional strategies and on the progress of recent years. It also incorporates the lessons learned from several reviews and evaluations of the work of the Union and in this way, aims to help IUCN to leap forward by better using its main assets – its wide networks of Members and Commission experts, its staff within its worldwide Secretariat and its constituency of governments and private bodies.

IUCN’s Vision: A just world that values and conserves nature.

IUCN’s Mission: Influence, encourage and assist societies to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Our vision and Mission remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, but if we are to meet these ambitious aims we need to vastly expand IUCN’s ability to influence change to enable humankind to live sustainably, in harmony with the natural world.

The overall objective of this strategy is to position IUCN as a global player in the fields of conservation and sustainability and ensure that this global platform offers value to IUCN Members, Commissions, partners, and the world at large. The aims of IUCN’s 2020 Strategy are:

- To confirm IUCN’s niche, Mission and ‘value proposition’ and to set a mid term roadmap that guides its Members, Commissions and staff, focuses its programme, defines changes in structure, governance and operations, priorities and approaches to work more effectively;
- To realize the potential of the Union’s Members, Commissions and other constituents.

The process for developing this strategy has involved:

- Advice and direction from IUCN’s Council and its various sub committees;
- Discussions with Members, Commission Members, Regional and National Committees and Secretariat staff;
- Dialogue with IUCN’s donors and partners;
- Consideration of the findings of external reviews of IUCN (2003 and 2007), the recommendations of various evaluations of thematic and regional programmes as well as the Secretariat’s regionalization and decentralization reports;
- Analysis of the findings from surveys of Members, donors and staff;
- The Future of Sustainability process;
- The IUCN organizational development and change process initiated in 2007.

Executive Summary

Despite all of the activity in the environmental movement during the latter part of the 20th century, we have come little closer to answering the fundamental question of how to deliver sustainability. Change is needed in almost every aspect of the economy, in many aspects of human culture and society, and in the terms of engagement between humanity and the rest of the biosphere. Three challenges stand out at the beginning of the 21st century: the challenge of conservation - standing up for the natural world, committing to justice and equity and promoting a low-carbon economy.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN¹) is committed and fully involved in finding solutions to all of these challenges.

IUCN is a union of Members, many of whom are at the forefront of action to conserve nature and natural resources. The role of the Union, as a collective entity, is to strengthen the capacity of its Members and partners to achieve their goals and promote excellence. By drawing the Members together in a common endeavour, IUCN provides a stronger and more authoritative voice for conservation than they could achieve separately.

IUCN's diverse Membership confronts a wide range of ethical, social, economic, cultural and environmental situations and forces. Under such circumstances a uniform approach to conservation is neither feasible nor desirable. IUCN seeks to develop and promote a common understanding, to build bridges between governments and non-governmental organizations, between science, policy and practice and with the private sector.

Recent surveys and evaluations of IUCN confirm that its Members and partners believe strongly in the concept and Mission of the Union and reaffirm its importance in today's world. However, they also want significantly greater involvement with the IUCN Programme, its Commissions and its Secretariat. To achieve this IUCN will focus on conserving biodiversity as the Union's heartland work as a basis for developing more effective and strategic interventions to support and influence the global sustainability agenda at all levels and deliver on four major priority areas:

1. Strengthen the Union as a global bridge-building network

IUCN will revitalize its Membership relations and enable its Commissions to meet new challenges. It will:

- Develop new governance arrangements to ensure meaningful involvement of Members in the governance of the Union while maintaining its democratic tradition and coherence;
- Develop and apply a new Constituency Policy and Strategy that will guide the Union's organizational evolution until 2020;
- Ensure access to the latest scientific developments (through Members, Commissions and partners) in order to be able to deliver credible science-based conservation;
- Ensure the culture change needed so that the Members, Commissions and Secretariat are all contributing to the delivery of an integrated programme of work (the 'One Programme' concept), explicitly and mutually adding value to each other, consistent with IUCN's value proposition and in a financially viable manner.

2. Communicate and manage conservation knowledge more effectively

IUCN will use the full potential of the latest technologies to generate and disseminate its knowledge. It will:

- Evolve its information technologies and information management systems to allow it to connect more effectively with its own community and with the outside world;

¹ IUCN is usually known by the shorter version of its formal name: International Union for Conservation of Nature

- Influence the broader political and economic environment, building on the knowledge and experience of every part of the IUCN community.

3. Increase the Secretariat's effectiveness

Any organization the size and complexity of IUCN requires a core team of dedicated people working solely in the interests of the Union. In the coming years, IUCN will:

- Make significant changes to its management systems to enable the organization to meet the expectations of its Members, Commissions and partners to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world;
- Strengthen its presence in various parts of the world to ensure connectivity with problems on the ground;
- Ensure that its Secretariat has the appropriate technical, collaborative and multi-cultural talents to adequately serve IUCN's Mission.

