



**The IUCN World Conservation Congress
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His Royal Highness Prince of Asturias; His Royal Highness Prince Albert of Monaco; His Royal Highness Prince Turki of Saudi Arabia; Her Royal Highness Princess Sirunthorn of Thailand; Molt Honorable Senor José Montilla, Presidente de Cataluna, ; Your Excellencies Elena Espinosa, Ministra de Medio Ambiente, Rural y Marino de Espana ; Jordi Hereu , Alcalde de Barcelona; Joan Rangel, Delegado Gobierno en Cataluna; Antoni Fogue, Presidente de Diputacion de Barcelona; honored guests – Professor Mohammad Yunus and IUCN Director General Julia Marton-Lefèvre; ladies and gentlemen: on behalf of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) welcome to the World Conservation Congress – Bienvenue – Bienvenidos

Perhaps it's the sea air, the rugged landscape or the warmth and spirit of its people – but disembarking in Barcelona, this world-city, fills us with a sense of our vast potential, and gives us the courage to tap into the natural wellspring of reason, humanity and creativity.

When Pablo Picasso, the gifted 14-year-old arrived in Barcelona from Malaga, his creativity flourished. He opened his first studio here, developed his Blue Period here, and for ten years here experimented with progressive visions that eventually fused classical European and indigenous art.

Consider next the architect Antoni Gaudi. How appropriate that his influence and work surrounds us. He so thoroughly borrowed and incorporated nature's shapes and curves that his structures resemble the environment. By mimicking nature he symbolically pushed back the encroaching excess of industrial society.

It can't be coincidence that during these individuals working in Barcelona were profoundly shaped by forces larger than themselves, energy which they then harnessed to inspire and influence the world in a progressive direction.

It can't be coincidence that during their time they confronted a world of war, disease, and exploitation; they saw nature destroyed; they saw crimes against humanity. Yet they did not shrink from it. They did not turn their back on ugliness, nor did they cry in fatalistic despair.

No. They saw the world exactly as it was, and then in a brave undertaking that combined art and science, they revealed the world as it one day might become.

We must draw on that spirit of Barcelona, for the work of conservation is a deeply creative act, and revealing the world's potential is our task in the brief days ahead.

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When those artists arrived in Barcelona the world seemed a dark and often hostile place, where the progressive discourse of the day was dominated by Fascism and the World Wars. Earlier concerns - now largely waned – have given way to far scarier pressures for the immediate future, foremost among them the menace of climate change, and the continuing degradation of ecosystems – our life support systems.

In 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that we are could see a rise of about 3 degrees celsius in global average temperature over the next century, with rising sea levels, shifting rain patterns, flooding and droughts.

It reported that 20-30% of plant and animal species are threatened if temperatures increase by a further 2 degrees Celsius, with unimaginable risks for all life on earth. While 2 degrees may not sound very much, we should remember that during the last ice age, temperatures were only 5 degrees cooler than now.

Skeptics often chastise the conservation and environment movement for being too 'alarmist' too full of gloom and doom. Perhaps they're right. So, I decided to check out what these skeptics were saying, and then reflect their take on things.

Last year, long after dismissing the Club of Rome 'Limit's to Growth', the World Economic Forum in Davos warned climate change was a real and immediate threat, that the world had hit "peak oil" supply, and we faced dangerous "scarcity" of natural resources.

Last year it was not green activists but *The Wall Street Journal* who rebuked corporate raiders for profligate abuse of the scarce and finite lifeblood on which millions depended.

Last year it was not the long-standing environmental activists in the US, but rather the Bush Administration whose Pentagon authorities warned mercury was rising and bringing more devastating storms, disease, dehydration, climate refugees and mass extinctions.

So it seems that the former environmental skeptics are finally mainstreaming what we have always known. It would be nice to feel smug and vindicated about this, but we just don't have the time.

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The eminent president of the Royal Society in the United Kingdom, Sir Martin Rees, contends in his recent book, *Our Final Hour*, that "The odds are no better than fifty-fifty that our present civilization on earth will survive to the end of the present century." We have all come here to beat those odds.

