

“The Future isn’t what it used to be”¹

A New Era of Sustainability & The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the first phase of the IUCN Future of Sustainability Initiative 2006-2007. It reviews a new generation of sustainable development thinking and practice and reflects on some of the challenges facing conservation and environmental organizations in rising to address the global challenges of the 21st century.²

The IUCN Future of Sustainability Initiative

Is the concept of sustainable development out-of-date? Are conservation and environmental organizations failing to make progress on major environmental challenges? Where are the major innovations for sustainability coming from? How can the conservation and environmental community raise its game to shape the 21st century?

Prompted by these and similar questions, the President and Council members of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) launched an initiative entitled the *Future of Sustainability* in 2006. Its objective is “to review the conceptualization of conservation and sustainable development as it stands today, and to help set direction of the evolution of the field and serve as a clarion call for the Union, the environmental movement and society at large.”³

While this may sound an ambitious goal it actually builds on the strengths and traditions of the Union. As a Union of more than one thousand member organizations in one hundred and forty countries, and over 10,000 voluntary scientists in 6 Commissions, it has played a leading role in shaping new eras of sustainable development policy and practice for almost 60 years.⁴

The history of the concept of sustainable development itself is well documented as it has evolved from its first iterations in the 1970s to the well-known definition, framed by the Brundtland Commission in 1987: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.⁵

What is less well known is that The World Conservation Strategy, published by IUCN, UNEP and WWF provided one of the first definitions, intellectual frameworks and practical guidance for intergenerational sustainable development back in 1980.⁶

Over the decades the concept has evolved through the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio (1992), Agenda 21, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), national government planning, engagement with business leaders, non-government organizations and through the work of academics and practitioners of all kinds.

Some twenty years on from the Brundtland Report: *Our Common Future*, the current initiative provides a timely review of the field for IUCN. It raises pertinent questions about the evolution of the conservation and environmental movement and the role and direction of the Union itself.

Taking Stock

The Union’s review of progress towards sustainability revealed a significant paradox. While the international community has made progress towards building the global institutional frameworks for sustainability, environmental trends worldwide continue to be negative.

1 The title is inspired by a quote usually attributed to Yogi Berra, a former Major League Basketball player, famous for his comic malapropisms.

2 I am grateful to Gabriel Lopez (IUCN), Anna Knee (IUCN); Susan Brown (WWF International), Tom Bigg (IIED) for comments on this paper. All omissions and errors remain my own.

3 The 63rd IUCN Council 2006. Decision C/63/16.

4 For more information on the World Conservation Union see

www.iucn.org

5 The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987): *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

6 IUCN, UNEP, WWF (1980): *World Conservation Strategy*. Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Gland, Switzerland.

Almost every national government now has a minister and department responsible for the environment, and the growth in the quantity of environmental legislation has raised the profile of environmental change and begun to shape the global policy process itself.

The private sector has also responded to sustainability issues, with many businesses voluntarily adopting corporate social responsibility programmes and reporting. Yet sustainability still remains on the margins of core business practices in most cases.

Citizen awareness of environmental and social issues in development has also evolved, and the significance of a healthy environment to human wellbeing is increasingly recognized and appreciated by consumers and entrepreneurs alike.

However, there is compelling evidence that human activities are becoming less sustainable, not more, as the twenty-first century unfolds.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), for example, reported that some 60% (15 out of 24) of ecosystem services evaluated are being degraded or used unsustainably.⁷

Despite some progress on reducing hunger worldwide, societies are failing to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The continuing degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity is destroying the natural assets of the world's poorest peoples, undermining health, livelihoods, security, and the social cohesion of millions.

The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2007),⁸ indicates that evidence for global warming is now unequivocal and that warming is almost certainly man-made. Climate change is predicted to have catastrophic effects on species and ecosystems worldwide, with potentially devastating impacts on the poorest groups who are most heavily dependent on natural resources and least able to adapt.

7 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005): Ecosystems and Human Wellbeing: Synthesis. Island Press, Washington, DC.

8 IPCC (2007): Summary for Policy Makers. Working Group III Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report. WMO and UNEP.

The Stern Review which examined the economics of climate change (2006)⁹ says that if we don't act now, the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global GDP each year. In contrast, the annual costs of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change can be limited to about 1% of global GDP by 2050.