4. Secure and diversify funding

IUCN has found the necessary resources to carry out its work in past years and has recorded a steady increase in both income and expenditure. This is mainly due to a number of long-term financial (framework) agreements with several bilateral donor agencies and one private foundation. However, the available funding and choices about spending priorities have limited IUCN's ability to become a vigorous Membership and partner organization with a worldwide public reputation for its promotion of science-based best practice in sustainability. IUCN will therefore:

- Strengthen its fundraising ability to provide the Union with the additional funding it needs on a sustainable basis;
- Move from fundraising for local field project implementation to resource mobilization for policy and programme development, networking and Membership support;
- Build up a sufficient reserve to provide security against risks and to undertake activities in new frontier areas.

The Structure of the Strategy

The overall objective of this strategy is to position IUCN as a global player in the fields of conservation and sustainability and ensure it operates as a global platform offering value to its Members, Commissions, partners, and the world at large.

This Strategy:

- builds on the strengths of the Union, especially its democratic processes and volunteer networks;
- recognizes that the Members are the key constituents of the Union, and accordingly strengthens their involvement when it comes to determining the activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat and Commissions;
- emphasizes that IUCN must undertake an integrated programme approach (the 'One Programme') implemented through the cooperative endeavours of the Secretariat, the Commissions and other networks, with and on behalf of the Members;
- ensure that the IUCN Programme is based on the analysis of needs and priorities at sub-national, national, regional and global levels;
- emphasizes the importance of synthesizing the results of the Programme into policy recommendations, and to promote these at national, regional and global level in order to influence governance and action (the 'policy-practice loop');
- recognizes the value of networking within the Union and with other entities;

- proposes adjustments to the functions of the Council, Commissions, Secretariat and other components of the Union in order to deliver our mission more effectively;
- emphasizes that the Secretariat and activities of the Union must continue to be decentralized, to regional and national level;
- addresses the need for transformation of IUCN's management information and information technology systems; and
- addresses how more diversified funding sources should be pursued in order to support the work of the Union.

IUCN multi-level programmatic strategy

IUCN has developed a multi-level programmatic strategy presented and discussed at the World Conservation Congress, Barcelona 2008. This set of documents has been prepared in close consultation with Members, Commissions and partners and together, provides IUCN with a 'roadmap' for the coming decades, covering the long, medium and short-term plans for the Union towards achieving a *just world that values and conserves nature*.

a. Long-term vision: The Future of Sustainability

The Future of Sustainability is an international consultative process to support the development of a new sustainability vision and strategy relevant to the global challenges of the 21st century. It is both conceptual and solutions-oriented in scope and is being undertaken in partnership with some of the leading thinkers and institutions from around the world at global and regional level. Whilst the Future of Sustainability is in itself not IUCN's long-term strategy it provides the basis on which IUCN will plan its long-term direction.

For more information, see http://www.iucn.org/Members/future_sustainability/.

b. Medium-term vision: Moving Toward a 2020 Vision for IUCN

IUCN's medium-term vision is the subject of this document. It builds on the recommendations of the Future of Sustainability initiative, the External Review of IUCN (2007) and other monitoring and evaluation documents. It also takes into account the other managerial and structural processes currently in place in IUCN (Regionalization and Decentralization Phase II, Managerial Restructuring of the IUCN Secretariat, etc.) to ensure strategic and efficient delivery of the IUCN Programme.

c. Four-year vision: Shaping a Sustainable Future – the IUCN Programme 2009-2012

The IUCN Programme 2009-2012 – Shaping a Sustainable Future – provides the framework for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the conservation work undertaken by the Commissions and the Secretariat with and on behalf of Members during the intersessional period 2009-2012. It is a result-based, demand-driven plan of action that addresses global issues, incorporates national level priorities, and provides a structure for detailed work plans for the Commissions, the Regional and the Global Thematic Programmes of IUCN. The IUCN Programme 2009-2012 was designed to provide focus for the Union to take action and engage with Members, partners and other stakeholders and deliver concrete results for conservation and sustainability. A 4-year Operational Plan accompanies the IUCN Programme and provides detailed information on how the Programme and more broadly the IUCN *2020 Vision* will be delivered.

d. Biennial planning: Budgets and Workplans (1-2 years)

The 4-year plan forms the basis for the development of Annual/Bi-annual Workplans and Budgets for all Component Programmes, including estimates of resources (human and capital) required to deliver the Programme Plan and achieve strategic objectives and targets. The annual workplan and budget are approved by the IUCN Council.

I. Today's world through an environmental lens

In 2005, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) concluded that over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than ever before, largely to meet growing demands for food, freshwater, timber, fibre and fuel. The result of this change has been a substantial loss in the diversity of life on Earth. Both the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the MEA report serious declines in all types of species and in all ecosystems. The loss of species and degradation of ecosystems is of great concern from a conservation perspective because of the intrinsic value of nature, and because of the potentially disastrous consequences of such loss on human society.

The direct causes of biodiversity loss are well known. They include loss and degradation of habitat, invasive species, overexploitation, pollution and climate change. Yet underlying these direct causes are deeper economic and social challenges such as human population changes, consumption, production and waste management, the effect of a globalized economy, and the impact of politics, institutions and cultural values.

Over-consumption of natural resources and the production of waste products (particularly carbon dioxide) by OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries contribute disproportionately to impacts on the environment. If emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and South Africa emulate the unsustainable consumption patterns and generate similar levels of waste of OECD countries, the global impact on natural resources will be catastrophic.

The good news is that viable options for a more sustainable future exist – we simply have to choose them and implement them. Environmental issues, once regarded as irrelevant to economic activity, today are rewriting the rules for business, investors, and consumers.

A new generation of communications, if well used, can help highlight the positive links between biodiversity, livelihoods, lifestyles, prosperity, tolerance and peace. The environmental and social justice movement now encompasses one million NGOs embracing more than 100 million people worldwide – the world's largest single movement, linking sustainability, social justice and equity. The environmental community is beginning to take better advantage of these new outreach opportunities, through second generation Internet and mobile phone technologies for example, to engage new partners in strengthening the growing social movement for sustainability.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that tackling the underlying causes of unsustainable development will affect the vested interests of powerful groups that shape and determine policy decisions. We believe that the principal way to address these powers is by continuing to broaden the new awareness of a sustainable environment for development, not development to the detriment of our environment.

The problems we face are grave, complex and urgent, but they are not insurmountable. Our challenge is to translate the growing awareness of environmental urgency and the gathering social movement into an effective campaign for political change that will deliver meaningful results for conservation and sustainability.

During the intersessional period 2005-2008, the IUCN Council commissioned and participated in a study of The Future of Sustainability which was presented to the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona for discussion and inspiration for action. The study reminds us that despite all of the activity in the environmental movement during the latter part of the 20th century, "*we have come little nearer to answering the fundamental question: how do we deliver sustainability? Or even, recognizing the tyranny of impossible goals, how do we move towards delivering sustainability?*" It further warns that "*A transition to sustainability is vital and profoundly challenging*".

With our reputation for generating and disseminating sound scientific knowledge, our diverse structure and credibility that allows us to convene a range of stakeholders around key problems and our local to global reach, IUCN can play a catalytic role in this renewed global effort.

IUCN believes that the environmental constraints within which our societies and economies must operate are real and will result in declines in human wellbeing if not addressed urgently. While we should celebrate past achievements, the international community's response to environmental challenges over the last two decades has often been too slow, disconnected from the political process, and at scales that fail to respond to the magnitude of the challenges. IUCN aims to address this by greatly accelerating efforts by its Members and partners to address conservation and sustainability issues. It will do this by **strengthening the Union's heartland work on conserving the diversity of life, while developing more effective and strategic interventions to ensure that the global agenda for sustainability supports much-needed conservation objectives.**

To achieve its Mission, IUCN has to engage more effectively with its Members and with constituencies beyond the nature conservation community, including those engaged in development, politics and the private sector.

“Change is needed in almost every aspect of the economy, in many aspects of human culture and society, and in the terms of engagement between humanity and the rest of the biosphere. Three dimensions of change stand out: first, the challenge of decarbonizing the world economy; second, the challenge of committing to justice and equity; third, the challenge of conservation, of standing up for life and the biosphere”.

IUCN is committed and fully involved in finding solutions to all of these challenges.

II. Defining IUCN

1. Origins

Founded in October 1948, IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network organization. The concept which underpinned its foundation as a global union of Members committed to achieving conservation and sustainable use of natural resources remains valid today; it is central to IUCN's identity and purpose. Working with partners, IUCN has played a leading role in shaping the evolution of sustainable development policy, practice, and thinking around the world. Signature IUCN contributions include the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, its work on protected areas, the natural sites of the World Heritage Conventions among others. IUCN's strength is a consequence of its unique structure often referred to as the 'three pillar' (or the 'triple helix') structure: Members, Commissions and Secretariat.

2. IUCN's niche

IUCN is one of many institutions working on environmental issues, but it stands out, because of its long history and reach to all parts of the world and society, through its Members, experts and Secretariat.

In this context, IUCN needs to choose its areas of specialization strategically. The role of the World Conservation Congress and the IUCN Council is paramount in this respect. Because there are many other players in the conservation field IUCN needs to:

- identify the areas in which it can 'add value' to the work of others, particularly to its Members;
- spell out its relationships with similar organizations at global, regional, national and local levels;
- ensure IUCN's constituents understand the Union's niche.

IUCN's niche, as a Union of governments, NGOs, scientific expert networks and a decentralized Secretariat, is derived from the unique nature of its Membership and the framework it offers for coherent international action dedicated to produce and use knowledge about the environment to benefit people and nature. IUCN's niche is described as follows:

"IUCN provides the knowledge-based platform to connect practice to policy at global and local levels and to influence decisions and actions about the sustainability of the Earth and its people."

3. IUCN's Mission

IUCN's mission is 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*².

IUCN commits itself to maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards in carrying out its mission, and urges its constituents to make a similar commitment.

IUCN will perform its mission by:

- harnessing the strengths of its Members, Commissions, Secretariat and other partners to build global alliances for conservation;

² IUCN Statutes, 2004

- strengthening the institutional capacity of its Members to conserve biological diversity and safeguard ecological life-support processes; and
- influencing national and international legal and administrative instruments and environmental policies, including those of the United Nations system and international financial institutions.

4. IUCN's value proposition

IUCN's main assets are clearly its Members, its networks of experts organized through its Commissions, and its highly motivated and competent staff within its worldwide Secretariat.

The way in which an organization uses its assets to deliver added value through its products and services is called a 'value proposition'.

IUCN's value proposition:

a. IUCN provides credible, trusted knowledge

Credible knowledge on the status of the earth's natural resources, including species and changes in ecosystem goods and services, is essential to inform and influence policy and practice at all levels. IUCN is well known for its sound scientific base and know-how in conservation and sustainable natural resources management. In particular it has a track record in providing up-to-date knowledge on species conservation, protected area management and ecosystem management related to water, forests and oceans. IUCN derives its value as a trusted source of knowledge from its expert Commission networks, its Members, its partners and its staff.

b. IUCN convenes and builds partnerships for action

IUCN helps build bridges between different actors and promotes joint actions and solutions. It uses its unique structure and credibility to establish multi-stakeholder platforms that bring divergent views together. IUCN is increasingly seen as an 'honest broker' and a 'provider' of independent scientific advice on natural resources management issues. This has helped the Union to link to all stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, businesses and the science and engineering communities. IUCN tailors its knowledge and tools to specific situations to find solutions for nature and people and empowers others to make use of this knowledge to inform decision-making and action.

c. IUCN has a global-to-local and local-to-global reach

IUCN's extensive network of Members, Commission Members, partners and Secretariat provides it with an unequalled opportunity to bridge local and global decision making and action. IUCN's policy positions are underpinned by lessons from the field. Field interventions operate as learning centres that explore and find out what works in practice. Combining field-level experience with expertise available through its global networks, provides IUCN with the level of credibility it needs to influence national, regional and international policies and laws. IUCN translates international policies and opportunities into effective national and local governance arrangements. Through this it promotes sharing of knowledge and experience across political and cultural boundaries.

IUCN is the only environmental organization with a seat at the UN General Assembly. This provides the Union with an important and unique entry into the international debate on environment and development. Its UN Observer Status is a powerful conduit for the concerns and knowledge of its Members and Commissions at the international level.

d. IUCN influences standards and practices

IUCN uses its knowledge, convening power and local-to-global reach to develop and influence international, regional and national standards and practices. In some cases, IUCN has developed the standards such as those of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the IUCN Protected Areas category system.

The IUCN approach to influencing standards and practices helps to ensure that decisions are based on best available science and knowledge and have received input from a wide set of stakeholders. The Union further helps stakeholders to scale up and adapt practices to local conditions and provides standards for quality control.

These four features of IUCN's value proposition make the Union distinct from others in the conservation and sustainable development arena. They enable the Union to demonstrate leadership and ensure it has influence at many levels.

III. IUCN's 2020 Vision

In the coming years IUCN will seek to make a step change in fulfilling its vision and Mission and tackling 21st century issues by standing up for the nature, committing to justice and equity and promoting a low-carbon economy. It will:

- Improve its ability to produce and support the use of cutting-edge knowledge and tools for natural resources management;
- Respond more effectively to emerging conservation and sustainability issues;
- Increase the capacity of Members, commission Members, partners and the Secretariat to network and connect their actions in the field with global policy;
- Connect nature conservation issues and achievements to wider societal objectives such as security and poverty reduction at the national and international level;
- Reach new partners and promote innovative solutions to natural resources management challenges.

1. The Governance of the Union

Governance relates to the composition of the Union, the systems and processes by which its business is carried out and its policies developed, the relationship among these, and their use in balancing interests and positions within the Union.

This strategy anticipates minor adjustments to the governance of the Union in order to allow it to deliver its promise.

