

**Summary  
IUCN Sustainability Forum**

**Filzbach  
Switzerland**

**21-23 January 2008**

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**1. Participants**

1. Bill Adams (Senior Consultant) (University of Cambridge);
2. Steve Bass (IIED);
3. Barbara Dubach (Holcim);
4. Pablo Farias (Ford Foundation);
5. Maria Ivanova (College of William and Mary);
6. Bill Jackson (Facilitator) (IUCN);
7. Sally Jeanrenaud (Coordinator) (IUCN);
8. Ashok Khosla (Club of Rome / Development Alternatives);
9. Jim Leape (WWF);
10. Gabriel Lopez (IUCN);
11. Nik Lopoukhine (WCPA);
12. Joan Martinez Alier (University of Barcelona);
13. Julia Marton-Lefèvre (IUCN);
14. Jeff McNeely (IUCN);
15. Marcus Morrell (Arup & Big Picture TV);
16. Valli Moosa (Eskom & IUCN);
17. Mohan Munasinghe (MIND);
18. Dumisani Nyoni (Zimele Institute);
19. Eliane Ruster (Logistics) (IUCN);
20. Muriel Saragoussi (Ministry of Environment, Brazil);
21. Achim Steiner (UNEP);
22. Francis Sullivan (HSBC);
23. Ton Boon von Oschssee (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands);
24. Ken Wilson (The Christensen Fund);
25. Lu Zhi (Peking University).

## **2. Objectives**

The overarching objectives of the Sustainability Forum were:

- To help shape a new era of sustainability thinking and practice at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- To explore how the conservation and environmental community can raise its game in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and opportunities, and more effectively deliver its core mission to conserve the diversity of nature, and to ensure the equitable and sustainable use of resources now and in the future.

The two objectives of this meeting were seen as interrelated. The broader sustainability debate, and discussions concerning the role of the conservation /environmental movement have always interacted and evolved together. The Forum aimed to consider the role of the conservation /environment sector in relation to a new era in sustainable development.

The meeting aimed to generate a cohesive overview of sustainability challenges and innovations rather than develop the in-depth, but sometimes narrow, views of particular disciplines.

IUCN emphasized that while it was convening the meeting and helping to catalyze the debate, it recognized that a new generation of sustainable development depended on the participation of many different partners and groups. It welcomed potential partners to the process.

The Forum attempted to concentrate on solutions and questions of 'how to' operationalize a new sustainability paradigm, as well as the strategic direction of the conservation/ environment movement – rather than simply diagnosing broad social and environmental problems.

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## **3. Inputs to the Meeting**

The substance of the Forum did not start from scratch, but built on outputs from the previous IUCN sustainability meeting in 2006, the IUCN e-discussion forum, and broader understandings of sustainability issues.

Participants (as well as colleagues from IUCN, UNEP, WWF and IISD) were invited to submit stimulating questions for debate, as well as background materials during the preparations for the meeting. Questions were clustered into several interrelated themes which helped inform the substance and flow of discussions.

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## **4. Format**

The meeting was designed as a peer-to-peer discussion, rather than a workshop with keynote speakers or panelists. It was anticipated that the gathering would create a generative dialogue in which participants come to new ideas together.

The format consisted of a mixture of plenary and break-out sessions as well as buzz-groups. The preparations of the meeting were coordinated by Sally Jeanrenaud. The

meeting was facilitated by Bill Jackson. Logistics were organized by Veronique Zurcher and Eliane Ruster.

Video interviews with selected participants were carried out by Marcus Morrell from BigPictureTV, for use on BigPictureTV and the IUCN websites.

There were 2 evening social events: Lessons in Alphorn, and an evening session of Archery. Participants were given copies of Spenser Tunick's photograph of the installation on Aletsch Glacier August 2007, signed by the artist, as a gift.

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## 5. Forum Themes

### 1. Sustainability in the 21C. Exploring the gap between where we are and where we need to be.

*This consisted of a short introduction to the major sustainability trends at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and some of issues faced by the conservation/ environmental movement. This drew on the outputs of previous IUCN sustainability forums and other contemporary works (PPT attached).*

### 2. Shifting to a Low Carbon Economy.

*Climate change and energy security are emerging as defining sustainability issues at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and top factors affecting all organizations today. Where do we apply our efforts for the new era of sustainable development, in particular learning from the many tracks through which climate change has come to be centre-stage? How do we maintain economic welfare while building a low carbon, low-throughput economy? Does the conservation/ environmental sector have the right strategies, systems and tools to ensure long-term viability of natural systems in a low-carbon, post-oil world?*

### 3. Prospering with Justice and Equity.

*The sustainability challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century link the economy, the environment and social justice in profound ways, and are engaging the hearts and minds of people worldwide. Is the 'environmentalism of the poor' a strong force for sustainability? How do we prevent increasing the gap between rich and poor in adapting to a low carbon economy? What needs to be encouraged (and set in place) that can respond to the unavoidable devolution of society caused by rapid or abrupt climate change?*

### 4. Policy and Governance – Collaborating for Change.

*Mindsets and governance frameworks are not keeping pace with twenty-first century challenges and innovative governance and accountability models for sustainability are emerging through collaborative approaches between governments, business and civil society. What should global environmental governance look like in the context of sustainable development governance? How can we achieve major, substantive alliances for sustainability?*

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## 6. Summary of the Discussion