We will do so by embracing science as Barcelona's great navigators once embraced the sextant. We need to adapt to changing circumstances as they arise. We see the climate crisis as an opportunity in disguise, and we recognize, in the words of economist Paul Romer, that "a crisis is a terrible thing to waste."

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Many questions about a new era of conservation have grown out of debate under the Future of Sustainability project, catalyzed two years ago by the IUCN Council, and its subsequent book *Transition to Sustainability: Towards a Humane and Diverse World*.

What emerged was a clear sense of urgency – not panic or fear, but urgency – to push our conservation movement to step up to new 21st Century challenges. We asked ourselves – are we making real progress on the most important environmental issues of our time? What is the direction for the future evolution of our work?

We concluded that the conservation and environmental movement must play a proactive and decisive role in planning and inspiring a transition to sustainability – and reach out to new communities. Our heartland concerns of biodiversity and ecosystem management have key roles to play in helping us adapt to climate change.

Picasso and Gaudi did not compromise their ability to inspire and push the world onto a new trajectory of thinking about itself. Neither can we.

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Let's start with the ability of our movement to transform the private sector. Ask ourselves this: why do we find that in the globally accepted standards of good corporate governance - that among the non-executive directors there should be an experienced accountant – but no environmentalist?

I know of no executive who wakes up in the morning and says: “Let’s see, how can I leave my children less beauty and integrity and diversity?” Leading entrepreneurs and markets have certainly contributed to the growth of the global economy. Yet while individuals may be moral, markets are not. The damage industries and commerce do to people and the environment is real, it is considerable, and it is unacceptable. But this is our point: it is also *unnecessary*.

While business potential is infinite, business practices operate within the finite bounds of our civic permission, our precious votes, our consumer choices and our natural resources.

The environment needs to become part of the DNA of all private sector entities. This is good not only for nature, but for the bottom line of a corporate entity itself. The process of moving toward efficiency saves species, but it also cuts waste, provides jobs, and boosts profits.

I make a call to business around the world to include on their Boards at least one non-executive director with knowledge and experience of the protection of the environment. Not to do is reckless, for it jeopardizes both the sustainability of the business concerned but also of the sustainability of the planet.

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Second, this brings us to how our movement can transform government.

What government can and must do is to set and enforce ethical rules. Like referees in a soccer or football match, governments have a responsibility to all its citizens as players to be responsive and observant and make rapid decisions based on what it sees to be the truth.

To address climate change, governments must swiftly and collaboratively set and enforce the necessary rules of the game by which we all must play. The world is suffering because there is no enforceable agreement. No red card evictions or even yellow card warnings. The referees of nations remain on sidelines, bogged down in endless bickering negotiations, while players and spectators alike inflict mayhem on others and themselves.

America and industrialized nations must lead the way. Developing countries like my own must become part of, and abide by, the same set of transparent and enforceable rules.

It is not good enough for big developing countries to take absolutely no responsibility just because the biggest contributors to climate change are the developed countries. We call for a

binding and enforceable global emissions reduction regime which binds not only the developed countries but also nations like China, India, Brazil and South Africa.

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We must ensure that businesses use their organizational skills and financial resources to help create innovative solutions, even as we push governments to act swiftly in setting and enforcing clear and unequivocal rules for fair play.

Our third question applies to environmental organizations, asking: How and where can our movement catalyze the necessary transformations? I can offer two cases: at sea and on land.

As we “Sail to Barcelona,” consider our maritime challenge.

We know the ocean generates abundant food, biodiversity and oxygen. We know it absorbs our carbon and climate impacts. What we don’t know is how much stress our oceans can withstand. Such ignorance has been dangerous.

Our ocean governance systems have not kept pace with this increased use and abuse. We have discovered how the high seas, a global commons covering half the planet, can no longer remain a free-for-all.

Our movement stands at the fulcrum between politics and markets. Only universally tighter rules and internationally coordinated strict enforcement will ensure the future health of our oceans.