The World Conservation Congress (through its Members' Assembly), the Council it elects, and the Director General appointed by the Council, are the principal agents of governance in IUCN. The Congress undertakes three main kinds of business:

- a) Formal and Statutory:
 - Election of the President, Treasurer, Commission Chairs and Council;
 - Approval of reports and future Programme and Finance Plans;
 - Amendment of Statutes.
- b) Definition of Policy: adoption of resolutions and recommendations which define the general policy of the Union;
- c) General discussion and exchange of ideas: a platform for debate, contacts and informal exchange between delegates, Commission members and others.

The continuing expansion in Membership is making the World Conservation Congress large, unwieldy and expensive. For most Members, activities (b) and (c) provide the chief attraction, but it is difficult to accommodate all the concerns of a worldwide Membership in a congested 10 day agenda. At the same time, it is evident that participation in a large global gathering every four years is insufficient to satisfy the wish of the Membership for close involvement in the governance of IUCN. In recent years, Regional Members Forums have been held in all IUCN statutory regions, but their potential as a governance mechanism is limited by IUCN Statutes.

Between Sessions of the World Conservation Congress, the Council is responsible for annual approval of the audited accounts, workplans and budget. It is also empowered to interpret the policies of the Union and take such decisions as would normally require the attention of the Members' Assembly but cannot wait until the next Session. This is essential, since they require attention more often than once every four years. Given the large size of the Council, the Bureau has the potential to play an important role by acting on behalf of Council between Council meetings.

Strategic objectives for IUCN's governance

- To ensure that the Members of a large Union are directly and effectively involved in its governance;
- To develop new governance arrangements that allow for effective discharge of the business of the Union while preserving its democratic tradition and making participation more meaningful;
- Strengthen the Council to enable it to fulfil its role as an effective oversight and strategic body to guide the Union.

2. *The Constituency of the Union*

For the purposes of this strategy 'constituents' are institutions and individuals that interact regularly with and within the IUCN in a manner that contributes to the Union's Mission and to furthering their own goals. Historically, IUCN's core constituency has been its Members and the volunteer network that makes up its Commissions. To adequately address conservation challenges, IUCN also needs to engage with other key actors including social networks, the intergovernmental system, sub-national authorities, corporate bodies, academic institutions, the media, youth organizations, and the philanthropic sector.

A dilemma arises because different constituents have genuinely different perspectives and priorities. IUCN has a very broad constituency, some of whom see IUCN primarily as an opportunity to contribute to global conservation and sustainable living, others as a source of information, policy and technical advice and as an aid to achieving their own missions. IUCN must preserve an essential cohesion and common vision if it is to succeed, and this has implications for policy regarding the constituency it should seek.

Strategic objectives for IUCN's constituency:

- To understand, define and secure the optimal constituency for advancing the Mission of the Union by recruiting, developing, and involving as constituents those entities that have potential to contribute to and derive benefit from involvement with IUCN;
- To define and clarify the relationships between IUCN and its existing or potential constituents;
- To enhance relationships between existing IUCN constituents in order to optimize their contribution to advancing its mission;
- To ensure that the Union works effectively with and through these constituents (especially Members and voluntary networks) in advancing its mission in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner;
- To enhance the capacity of individual Members to contribute to conservation.

Further actions for Membership, Commissions and other constituents are detailed in the sections below.

a. Role and composition of IUCN's Membership

The Membership of IUCN has grown rapidly in recent years and has broadened in character so that organizations concerned with nature conservation in the traditional sense have now been joined by many concerned with sustainable development.

In March 2008, IUCN Membership stood at 1104, including 84 States, 111 Government Agencies, 874 National and International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and 35 Affiliates. The number of countries represented is more than 140.

During the past 15 years, IUCN's NGO Membership has almost doubled, State Membership has increased by 50% and agency and affiliate Membership has been largely stable. There are, however, practicalities to consider. How large and diverse can the Membership grow without threatening the identity and cohesion of the Union? Many small organizations (especially in poorer countries) find it difficult to keep up with payment of their Membership dues, yet their links with IUCN are important in advancing conservation in their country or region. How can IUCN maintain its role as a worldwide Union, linking and supporting a large number of States, government agencies and non-governmental organizations, but still ensure cohesiveness among the Membership?

Strategic objective for IUCN's Membership:

- To develop the Membership of the Union in a way that ensures balance between the various interests, cohesion, and the identification of all Members with the Mission and approach of the Union..

b. The IUCN Commissions – The world's largest network of environmental experts

The Commissions are “*networks of expert volunteers entrusted to develop and advance the institutional knowledge and experience and objectives of IUCN*”³ and as such, are a valuable feature of IUCN's constituency.

The IUCN Commissions are established by the World Conservation Congress in areas deemed as important, and are expected to develop and advance knowledge and experience in key areas for conservation and sustainability.

Commission Members contribute to setting global and national environmental standards, policies which in turn influence the efforts of governments and civil society to sustain biological diversity and conserve the natural resources on which human livelihoods are based.

The Commissions provide the principal mechanism through which individuals drawn from the Membership and other organizations can participate actively in the work of the Union and a source of conceptual analysis, synthesis of knowledge, evaluation of priorities, proposals for action and methodology which are of particular use to the Membership.

The following basic conditions need to be met if Commissions are to be effective in the 21st century:

- a clear and focused mission to attract appropriate experts to join the Commissions;
- a defined constituency of users, and Commission products that meet genuine needs among IUCN Members and partners;
- leadership by Chairs and Steering Committees and support by the Secretariat, but not such strong central control that creativity is suppressed;
- good communications within and between Commissions and with the other parts of the IUCN constituency.

Strategic objectives for IUCN's Commissions:

- To reflect the value of Commissions in advancing the mission of the Union;
- To ensure the leadership and Members of the Commissions are selected to best represent the issues being addressed;

³ IUCN statutes, 2004

- To promote partnerships between the Commissions and the Secretariat so that the Commissions play a significant role in the process of policy, programme development and implementation;
- To ensure that Commissions function in a manner which enables the Union to more fully realize their potential;
- To re-visit the concept of voluntarism in the 21st century, and examine the ways in which IUCN can benefit from the expertise of volunteers, and how their association with IUCN can be of benefit to them.

c. Other Constituents

Throughout its long history, IUCN has been in contact with a wide variety of partners and networks who are all important actors in bringing about conservation and sustainable development. Privileged among these have been the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and regional organizations.

We are now strengthening our links to organizations at the national and local level, and organizations dealing with the parts of society which have not been traditional partners to IUCN, but are essential to help us achieve our mission. These include sub-national authorities, the academic sector, youth organizations, media groups and the business sector.

Having agreed to reach out to a broader constituency, we must be guided by principles of engagement that are relevant to IUCN's vision and mission, responsive to the aspirations of our Members and Commissions and helpful for IUCN to implement its programmes.

At the 1996 Members' Assembly in Montreal there was a specific recommendation for IUCN to engage business in the delivery of its mission more significantly and comprehensively.

We continuously ask ourselves, as does every other member of the conservation community, why bother with business? The growing environmental movement, proliferation of environmental organizations, and development aid for environment have not stemmed the loss of global biodiversity. Engaging the business sector may not turn the tide, but failing to bring this important part of society to the table to find solutions may prove to be a costly mistake.

Strategic objectives for IUCN's engagement with other constituents:

- Effective collaboration between IUCN and other constituents which helps to achieve conservation through, and alongside, sustainability.
- A more accountable business sector which contributes to sustainable development including conservation and social equity;
- A conservation community that is well informed about social, political and economic mechanisms and understands their potential and limitations in achieving conservation.

3. Secretariat

The IUCN Secretariat consists of the staff employed by the Union under the direction of the Director General as the Chief Executive Officer. The Secretariat runs the day-to-day operations of IUCN on behalf of the Members and Commissions. It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to plan, monitor and report on the activities of IUCN and to ensure the quality of its products.

Strategic objectives for IUCN's Secretariat:

- To promote a general culture change throughout the Secretariat to encourage team work and collaboration for the delivery of Programme and Operational results, explicitly adding value to Members and the Commissions, consistent with IUCN's value proposition and in a financially viable manner;
- To strengthen the Secretariat's capacity in strategic influencing at all levels;
- To ensure that the Secretariat has the skills needed to deliver the Constituency strategy, programme of work, and change management processes.

Regionalization and decentralization in IUCN

During recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on strengthening links with, and support for, Members at regional and national level. The response has taken two forms: the decentralization of the Secretariat so that it can work more with the Membership and the regionalization of Membership structures through regional committees, regional fora and national committees.

Finding an approach to delivering a conceptually sound and focused programme at the global level, while simultaneously addressing the multitude of needs of a network of Members at local, national and regional levels is an immense challenge.

The aim of regionalization and decentralization is to make the Union a genuinely global organization, driven by the Members as key constituents and as increasingly powerful agents in achieving IUCN's mission. However, the process must avoid fragmentation, for it is only as a unified entity that IUCN can realize its potential to influence developments at global level.

Strategic objectives of the regionalization and decentralization process:

- To establish a regional system which takes account of the political, social and economic characteristics of the various countries in the regions, and guarantees an equitable numerical representation by Councillors;
- To make the Members stronger and more effective as institutions in the front line of conservation and in ensuring that any resource use is ecologically sustainable;
- To ensure efficient contact and information flow between the Membership, Commission Members, the Secretariat, and key partner organizations;
- To create forums for the IUCN constituency to discuss key conservation issues in the regions as a basis for programme development;
- To strengthen the involvement and capacity of Members, Commissions and partner organizations in decision-taking and in programme implementation.