Against this backdrop there have been on-going debates and about the role and evolution of the environmental movement. Some analysts have criticized conservation and environmental organizations for failing to make any impact on new global challenges such as climate change, and for their "worn-out" answers to problems. By continuing to focus on traditional agendas, narrow technical issues and 'counting the problems' some claim that such organizations are in danger of becoming relics of the past.¹⁰

Meanwhile we are seeing the birth of new strands of environmentalism – 'third generation environmentalism';¹¹ 'bright green' environmentalism;¹² 'one-planet living'¹³ and so on. These are characterized by solutions oriented approaches. They do not shy away from technologies, markets and the built-environment but embrace radical new approaches to sustainable production and consumption. They identify new leverage points for change, new ways of organizing for sustainability, and a new generation of policy approaches. Do these herald new ways of working for the conservation and environment community?

Given the unprecedented speed and scale of environmental change, the current human capacity to undermine basic life support systems, and the severe impact on the lives of the most world's most vulnerable peoples, the

9 Stern Review (2006): The Economics of Climate Change. Executive Summary. HM Treasury, UK Government.

10 Shellenberger, M. & Nordhaus, T. (2004): The Death of Environmentalism. Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World. See

http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death_of_Environmentalism.pdf

11 See <http://www.e3g.org/index.php>

12 Alex Steffen is known for coining the term 'bright green'

environmentalism. See

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bright_green_environmentalism.

13 See

<http://www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanet/ophome.asp>

World Conservation Union is asking how it can raise its game to meet new challenges.

A Global and Regional Review Process

IUCN is drawing upon its global membership and new advances in interactive media and communications in its review process.

As a first step, the Union convened an international meeting of prominent thinkers in 2006 which reviewed society's progress towards sustainability. The discussion helped identify and integrate the main elements of global challenges, and outlined some of challenges facing the international conservation and environmental community at the beginning of the new millennium. It generated a base document entitled "*The Future of Sustainability: Rethinking Environment and Development in the Twenty-first Century*", available in French, Spanish and Arabic.¹⁴

The Union subsequently hosted a global electronic discussion on the main themes of this report, for all its Members, Commissions, staff as well as the general public. These discussions, with 460 participants from over 70 countries generated over 200 pages of comments.

These discussions amplified criticisms of the international environmental movement, and revealed that a new era of sustainable development thinking and practice coming from innovations in ethics, economics, sustainability sciences, technology, governance and accountability, livelihoods and lifestyles, media communications and new learning.¹⁵

These ideas have been shared and reviewed with IUCN members through a series of regional consultations in 2007 which help raise awareness of new perspectives as well as integrate local and regional perspectives within a new era of sustainability thinking and practice. They have also helped generate political support amongst members and mobilized new kinds of action for sustainability within the regions.

A further global meeting with sustainability leaders, to be held early in 2008, will help consolidate these discussions and identify innovations and the next step-change for the

¹⁴ Adams, W.M. (2006): *The Future of Sustainability: Rethinking Environment and Development in the Twenty-first Century*. The World Conservation Union (IUCN), Gland, Switzerland.

¹⁵ A further e-forum and competition for young people is being planned in collaboration with WWF International and the private sector in 2008.

conservation community. This will be presented as a Challenge and Innovations Paper for debate with Councillors, members and partners at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2008 in Barcelona, and may help inform future policy directions.

A New Generation of Sustainable Development

The following sections draw on inputs from the IUCN e-discussion forum and IUCN global and regional meetings between 2006-2007. See Figure 1 for 7 themes of an emerging new paradigm of sustainable development thinking.

New Directions in Economics and Development
The discussions re-emphasized that our current development and economic path is simply unsustainable. As Lester Brown put it, emerging economies such as China, who are already eclipsing the United States in the consumption of most basic resources, are forcing us to rethink our economic future.¹⁶

We need to replace our fossil-fuel-based based, throwaway economy with a renewable-energy-based, reuse/recycle economy, and develop new incentives and new metrics, beyond GDP, which allow the economy to tell the ecological truth. It also drew attention to the increasing number of economists and organizations that are challenging mainstream assumptions about the links between economic growth and progress and arguing for new models beyond the 'growth fetish' of standard economic theory.¹⁷

Social justice emerged as an essential element of a new sustainability paradigm. There has been growing unease about what some people regard as the fundamentalist end of the neo-liberal development model which is blamed for liberalizing trade and a decline in state control at the expense of people and nature. Although not opposed to the role of the market in promoting a better standard of living, it is widely observed that the benefits of global trade are not being shared equally.