- The meeting underscored the seriousness, uncertainty and complexity of factors molding our lives, the risks of tipping points and irreversible environmental damage, the need to understand resilience, and urgency of acting now for a sustainable future.
- It highlighted the need to shift to an equitable low-carbon economy, and the importance of de-linking carbon, energy, growth and wellbeing in a new generation of sustainability thinking and practice. Climate change and energy security issues were seen as symptomatic of underlying drivers (such as iniquitous material flows, unsustainable consumption, material values, population and gender dynamics). It was considered important that climate change should not overshadow other serious challenges.
- Participants referred to growing global and regional inequalities, and the lack of linkages between international debates and local realities. Many poor rural peoples are already faced with environmental challenges, and survive chaos on a daily basis. There is a need to put poor people at the centre of the debate, and to increase efforts to bring different groups to the table to represent different realities.
- The effects of climate change were noted to increase the risk of conflicts, the rise of fortress mentalities, gated communities and the danger of losing humanity's best values. On the other hand, civil society mobilization and local government engagement on environmental issues is generating energy, innovative approaches and practical solutions, and is acting as a kind of 'immune system' for the planet. People-power could help put pressure on leaders for change. Emerging links between social movements, the new green economy, and bio and cultural diversity for resilience were recognized.
- The conservation community was advised to tackle carbon emissions from changing land use through developing strategies for adaptation and resilience (the 'green agenda') rather than mitigation strategies, and to prepare for extreme natural hazards. The effectiveness of existing protected areas for evolution was questioned. It was urged that protected areas themselves should become carbon neutral.
- The inadequacies of the existing international environmental governance structures; the risks of failure of the Millennium Development Goals; the limitations of the 'Washington consensus', the loss of international commitment and funding streams, and the lack of real influence of the global environmental organizations on political decision making were recognized as key institutional challenges affecting the future of sustainability.
- It was argued that the environmental movement lacked an institutional anchor, legitimizing platform and political strategy at a global level, and that despite difficulties within the UN system, efforts should be made to

strengthen UNEP, and re-engage the broader environmental movement, along with the business and the academic community, with the multilateral agenda on environment and sustainability.

- The negative, accusatory, and doom and gloom messages of the conservation community were critiqued. There was a need for a new generation of communications that highlight the positive linkages between biodiversity, livelihoods, lifestyles, prosperity, tolerance and peace. The conservation community was urged to take up opportunities for reaching out to new communities through Web2 and mobile phone technologies, and to engage new partners to build a more robust social movement for sustainability.
- Solutions for a sustainable future do exist and wait to be implemented, although there are no silver bullets of success. There are problems financing the transition, and a variety of approaches are required. The development of environmental economics; the emergence of environmental markets (e.g. carbon market); new statistics and metrics (e.g. beyond GDP; footprint calculators; sustainability indices); the rise of renewable energy technologies; the conception of eco-technologies for the next industrial revolution (e.g. bio and eco-mimicry), and the emergence of new action networks for sustainability were recognized innovations for a sustainable future.
- The pluralism and fragmentation of the conservation and environmental movement was recognized, as well as conflicts of interest between the traditional conservation agenda and the 'environmentalism of the poor'. The bureaucratization and inertia of the conservation and development professions were also considered a problem.
- This meeting was privileged to be joined by leaders of the global conservation and environmental organizations (IUCN, WWF, UNEP) which provided a unique opportunity to reflect upon the response of the wider conservation /environment sector to 21C challenges, and new opportunities to reinforce each others' work, and to leverage for change together. The possibilities of producing a joint paper between the organizations were raised.

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## 7. Outputs

- Outputs from the Forum will be incorporated into a joint Challenge and Innovations Paper for discussion at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008 and elsewhere during the year.
  - The Forum, along with other IUCN processes and products, will help inform the longer-term strategy of the World Conservation Union.
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## 8. Next Steps

Drafting of Challenge and Innovation Paper by Professor Bill Adams	February 2008	1 <sup>st</sup> draft Challenge and Innovations Paper
Circulation of 1 <sup>st</sup> draft to Forum participants for information.  Review of draft by small editing group.	By end of February 2008	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft of Challenge and Innovations Paper
Construction of IUCN Future of Sustainability Web Site	March 2008	
Discuss 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft at 69 <sup>th</sup> Council	10-12 March 2008	Decision on Council Motion
Latin America Sustainability Forum	March 2008	Inputs into final draft
North African Sustainability Forum	May 2008	Inputs into final draft
Finalization of Challenge and Innovations Paper	May 2004	3 <sup>rd</sup> draft of Challenge and Innovations Paper
Presentation at Global Reporting Initiative 2 <sup>nd</sup> Global Conference, Amsterdam	7-9 May 2008	
Presentation at CBD COP9 , Bonn	19-30 May 2008	
Review of 3 <sup>rd</sup> draft by Editing Group	June 2008	<b>Final draft of Challenge and Innovations Paper</b>
Spanish and French Translations of paper	June 2008	
Upload documents as IUCN Wikis	July 2008	
<b>Launch of Challenge and Innovations Paper</b> Geneva	Early September	Press Release
Preparatory meeting (TELECON) with Congress moderator, panelists & collaborators	September 2008	Draft questions and format for Congress plenary session
Presentation at the IUCN Congress	October 2008 Panel Debate Opening of the Forum  Jointly-hosted Public Session a the Forum	Links into Barcelona Legacy
Finalization / Review of FoS Initiative	November 2008	Inputs into earth summit process