4. The Programme of IUCN

The IUCN Programme represents the framework for IUCN's Secretariat and Commissions to develop their activities and deliver results with and on behalf of Members. It includes the provision of services and the management of the Union's worldwide activities.

Since 1999, IUCN's Programme has evolved in an effort to focus and enhance the activities of the Union within the framework on a programme for all IUCN's Components (the 'One Programme'). Innovative structures and mechanisms are now needed to deliver the 'One Programme', to ensure an optimal flow of knowledge, and to embed the delivery of the Programme in the daily work of the Commissions and the Secretariat, with and on behalf of

Members.

Strategic objectives for the IUCN Programme:

- To formulate a Programme that provides a strong scientific and technical foundation for action to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and for ensuring that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable;
- To ensure that the Programme meets the needs of the IUCN constituency, and especially Members and partners, and involves the Members themselves in both its development and execution;
- To ensure that any statements made in the name of IUCN properly reflect its mission and policies, and are broadly acceptable to the Membership as a whole.

5. Knowledge Management

IUCN defines knowledge management as a set of disciplined and systematic actions that an organization takes to derive the greatest value from the knowledge it acquires, creates, stores, shares and uses.

IUCN recognizes that excellent knowledge management is crucial to bridging cultural, political, economic and other divides and to foster collective and accelerated action for conservation.

IUCN recognizes the value added of knowledge management. It relishes an empowered workforce, promotes knowledge management as part of everyone's work, supports the democratization of science and has a commitment to open access. It appreciates that knowledge management is about people and processes and not driven by technology.

IUCN is committed to excellence in knowledge management – both internally, and in the multiple communities of conservation practice of which it is part.

Strategic objectives for knowledge management:

- To provide an enabling environment with systems and capacities that support and embed knowledge management in the work of the Secretariat and the Commissions;
- To strengthen knowledge creation, sharing and learning across organizational boundaries and barriers;
- To strengthen IUCN's capacities to assist, empower and influence its target audiences.

6. Resourcing the strategy

IUCN acknowledges the importance that Official Development Assistance (ODA) will continue to play in funding the Union's work. The Union's fundraising strategy emphasizes expansion and diversification of funding, particularly core funding from non-ODA sources.

IUCN's budget has grown rapidly over the past decade, from CHF 9 million in 1983 to CHF 55 million in 1993, to CHF 115 million in 2007. Government and multilateral agencies (especially bilateral official development assistance agencies) are the main funding sources, accounting for 78 per cent of IUCN's total income. During the period 2003-2006, ODA represented 64 per cent of IUCN's income, of which 70 per cent was provided only by five donors.

Membership dues, which are the only category of income under the direct control of the Members' Assembly, account for less than 10 per cent of income.

Framework agreements with bilateral donor agencies provide the bulk of IUCN's core funding, and were first introduced in the early 1990s with a view to supporting a programmatic approach and to mobilizing the core competencies of IUCN. They have been instrumental in strengthening IUCN's Programme, allowing for decentralization, innovation and catalysing the work of the Union's scientific, technical and policy networks. They have also provided the necessary financial support for designing and marketing project and programme proposals and thus have enabled IUCN to deliver a large number of conservation results in many countries.

In 2008, IUCN had nine multi-year Framework Agreements with eight bilateral donor agencies and one private foundation.

Although the operational reserves of the Union have increased, they still cover less than 6 months of IUCN's annual turnover. This makes the Union vulnerable should recession or changing political priorities cause major supporters to withdraw.

The vast majority of IUCN's Members pay little towards the costs of the organization. Those in the lowest dues category do not even cover the costs of the routine services they receive or the support funding necessary for many of them to attend Members' Assemblies. Many governmental and NGO Members in developing countries are finding it increasingly difficult to pay even these modest dues.

Despite a welcome recent trend among funding agencies towards core or Programme support rather than funding linked to individual projects, there is still insufficient flexibility in the overall system. This makes it difficult for management to respond quickly to new needs. Flexible income will be a priority if IUCN is to position itself as a global player and offer a global platform to IUCN Members and Commissions.

While conventional sources of financing from bilateral and multilateral agencies will continue to be important, IUCN recognizes the need to develop a broader range of innovative mechanisms to provide long-term funding for conservation and sustainable core funding for the Union. In seeking to resource its *2020 Vision*, IUCN will be exploring both new financial mechanisms and new roles for traditional ones.

Strategic objectives for fundraising:

- To broaden and increase the flexibility of the income base;
- To ensure that the allocation of income matches the priorities established by the World Conservation Congress and Council;
- To augment the financial reserves as a 'cushion' against unexpected shortfalls in income;
- To explore innovative financial mechanisms for the Union's work, and in particular for the integrated work of the Members, the Commissions and the Secretariat;
- To expand the Membership base, particularly state Members, thereby increasing core income from Membership.