¹⁶ Brown, L.R. (2006) : *Plan B2.0. Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*. Earth Policy Institute. W.W. Norton and Company. New York and London.

¹⁷ For example see:

http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=219 and
<http://www.unctad.org/templates/Page.asp?intlID=4076&lang=1>

Environment and development agencies are also critiqued for not addressing the processes by which the 'haves' marginalize the 'have-nots' from land and resources – from village to global levels, and are still blamed for perpetuating inequities. There are renewed calls for these agencies to address the underlying causes of environmental degradation and social injustice and to press for wider, deeper systemic change for a sustainable future.

There is growing support for establishing new markets for ecosystem goods and services, and interest in the potential of non-Western development pathways and new social enterprise models for sustainability.¹⁸ Adaptation of the traditional Islamic concept of the Waqf Fund for sustainable development,¹⁹ or the promotion of new multi-dimensional concepts such as the 'social business entrepreneur' are new experiments in providing positive benefits for people and nature from different parts of the world.²⁰

Embracing Cultural Values

Many forum participants identified a 'crisis of values', particularly in industrial western society, and called for a deep transformation of worldviews and for a new consciousness for sustainability – one which makes room for cultural and spiritual values in decision making. However, the domain of spiritual and cultural values remain neglected issues in the mainstream sustainability debate.²¹

Contributors challenged the simplistic connections between material wealth and wellbeing, highlighting problems of 'affluenza', unsustainable consumption and the psychological effects of living divorced from nature – particularly amongst the younger generation. Some claimed that western society seems to have lost touch with its wisdom traditions that teach that moderation in all things produces the greatest advances for human beings, and society is urged to redefine 'the

good life' in a new era of sustainable development.²²

It was agreed that measurements of consumption and profits are clearly not always good indicators of happiness and fulfilment, and there are calls for the promotion of new metrics that take into account social and environmental values beyond profit, such as the Happy Planet Index, or the Bhutanese indicators of Gross National Happiness.

The conservation and environmental organizations were urged to tackle the 'demand' side of unsustainable consumption as well as measuring its 'impact', although the difficulties in competing with corporations who spend billions on advertising, and in facilitating new understandings of the 'good life' beyond dreams for 'American lifestyle' are recognized, particularly in emerging economies.

Sustainability Sciences

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) was appreciated as a key initiative that has helped revive the importance of ecological principles and limits. It has provided a breakthrough in the types of knowledge needed for advancing sustainable development.²³ It was recognized, however, that there remain many uncertainties and areas of dispute within ecosystem science, and scientists do not understand the complexities of the inter-relationships between different organisms, and their influence on each other.

There was a sense of frustration that looking to conservation biology and environmental science for breakthroughs will not produce the answers and solutions for sustainability that we urgently require. The challenges facing society have been clearly identified and social change needs to happen at a rate faster than the processes of scientific validation can supply. The need to examine the findings of key global scientific initiatives together, rather than separately, such as the MA and the IPCC reports, has also been identified.

Others have recognized what might be called the rise of 'sustainability science' (or systems science), which provides a new, specially developed science base underpinning sustainable development. Key ideas include 'resilience', 'political ecology' and 'ecological economics'. These have emerged from a

18 For example see:

<http://www.nextbillion.net/node/4681>

19 See

<http://www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2005/11/waqf.pdf>

20 Mohammad Yunus (2006) : IUCN Future of Sustainability Meeting

2006. See also <http://www.grameen->

[info.org/bank/socialbusinessentrepreneurs.htm](http://www.grameen-)

21 IUCN Future of Sustainability Debate. See

<http://www.iucn.org/members/future%5Fsustainability/>

22 IUCN Future of Sustainability Debate. See

<http://www.iucn.org/members/future%5Fsustainability/>

23 Comments on Background Paper, No.3. Week 1, No.18,

'sustainability agenda' rather than from classical disciplines, and are rooted in understandings of the interdependency of human and natural systems. It was predicted that these three new disciplines, although only partially developed, are likely to merge around a shared meta-agenda sometime in the future.²⁴

Participants emphasised that science needs to reinvent ways of relating to society to remain credible. There is distrust of scientists because of their connections with big-business and government, and a sense of alienation from scientists in their ivory towers. Without losing its essential properties, it was felt that a new scientific venture needs to be open to ethics and holistic perspectives and encourage a better dialogue between the scientific community, the public and policy makers.

Green Technologies for the Future

Technology was recognized as a critical component of sustainability and one that powerfully mediates relationships between people and nature. Khosla (2006) believes that it is so important it should be treated as the fourth pillar of sustainability equivalent to its social, economic and environmental dimensions.²⁵ Contributors spoke about the urgency of supporting the switch to renewable energy and reuse/recycle technologies. However, it was also pointed out that being clean and green did not necessarily mean that biodiversity would be conserved.

There is growing interest in the 'next industrial revolution' inspired by nature's principles and solutions and biomimicry²⁶ and 'cradle to cradle'²⁷ thinking are emerging as exciting new concepts for a sustainable future. As Benyus (1997) points out nature has had 3.8 billion years of evolution (or research and development) and has solved many of the problems that humans are currently challenged with.²⁸ Unlike the 'take, make and waste' models of our current industrial systems, nature manufactures biodegradable products, on site, using only small quantities of chemicals at ambient temperatures, and are extraordinary energy efficient.

In terms of design, spiders' silk, gram for gram, is five times stronger than anything we produce. Blue mussels produce very strong adhesives that work under water. Termite mounds construct homes with natural ventilation systems. Desert beetles, which live in the hottest driest places on earth, obtain water through condensing vapour on the ridges on their backs.

While the private sector and organizations like NASA have started to explore the potential of nature's designs, Julian Vincent from the University of Bath estimates that there is currently only 10% overlap between biological and technological systems and that we have only begun to scratch the surface of understanding how nature's principles and processes can be used in a new paradigm of sustainable production and consumption.²⁹

Collaborative Governance

There are claims that mindsets and governance frameworks are simply not keeping pace with twenty-first century challenges, and that international environmental governance is fragmented and in a state of paralysis. Analysts point out that despite all the high powered meetings, and international agreements, environmental trends are getting worse not better, and financial resources for addressing the challenges are not materializing.³⁰ While many are urging greater coherence between the United Nations treaty bodies, there are underlying concerns about inequity, lack of transparency and accountability, and lack of civil society voice within existing multilateral arrangements.

Some observers question whether we can really expect progress for sustainability to rise out of existing institutions and through top-down approaches. More strategic and innovative governance and accountability models are emerging through voluntary and collaborative approaches between government, business and civil society.³¹ And as Paul Hawken points out, a new era of sustainability is actually being organized from the bottom up.³² An

24 Comments on Background Paper, No.3

25 Khosla, A. (2006): IUCN Future of Sustainability Meeting 2006.

26 Benyus, J. M. (1997): *Biomimicry. Innovation Inspired by Nature*. Quill, William Morrow & Company, New York.

27 McDonough, W. & Braungart, M. (2002): *Cradle to Cradle. Remaking the Way We Make Things*. North Point Press.

28 Benyus, J. M. (1997): *Biomimicry. Innovation Inspired by Nature*. Quill, William Morrow & Company, New York.

29 Vincent, J. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bionics>.

30 Mohamed El-Ashry (2007) quoted in Swart, L. & Perry, E. (2007):

Global Environmental Governance: Perspectives on the Current Debate. Center for UN Reform Education, New York. See

<http://www.centerforunreform.org/node/251>

31 Zadek, S. (2006): Founder and Chief Executive of of AccountAbility. Personal communication.

32 Hawken, P. (2007) *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*. Viking, Penguin Group, New York.

extraordinarily creative world-wide movement of organizations is at work dedicated to restoring the environment and fostering social justice. This is supported through the rise of new interactive media, blogs, podcasts and social networks that give voice to millions, and might just tip the balance towards a sustainable future.

