

## **IUCN 2016 World Conservation Congress Highlights**

Honolulu, Hawai'i, 10 September 2016 (IUCN) – The IUCN World Conservation Congress closed today in Hawai'i, setting the global conservation agenda for the next four years and defining a roadmap for the implementation of the historic agreements adopted in 2015.

The IUCN Congress closed with the presentation of the Hawai'i Commitments. This document, titled “Navigating Island Earth”, was shaped by debates and deliberations over the last ten days, and opened for comment to some 10,000 participants from 192 countries.

It outlines opportunities to address some of the greatest challenges facing nature conservation and calls for a commitment to implement them. It encapsulates the collective commitment by all who attended the Congress to undertake profound transformations in how human societies live on Earth, with particular attention to making our patterns of production and consumption more sustainable.

“Some of the world’s greatest minds and most dedicated professionals met here at the IUCN Congress to decide on the most urgent action needed to ensure the long-term survival of life on Earth and our planet’s ability to sustain us,” says Inger Andersen, IUCN Director General. “This IUCN Congress has come at a pivotal time in our planet’s history as we find ourselves at a crossroad, facing challenges of unprecedented magnitude.

“Today we leave Hawai'i equipped with a much clearer roadmap for advancing on the post-2015 agenda, confident that we have taken our first steps on the road to a sustainable future where nature and human progress support each other.”

With more than 10,000 registered participants, the event brought together leaders from government, civil society, indigenous, faith and spiritual communities, the private sector, and academia, to collectively decide on actions to address the most pressing conservation and sustainable development challenges.

More than 100 resolutions and recommendations have been adopted by IUCN Members – a unique global environmental parliament of governments and NGOs – many of which call on third parties to take action on a wide range of urgent conservation issues.

Key decisions included closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory, the urgency of protecting the high seas, the need to protect primary forests, no-go areas for industrial activities within protected areas and an official IUCN policy on biodiversity offsets.

“International decision-makers have converged on the most urgently needed conservation action,” says IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng. “IUCN’s more than 1,300 Members behind these decisions give them the weight to drive the real change needed to address some of the biggest challenges our planet faces today.”

IUCN Members have also approved a new programme for IUCN for the next four years and elected new IUCN leadership.

The IUCN Congress put new issues on the global sustainability agenda, including the importance of linking spirituality, religion, culture and conservation, and the need to implement nature-based solutions – actions that protect and manage ecosystems, while effectively addressing societal challenges, such as

food and water security, climate change, disaster risk reduction, human health and economic well-being.

U.S. President Obama's announcement to expand the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument – now the largest protected area in the world – set the scene for the IUCN Congress.

Other announcements included the commitment from Governor Ige of Hawai'i to protect 30% of Hawaii's highest priority watershed forests by 2030, effectively manage 30% of Hawai'i's nearshore waters by 2030, double local food production and achieve 100 % renewable energy in the electricity sector by 2045.

Colombia has announced the quadrupling in size of the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary bringing it to 27,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

The IUCN Congress also saw new commitments to the Bonn Challenge initiative to restore 150 million hectares of degraded land by 2050. With the latest pledges from Malawi and Guatemala, total Bonn Challenge pledges have now exceeded 113 million hectares, committed by 36 governments, organizations and companies.

The next IUCN World Conservation Congress will take place in 2020.

## **Key resolutions and recommendations adopted by the IUCN Congress**

### **Illegal wildlife trade**

Following intense deliberations, IUCN Members have urged all governments to close domestic markets of elephant ivory, seen as creating opportunities for laundering illegal ivory. Elephants are killed for their tusks across Africa, threatening both the survival of savannah and forest elephants and park rangers.

Combatting illegal wildlife trade was also at the heart of an IUCN decision on the alarming increase in the poaching of vicuña for its fiber. IUCN Members have called for measures to be put in place to promote the sustainable use of the species, and eliminate the illegal trade, including greater traceability of vicuña fiber and cross-border collaboration.

### **Hunting for captive-bred lions**

IUCN members have called for legislation to ban – by 2020, and particularly in South Africa – the breeding of lions in captivity for the purpose of 'canned shooting', regarded by hunters as 'an ethically repugnant embarrassment'.

### **The high seas**

Members have also identified the need for internationally binding legislation to preserve the high seas, and have set an ambitious target of 30% of marine areas to be protected by 2030. Nearly two-thirds of the world's ocean lies beyond the jurisdiction of countries.

### **Indigenous peoples**

IUCN Members have also agreed to create a new category of IUCN membership for Indigenous peoples' organizations, boosting support for Indigenous peoples' rights on the international scene. A large

number of resolutions adopted by IUCN Members have also contributed to strengthening Indigenous peoples' rights.

### **Protection of primary forests**

IUCN Members have expressed support for the conservation of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes. These are seen to play a critical role in maintaining biodiversity, and are vital for the protection of indigenous cultures, and livelihoods of poor, marginalised communities.

### **No-go areas**

Another decision by IUCN Members has put all land and seascapes classified under any of IUCN's categories of protected areas off limits for damaging industrial activities – such as mining, oil and gas, agriculture – and infrastructure developments – such as dams, roads and pipelines. To date, only World Heritage sites have been formally recognized as no-go areas.

### **Oil palm industry**

In another decision, IUCN Members stressed the crucial need to identify intact forests and critical ecosystems to be avoided by the fast-growing oil palm industry. The rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities should be respected and taken into consideration, according to the decision. Activities of the oil palm industry can have negative impacts on the environment, such as the loss of habitat for great apes and other primates, as well as on community livelihoods.

### **Biodiversity offsets**

IUCN Members have also agreed on a policy on biodiversity offsets, emphasizing that priority must be given to avoid biodiversity loss. Offsets must be a measure of last resort, and in certain cases, they are not appropriate – according to the Members.

### **Natural capital**

IUCN Members have also agreed to develop a policy defining natural capital, taking into account ecological, ethical and social justice issues. Members have noted emerging standards which aim to integrate the value of nature in the decision-making of business and financial institutions, and the need for an improved understanding of natural capital.

Motions are proposed by IUCN Members every four years to set priorities for the work of IUCN.

The Members' Assembly is the highest decision-making body of IUCN. It brings together IUCN Members to debate and establish environmental policy, to approve the IUCN Programme and to elect the IUCN Council and President.

IUCN's membership currently stands at over 1,300 and includes 217 state and government agencies, 1,066 NGOs, and networks of over 16,000 experts worldwide from more than 160 countries. Resolutions and Recommendations on important conservation issues are adopted by this unique global environmental parliament of governments and NGOs, guiding IUCN's policy and work programme and as well as influencing many other organisations around the world.

### **Scientific announcements**

Major scientific announcements were released at the Congress, including the latest update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ which declared the eastern gorilla – the largest living primate – as Critically Endangered due to illegal hunting, while announcing the improvement in status of the giant panda. IUCN also launched the most comprehensive review of the scale and impact of ocean warming on nature and people available to date.

### **Highlighted Speakers**

Speakers at the IUCN Congress included HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco; Tommy Remengesau Jr., President, Republic of Palau; Hilda Heine, President, Republic of Marshall Islands; Edouard Fritch, President of French Polynesia; Sally Jewell, U.S. Secretary of the Interior; Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary; Erik Solheim, UNEP Executive Director; John Scanlon, Secretary-General of CITES; Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General of DG Environment, EU; Prof. Edward O. Wilson, Founder of E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation; Dr Sylvia Earle, Ocean Elder and Founder of Mission Blue and Dr Jane Goodall, Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute.