



West Asia/ Middle East (WAME) Regional Office

April 2008

Editorial



Dear Members and partners,

This year is characterized as a year of strategic intent and governance. The 2008 strategic planning exercise with the IUCN global team helped in shaping a new profile for our region as a potential leading conservation entity. The meeting of the regional committee of West Asia was a bench mark in defining the role of members in shaping the global environmental agenda. I was pleased to see that members were keen to see synergies among themselves and to co-create a shared vision for the IUCN in West Asia/ Middle East. IUCN's core competence and business is to add value to members and to provide a platform for facilitating knowledge. The major asset of IUCN is its members and in its ability to set norms and standards for good professional practice. Hence, strengthening and supporting IUCN governance through national and regional committees is a priority for 2008.

Another priority is to raise presence of IUCN in selected countries through decentralized structures with specific focus on water, marine, poverty and business and biodiversity. Finally, emphasis on knowledge-creation and new learning is the cornerstone of IUCN regional office. This knowledge creation is being developed through all programs; water & drylands, protected areas, poverty, equity & gender and marine programmes.

Finally, one of the key opportunities for IUCN at this stage of formation is to strengthen our commissions and I do urge you to join commissions and be the change agents to transform the social DNA of IUCN.

Odeh Al Jayyousi, Regional Director
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Latest News

Major Changes in IUCN



New Name .. New Logo... New Website!

We're simplifying our name; we are just IUCN. If you need to explain, it stands for the International Union for Conservation of Nature. We've confused many people for many years with our two names: IUCN or the World Conservation Union.

As a part of the new communication strategy for the World Conservation Congress, IUCN has changed its logo and its name. The Union is now only known as International Union for the Conservation of Nature or Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature in French. The term "World Conservation Union" must be forgotten and avoided in publications. [Full Story](#)

WWF and IUCN launch new green on-line community for youth, supported by Nokia

Two of the world's largest environmental organizations, WWF and IUCN, supported by Nokia, are launching connect2earth.org for young people to tell the world what they think about the environment.



A new online community where young people can have their say on the environment by uploading videos, pictures and comments is being launched today. The site, www.connect2earth.org, will also allow people to rank other entries, discuss the issues that matter most to them, and share smart ideas and solutions from their own communities. Each month, users will vote on a winner who will be rewarded with a Nokia mobile phone.

[Full story](#)

The way towards the Congress



More than 8,000 leaders from government, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, business, UN agencies and social organizations will discuss, debate and decide solutions for the world's most pressing environment and development issues. IUCN World Conservation Congress will take place from 5-14 October 2008 in the Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona (CCIB) at Barcelona, Spain. IUCN, along with Spanish, Catalan and Barcelona governments are working together to make the 2008

Congress a landmark event. [Full Story](#)

Recent Events



Global Team give strategic guidance to WAME Office

A team from the IUCN Head Quarters have held a Strategic Meeting for IUCN WAME team to give guidance on a number of critical planning issues in the office. Bill Jackson, IUCN Deputy Director General and Jean-Eves Pirot, IUCN Senior Coordinator – Global Programme gave the WAME team guidance on positioning the regional office through defining the niche and value proposition of IUCN in the region. It also addressed some key issues like, how to engage with members and commissions through IUCN programmes, and how to define IUCN priority country presence within the

coming years. The global team who met during Feb 4-7, 2008 in Amman, recommended a number of planning steps that should be taken including developing a membership and communications strategies, revise the organigram and terms of reference to be in line with the strategic directions that were concluded in the meeting.

First West Asia Regional Committee meeting held in Amman

The West Asia Regional Committee (WARC) held its first meeting on January 21, 2008 in Jordan. The meeting was hosted by IUCN West Asia/ Middle East (WAME) Regional Office at the invitation of Dr. Odeh Al Jayyousi, IUCN WAME Regional Director.



In their first meeting, the committee focused on the definition of strategic priorities in the region. This process, it will define management mechanism in order to tackle these environmental topics in the region. This new initiative is deeply supported by IUCN WAME as a method to share knowledge on governance practices and to allow active participation of its members in the decision-making process.

[Full Story](#)

Protected Areas Programme



IUCN WAME shows major commitments to save the critically endangered Northern Bald Ibis in Syria

The first-ever meeting of the Species Survival Commission Specialist Group Chairs held in United Arab Emirate on 13 February 2008. IUCN WAME showed a great interest in developing a shared strategy with SSC specialist groups by engaging with the Commission on key issues like Red Listing. The northern Bald Ibis protection is part of this common strategy.