Media and Communications

The IUCN discussions generated a significant debate on the role of communications and media for a sustainable future, and made a strong call for the conservation and environment community to go beyond its usual doom and gloom messages to the discourse of sustainability and concrete actions. The conservation and environmental movement have been blamed for preaching to the converted for too long, and cast as priests warning people of hell through messages about the state of the planet.

A new generation of communications is needed that inspire hope and optimism. As one participant put it "How can we write about hope rather than the language of failure and crisis to further motivate people to change? How can we learn from what is working?"³³ It is clear that the environmental message has to go beyond the 'green circle' of those who are already convinced, reach out to new audiences, particularly youth, and focus on practical and workable solutions for the twenty-first century.

For example, how do we make the most of a new generation of interactive Web2 tools and mobile phone technologies for sustainability which allow us to reach out to communities of practice worldwide in generating and shaping ideas and solutions for a sustainable future?

The Concept: Keep it but Fix it!

The concept of sustainable development was widely critiqued throughout the discussions. The three pillar model of sustainable development (economy, society, environment) is not liked on the grounds that it encourages the idea that tradeoffs between the three dimensions is acceptable, whereas the environment is better considered as a life support system or foundation of society and economy.

Others argue that the concept of sustainable development has lost something of its sharp

edge from an ecological perspective, and that the environmental sciences and the notion of limits need to be re-centred in the debate if the concept of sustainable development is to remain credible.

Other participants noted that the concept had been hijacked and politicized and that whatever concepts or terms are used, they are always co-opted by those in power. The point was to move beyond concepts to working with communities of practice for sustainability. In general it was agreed that sustainable development is now a well-known 'brand' and that the most effective strategy is to re-orientate the concept, re-emphasise what it means and move forwards: a strategy of 'keep it but fix it'.

Summary of Some of the Challenges

Scale and Urgency

The scale of the global environmental and development challenges, particularly of climate change, have defined new questions and put new demands on conservation and environmental organizations. 'Best practices' in conservation or even scaling-up best practices, no longer seem sufficient to protect the planet or help marginalized peoples. How can the conservation and environmental organizations avoid becoming relics of the past and equip themselves to face the massive challenges of the twenty-first century? Business as usual is no longer an option. We need business as unusual.

Underlying Causes

Some conservation and environmental activists know that in order to effectively tackle the global challenges they need to understand their work within a broader set of geo-political, economic and power dynamics. However, organizations still find it easier to treat the symptoms of problems rather than the causes. Efforts to address the underlying drivers of change through programmes on trade, governance and new economic instruments are underdeveloped within international conservation organizations. How can we develop a more integrated and effective set of strategies to generate underlying economic and systemic change?

Holistic Vision

The Union has integrated diverse disciplines and values within its vision, mission and policies over the years – from conservation biology to social justice. The demand for holistic approaches to planning has never been so great. But it is still challenging for the

³³ IUCN Future of Sustainability Debate. See

<http://www.iucn.org/members/future%5Fsustainability/>

conservation and environment community to think across knowledge silos. How do we build in understandings of the interdependence of ecological and social systems and the importance of biocultural diversity for resilient societies? How do we avoid the drift to technocentric and reductionist approaches to planning?

Power and Governance

The Union has played a key role in helping establish and develop the international rules and regulations relating to biodiversity conservation. Policy and politics are an integral part of a new sustainability paradigm but strategies and tactics need to evolve in response to the shifting balance of power and the rise of new powers. How can the Union identify new political leverage points to have more impact on the big drivers of change? How can it support innovations in governance models that ensure that diversities are valued, that voices from the global south are heard, and that those in power are held accountable?

Collaboration for Innovation

We live in an interdependent world and conservation and environmental organizations are not the only organizations responding to global challenges. Green issues are being mainstreamed across society by business, humanitarian and health agencies, consumer organizations, the media, local governments and so on. A sustainable future requires creative and collaborative rather than competitive mind sets. And yet collaboration within our own networks and with new partners remains a huge challenge for our community. How do we reach out and bring value-added on the environment to new partnerships for sustainability? How do we build the vision, values, political skills, institutions and leaning across divides for a sustainable future?