IV. The Way Forward: Implementing Strategic Changes

This *2020 Vision* document has been prepared with numerous inputs from various parts of the IUCN system and from partners. It will be shared on IUCN's website, in the expectation that it will inspire dialogue and will evolve with new developments and new inputs so as to become a shared vision of the members of the conservation community.

In parallel with the continued sharpening of this vision, an organizational development and change management process has been put in place at IUCN at the beginning of 2009. This

process, led by the Director General assisted by a Change Leadership Team, will look at the results of a number of reviews of IUCN and its components, as well as the aspirations contained in this *2020 Vision* document. The objective of the change management will be to bring about the needed modifications and reforms in an organization with a rich and long past and an important role to play in future. The guiding principle of change management will be to integrate the results of the various reviews, strategies and processes that have been developed over the years in view of up-grading the Union's focus and delivery systems.

The change process will be a participatory one, with inputs expected from all parts of the IUCN 'family': Members, Commissions, and the Secretariat. The process is expected to take 2-4 years, with smaller change measures adopted and implemented in the first phases, and proposals to modify statutes to be presented to the 2012 Congress.

Note: The implementation of the organizational development and change management process forms the backbone of the 2009-2012 Programme. It is detailed in the 2009-2012 Business Strategy. The present document should be read in conjunction with the IUCN Programme 2009-2012: Shaping a Sustainable Future and the IUCN 2009-2012 Business Strategy which describes the immediate priorities selected to effect change management throughout the Union and their implementation over the forthcoming 4-year intercessional period. All documents and references can be found on the IUCN website: www.iucn.org

Annex 1: Principal findings of the main IUCN reviews

The following sections highlight the principal findings of the main reviews, namely the external review, the membership survey, and the donor survey.

1.1. External Review (2007)

The 2007 External Review team “*heard virtually universal endorsement for the concept of IUCN as a highly valued organization with a unique and probably irreplaceable membership structure that gives IUCN international credibility and authority*”. They noted that “*IUCN is clearly doing much good work at all scales and in all regions and is delivering important results and products*”. The review emphasized that the fact “*that IUCN is doing valuable work in many areas is not the key issue. Rather it is whether IUCN is sufficiently focused on and aligned with its own value proposition – that it works through its Members and harnesses the efforts of thousands of volunteers through its Commissions – to be a global leader in strategic influencing through world-class knowledge products and convening processes*”.

The review found widespread concern that IUCN’s full potential in regard to its niche of convening and forging commitment for change is not being realized. The review noted that the context in which IUCN is operating is changing very rapidly which calls for significant revitalization across the Union if it is to fully achieve its potential and remain a relevant and financially viable organization in the future.

Of key importance is the conclusion of the review that IUCN needs to utilize its resources in a different way and have more resources for membership support and strategic influencing. The current emphasis on donor-funded projects makes this difficult. Currently IUCN’s key organizational systems like Information and Communication Technology, Management Information Systems, Monitoring and Evaluation and knowledge management more broadly are weak for a global organization with major influencing, knowledge brokering and communications functions. Over the recent past, the leadership of IUCN, its funding model and its management structure and processes have not allowed IUCN to escape a vicious circle of taking on projects to support the Secretariat to undertake more projects.

For more information:

2007 External Review:

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/final_er_vol_1_synthesis_report_15_apr.pdf

1.2. Member Survey (2007)

The 2007 Global Survey of IUCN Members canvassed Members’ views on IUCN’s role and purpose, structure, leadership, governance, accountability, and communications in relation to Members. The results suggest that IUCN Members want to be more involved in the work of the Union, and that they want IUCN to play a strategic leadership role in conservation and sustainable development policy on behalf of Members. Members called for IUCN to: clarify its role, purpose, and objectives as a member-based organization; adapt its current structure, strategy, and model of operation to enable, strengthen and scale up the work of Members; improve its leadership and positioning; strengthen its governance structure, particularly regional and national committees; improve Member relations and accountability of the Secretariat and Commissions to Members; and strengthen its role in knowledge management and communications.

For more information:

Global Survey of IUCN Members (2007):
http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/survey_full_report_en.pdf

1.3. *Donor Survey (2006)*

In the 2006 Survey of Global Donors and Partners, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, and partners were asked to provide feedback on IUCN's performance with respect to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, communications and outreach, reputation and image, and overall value-added and strengths and weaknesses. Answers pointed to perceived strengths in the quality of IUCN's people and scientific contributions, cost effectiveness, and breadth of membership. Perceived weaknesses included IUCN's field office management and connections with Headquarters, monitoring and evaluation of projects and other activities, and strategy and programme coherence, which were seen as lacking. Several respondents expressed concerns about what they saw as the tilting of IUCN's balance towards project implementation and away from its 'brain trust' function.