[Full story.](#)

IUCN contributes to the National Action Plan for the conservation of Sea Birds in Syria

The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in Syria has started off the preparation of a national action plan for the conservation of sea birds in Syria. This activity is conducted in cooperation with IUCN WAME Protected Areas Programme who will do this plan through a participatory approach. During a one-week field trip, a series of meetings were held with all the stakeholders in the Mediterranean Coastline of Syria to accumulate all the required information for the action plan. The current situation for the sea birds, the major threats affecting these birds and the proposed national plans for protecting them were all topics that were handled by the project document which will lead to a national action plan to be submitted to the Syrian Authorities in the next few weeks.

For more information please contact Mr Khaldoun Al Omari, Protected Areas Programme Officer at: Khaldoun.Alomari@iucn.org

Socotra ... Future of an Archipelago



IUCN WAME Protected Areas Programme will start filming a documentary on Socotra Islands conservation this month. The aim of producing this film is to promote the terrestrial and marine biodiversity of the Socotra Archipelago and to show how the islands and the local people there are trying to fit into today's changing world. With increased accessibility and the influence of globalization, the islands are threatened by unsustainable development. The film will raise some important questions regarding the future of the archipelago and the threats facing Socotra. The film will also concentrate

on the main conservation issues and achievements of the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme (SCDP) and others relevant stakeholders.

REWARD Programme

REWARD, a new name for the regional water programme

The REgional WAter Resources & Drylands Programme (REWARD) is the new name for the West Asia/Middle East Regional Water Programme. "This new name expresses the idea that water and drylands ecosystems must be REWARDing to local people, while people have to REWARD or value their ecosystems. At the same time, the Arabic translation of REWARD, "Mukafa'a" also implies the benefit of win-win situation." According to Peter Laban, IUCN REWARD Programme Coordinator. He added that taking care of your ecosystems provides an important price as a REWARD to your own life!" [Full story](#)



REWARD consults with members in Jordan

The REWARD team held a consultation meeting with IUCN Jordan members on April 10th to brief them about the REWARD Programme and its demonstration projects in Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Yemen. REWARD Programme Coordinator, Peter Laban said that IUCN will focus on involving members in the REWARD projects in the coming months to build on their experience and knowledge.

Special focus was given to the Jordan projects in Azraq Oasis and the Zarqa River Basin. The REWARD team

discussed the detailed plans of each project. Members showed interest to work with IUCN on these projects which will solve the environmental challenges facing two of most important water resources in Jordan.

Representatives from Jordan Environment Society, Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN), Arab Women Society, Jordan River Foundation, Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), Jordan Society for Desertification Control and Badia Development and University of Jordan attended the meeting.

For more information, please contact Peter Laban on peter.laban@iucn.org

REWARD Implements Azraq Oasis Dialogue

In cooperation with relevant stakeholders, the REWARD team is preparing a three-year-project called Azraq Oasis Dialogue which is a continuation for the Azraq National Dialogue that was under process last year. This proposal pursues long-term efforts for Azraq Oasis rehabilitation. The initiative is a learning-by-doing capacity building plan. The intervention stresses on building systemic tools that can help to make the proper long-term and difficult policy decisions. The Azraq Oasis Dialogue intends to become a sound example on water resources governance for the whole region. This project is funded by DGCS as part of the 5 demonstration projects of the REWARD Programme. [More information](#)



Zarqa River Restoration fund by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation

The Jordanian Ministry of Environment has signed an agreement with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation regarding cooperation for Zarqa River Restoration. The Spanish agency will support the project during three years by funding 965,000 euros. As a third party of the contract, IUCN WAME, will be in charge of strengthening local and institutional capabilities due to its renowned expertise. [More information](#)

Coming Events

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Conventions, Conservation and Management Workshop in Iraq

The Iraqi Ministry of Environment, UNESCO World Heritage Center, IUCN WAME and the designated entity for evaluation of the natural World Heritage Site are holding a workshop on Natural World Heritage topics from 21-25 April 2008 in Sulaymania, Iraq planned by UNESCO Office for Iraq. The program of the workshop is considered as a first module that conveys the basic knowledge to the concerned people and institutions. It will give also a wide overview of key issues related to biodiversity and natural heritage conservation and management.

Future of Sustainability Forum to be held in Alexandria

IUCN and the Alexandria Library seek to co-host a series of annual Sustainability Forums. The objectives of the Forums are to encourage multi-stakeholder participation and commitment to action for sustainability; integrate local and regional knowledge into a new generation of sustainable development thinking and practice; and help embed biodiversity and ecosystem values into mainstream economic sectors.

The first regional Sustainability Forum will be held on June 4th, 2008 on the occasion of the World Environment Day. The forum will be entitled Future of Sustainability Debate: Voices from the South. [More Details](#)

The First REWARD Regional Dialogue Meeting on Ground Water Management to be held in Egypt

REWARD programme will hold its First REWARD Regional Dialogue Meeting on Ground Water Management during July 9-12, 2008 in Egypt. The meeting is a major opportunity for many water related institutions in the region to share knowledge and define a new paradigm for water resources management. The REWARD

Workshop will launch at the same time a 4-year-Forum for Dialogue on sustainable ground water management. The Forum for Dialogue will consist of a series of yearly network/expert meetings putting on the table instruments and practice in order to recommend improved policies and will be convened in partnership with other relevant regional organizations under the auspices of the Arab Water Council. The Forum will especially focus on groundwater and its conjunctive use and management with other water resources (surface water, use of waste water, desalinization of saltish water). It will deal with the interfaces between rural-urban, economy–ecology, long-short term, and have important attention to the implications for poor and women of further degradation of water resources in the region.

For more information please contact **Mr Peter Laban, REWARD Programme Coordinator** at:
peter.laban@iucn.org

Membership News

Consultations with members in Lebanon

Consultations with IUCN members in Lebanon were made during one a National Committee Meeting on April 11th to discuss the prospects of raising IUCN presence and profile in Lebanon. The new IUCN member, Friends of Environment Society, has graciously hosted this meeting. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) presented the planning process for the Sailing to Barcelona activity, where youth will be sailing to the IUCN Barcelona Congress with media coverage from Al Jazeera Children Channel. This project will play a major role in nurturing youth leadership for environment in the region. SPNL, IUCN, Al Jazeera Children Channel and Qatar Foundation are the major partners in this youth activity.

IUCN WAME Regional Director, Dr Odeh Al Jayyousi, highlighted the value of membership in transforming the role of IUCN as a leading agency in environmental conservation. Due to recent history and natural disasters, the cost of environment degradation in Lebanon amounts to about 2-3% of GDP according to a World Bank study. Environment is in jeopardy due to the growing population and the lack of arable lands. Hence, IUCN can assist in ecosystem restoration.

Hala Kilani, IUCN WAME Poverty, Equity and Gender Programme Coordinator has presented the IUCN strategy in Lebanon to the members to get their input and feedback. This exercise reflects the spirit of involving IUCN members in the decision making process.

For more information, please contact Hala Kilani, Poverty, Equity and Gender Programme Coordinator at:
hala.kilani@iucn.org

Should IUCN change its statutory regions? Members are invited to express their views

For a number of years, the IUCN statutory regions have been criticized by some members. The Governance Task Force of Council has been evaluating the boundaries of the IUCN's statutory regions and the related issue of regional representation on Council.

One aim has been to modify a system based on geopolitical realities that no longer accurately reflect the world in which we operate. Four options are proposed and your opinion is sought. [Full Story](#)

A safer marine environment thanks to IUCN member "JREDS"

The field work of the Royal Marine Conservation Society (JREDS) paid last week with two recorded successes. The Society is a major actor in the marine environment in Jordan focusing on sustainable management of Jordanian coastline and marine environment. The Jordanian coast is 27 km long and mainly composed of coral reefs. These particularly sensible organisms face different threats from coral traffic to ships pollution or bleaching due to climate change. Last week, JREDS team has helped the police to arrest coral cutters. [Full Story](#)



Three new members from Iraq, Lebanon and UAE...welcome to IUCN

Three national NGOs from Iraq, Lebanon and UAE have been recently accepted to become IUCN members during the 69th IUCN council meeting held in March 2008 in Gland. IUCN WAME welcomes the three new

members and is looking forward to cooperate with them in the near future. IUCN will provide the platform to the three societies to lift the local and regional conservation issues and priorities to the international level. [Full Story](#)

Members Portal

Get your Password **NOW** – The World Conservation Union launches a new Portal for its members: The World Conservation Union launched an exclusive electronic platform for its members to share knowledge and directly engage with each other. <http://www.iucn.org/members/portal.htm>

For more information contact IUCN WAME Communications Officer, Rania Faouri at: rania.faouri@iucn.org or IUCN WAME Communications Intern, Florent Eveille at: florent.eveille@iucn.org