Scaling Up Solutions

Biodiversity and ecological knowledge is fundamental to a new sustainability paradigm, and yet the scale and urgency of challenges is prompting organizations to find innovative outlets for environmental knowledge, beyond the traditional science and policy communities, and to go beyond analysis of problems to scaling up for green solutions. In a carbon constrained world the next industrial paradigm may be based on innovations inspired by nature. How can the Union make the most of its knowledge to advance new models of sustainable production and consumption based on nature's principles? Can the Union develop

practical tools, solutions and standards for a new generation of sustainable enterprise?

From Species and Spaces to Sustainable Lifestyles

Ecological footprint, unsustainable consumption, social justice and the imperatives of building a low carbon economy are gaining increasing attention, and the new environmental movement is embracing 'bright green' values as well the 'deep green' ones.³⁴ Can the Union integrate new approaches that go beyond species and spaces and harnesses the power of business, technology, markets and advertising for solutions for sustainable lifestyles?

Conservation and Sustainability

While the conservation, environmental and sustainability communities are distinct they co-evolve and inform each other. The policies of the World Conservation Union have evolved over the years to integrate many sustainability issues including sustainable use, private sector, poverty and rights-based approaches. But to some observers the Union's work is still perceived as very conservation-centric and supply-driven. Can the Union continue to evolve to serve a more cohesive and progressive movement that resonates with a new era of sustainable development at the beginning of the twenty-first century?

Conclusion

The IUCN review indicated that the urgency and scale of global environmental challenges, particularly of climate change, and the failure to meet global development targets, are defining new questions and demanding new responses from the conservation and environmental community.

The review also revealed that innovations for sustainability are coming from many new areas outside the traditional conservation and environment agenda and from different parts of the world. Environmental values are being mainstreamed in design, engineering, arts, business models, and social movements, and through the creative interactions of widely differing actors in unexpected ways.

The World Conservation Union is still in the process of defining and debating what its own vision and step-change will be in rising to new global challenges of the twenty-first century and how it will play its role in shaping and collaborating within a new era of sustainable

³⁴ See footnote 12.

development.

Some experts speak about the need to move to 'third generation environmentalism' to make more rapid progress towards sustainability.³⁵ While first generation environmentalism focused on species, protected areas and habitats, and second generation focused on brown issues, sustainable use and integrated conservation and development; third generation environmentalism seeks to embed biodiversity and environmental values into mainstream economic sectors and strategies, such as foreign policy, banking, insurance, and sustainable consumption.

Third generation environmentalism works fluidly through communities of practice which cross-cut traditional institutional boundaries. It represents a shift for environmentalism from being an 'outsider' to an 'insider' with more influence on mainstream decisions.

Given the prospects of billions more consumers and increasing human footprint on resources within the next few decades, advocates believe that moving to a new generation of mainstreamed approaches is the only way the environmental movement can effectively deliver its mission in the future, and that the community needs to evolve new ways of organizing itself and new product-lines in order to remain relevant.

This represents a radical reorientation of the environmental movement. At the beginning of the twentieth century organizations which valued nature once stood apart from and represented a critique of modern industrial society. They strived to protect nature from society. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the survival of all species, including our own, may depend on closing the gap between nature and society, and bringing environmental values in from the wilderness to the mainstream.

New approaches promote nature as a regenerative force and source of prosperity for people and business. They work with new sectors and partners to find ways of making green affordable, desirable, a symbol of excellence and wellbeing. They are more 'demand-led'.

Others claim that while conservation and environmental organizations work within a sustainable development paradigm, they are

not sustainability organizations, and that they should not forget their heartland work of scientific analysis, species conservation and protected areas. The approach here is to find more effective ways of advancing conservation and environmental knowledge, and new ways of influencing, encouraging and assisting societies to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature. It is more 'supply-driven'. The two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but the jury is still out on whether the new approaches are relevant to the Union and whether they can be integrated under a more expansive vision and set of values.

The first phase of the IUCN Future of Sustainability initiative focussed on developments in new era of sustainability thinking and practice and some of the challenges facing the conservation and environmental community. The second phase (2008) will explore some innovations in rising to these challenges and help define how the Union imagines its role in creating a sustainable future. These elements will be integrated into a Challenge and Innovations Paper for debate by Council, and members at the World Conservation Congress in 2008.

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³⁵ See <http://www.e3g.org/index.php>

Figure 1.

An emerging new paradigm - 7 key themes

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