A new vision for high seas governance of “Planet Ocean”, and ten key principles, facilitated by IUCN, to be launched Wednesday morning, chart a course for the protection of what remains our final frontier. We must now collaboratively sketch the foundation for 21st century ocean governance. Our framework can respond to existing uses and pressures and anticipates and proactively manages emerging uses and pressures. We can still get it right, we can conserve and still use a vast portion of our planet – but only if we seize this opportunity together and restore life to the ocean and by extension, ourselves.

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Next, consider the current energy debate.

Today conventional energy sources – wood and fossil fuels – are under geopolitical threats from two directions. Deforestation, depletion, desertification and disease result from overharvesting dry, spare woodlands. Geologists warn we are reaching maximum petroleum production followed by

shortage, decline and rising prices. And to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, nations now seek alternative, diverse energy sources.

Again, our movement stands at that pivotal juncture between supply and demand, government and business. Together we must explore, for example, whether, where, when and which biofuels provide an equitable and efficient energy alternative to oil. Some burn more energy than they produce; others drive up food prices and obliterate the carbon-inhaling rainforests through which our planet breathes. Local production and consumption may help in developing countries; advanced biofuels may play a small but significant role in de-carbonization of urban transport and energy systems. Yet unrestrained conversion to biofuels can undermine soil integrity, land rights, water security, and biodiversity.

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Our approach to oceans and to energy reveals the extent of our interdependence. Because conservation is everyone's business, we must infuse our mission into the heart of contemporary issues. Yet when we set sail four years ago from Bangkok we chose to push ourselves further.

We asked ourselves: What we can do better, faster, fairer? We set out to develop the tools, the network, the vision and the will to navigate ahead through mass collaboration. We gazed ahead, staring at a point just beyond the horizon, to meet the coming conservation challenges and make the 21st Century a richer, more diverse and equitable world for all.

A transition to sustainability requires that we work towards de-carbonizing our economies, committing to justice and equity, and collaborating for change whilst protecting the biosphere. In the past, those three challenges were segregated, divided up by three competing global movements. One imagined it could sustain growth by liquidating natural capital. Another hoped to secure people through rights alone. A third set out to save biodiversity by excluding people and economies. We now know better.

We now call upon the environmental movement to rise to the challenge of providing leadership to broader society in the transition to sustainability; not only to NGOs but also to government; not only to biodiversity research, but also to the economy.

We must play our part in building an economy that fits on a single planet, embracing a single movement for equity, while restoring integrity, beauty, diversity and resilience not merely for nature's long term stability and survival, but for our own. We call on our combined movement to offer vision and hope; to make our knowledge useful to other sectors in society; to offer concrete

solutions in a common language that people can understand, absorb and use to drive appropriate change from the ground up.

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What Barcelona forged were leaders who inspired, who challenged the conventional wisdom of their time, who took chances, who ventured forth in directions that had never been considered, let alone attempted, who infused years of experience with a sense of what was possible, and who overcame the odds.

I conclude with those Barcelona artists because in the end they were, like all of us here, motivated by invisible forces of breathtaking power. They were infused with the Earth's living currents, of people and place, in a way that we all know well.

Many of us are scientists, or academics, or activists. We consider ourselves rational. We seek pragmatic, economic solutions on behalf of "nature," for "the environment."

To some extent this is true. We plant trees to absorb carbon and prevent erosion. We preserve a reef to protect fisheries or tourism. We restore a tributary to ensure watershed stability and disease prevention. We aim to 'save' the planet by halting from extinction one species at a time. This is all very logical. But it is not the whole picture.

For as we gather to bring back native fisheries, we notice how these humble fisheries bring us back to our roots. As we meet on the river banks to restore integrity to rivers, we find the rivers restore integrity and credibility to our democratic instincts.

A walk in the mountains or the exquisite beauty of one small creature touches the Soul, elevates the Spirit and fills the senses. It is this subliminal nurturing offered by nature that in fact completes our humanity. Yes, indeed, it is in those moments when we hear the silence of nature and smell its beauty.

We realize how every moment we have spent working on nature, nature has been working on us. It is that indescribable, trans-rational element of our work that makes our shared challenge so inspiring, so necessary, so urgent. In the spirit of Barcelona, the creative imperative awaits us. So now let us answer the call.

Thank you.