

IUCN WEST ASIA 9TH REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM



الإتحاد الدولي لحماية الطبيعة
International Union for Conservation of Nature



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Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences



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... للطبيعة، للناس ومستقبل الأجيال القادمة
... for Nature, People and Future Generations



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Kuwait City, Kuwait
9-11 September 2019



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INTRODUCTION

The IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) was established in October 2004 covering the region of West Asia, which comprises of 13 countries including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iran in addition to the Gulf countries including Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

West Asia is part of three eco-regions that incorporate a variety of ecosystems, including Mediterranean forests, deserts, plains, rangelands, savannas, oases, mountains, rivers, lakes, springs, mudflats, swamps, marshes, mangroves and coral reefs. All of which provide a wide array of ecosystem services and ecological corridors for migratory species through the region.

IUCN ROWA aims to be active in all 13 countries in various conservation and sustainable development activities. The critical issues facing the region are:

- Land degradation, aridity and desertification
- Unsustainable water extraction and use
- Biodiversity and habitat loss, and species extinction.
- Threats to sensitive marine ecosystems through pollution, habitat destruction, Invasive Alien Species, and unplanned coastal development.

The IUCN Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) for IUCN West Asian members and partners was inaugurated from 9th to 11th September 2019 in Kuwait City, Kuwait. It was organized by IUCN ROWA in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority in Kuwait and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

Around 180 participants took part in the forum, where the participants represented, in addition to the organizer (IUCN ROWA), the 77 members in West Asia region, partners and donors.



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DAY 1- MONDAY; 09.09.2019

Forum opening session

1. H.E. Mariam Al-Aqeel; Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Kuwait

H.E. Mariam Al-Aqeel welcomed the participants in Kuwait and ensured Kuwait's commitment for all environmental agreements. Kuwait hosted this Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) to support IUCN members and plan for the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) that will be held in France in 2020. She believed that there is time to make changes and hoped that this RCF will encourage other countries to take measures against environmentally harmful acts.



2. Mr. Zhang Xinsheng; IUCN President

Mr. Zhang Xinsheng started his speech with a warm thankful for Kuwait and their hospitality in hosting IUCN ROWA RCF. He ensured the importance of 2020 as the environmental super year, where the world will witness IUCN WCC in Marseille, France as well as other main global conferences.

In this forum, IUCN will have the chance to enhance collaboration and partnerships among IUCN members in order to find out how our union could better serve members, help leadership in the field, and solve current issues.



Mr. Xinsheng highlighted the diversity existing in West Asia region that contributes in the diversity of the flora and ecosystems of the world. Although West Asia members have achieved a lot to conserve the environment, the region is still suffering from several environmental problems such as deforestation, depleting water resources, climate change, etc.

He shared his interest in this region and his willingness to listen to the members. He aimed to discuss how the policy for this great union can be shaped with three regional councillors and 77 members in the region. He also showcased that his visits to Qatar and Lebanon helped him to better understand the situation in West Asia region.



During his speech, he explained the structure of IUCN and its three major pillars; secretariat (1000 worldwide), commissions, and members. Having state, governmental agencies, NGOs, and scientists within IUCN gives this union a unique power. He also shed light on

the election process of IUCN councillors and the council meetings per year, which will improve the communications and governance in the region.

Since West Asia region faces technological, economic, social, and governance challenges, this forum is a great opportunity to be prepared for IUCN WCC and other global conferences that will be held in 2020 in order to draw attention to the region's main concerns and issues. He encouraged the members to shape a vision on how to conserve the nature in West Asia and bring it to the WCC.

3. Dr. Grethel Aguilar; IUCN Acting Director General

Dr. Grethel Aguilar thanked Kuwait for their hospitality and started her speech with the importance of 2020 and how everything we do now will set the foundations for crucial discussions next year.

She shed light on Kuwait's leadership and commitment to the environment, where Kuwait showed a remarkable progress in the Global





Environmental Performance Index, issued by the Yale University Environmental Centre. Ranking 61st, out of 180 countries assessed, from 113th place in 2016, is a bright example to all of us.

Dr. Aguilar also mentioned some of the main achievements across the region, for example, four sites were recognized to well-managed and well-governed protected and conserved areas and listed to the IUCN Green List; 2 in Jordan, 1 in Lebanon and 1 in the United Arab Emirates. Iraqi marshlands was declared as UNESCO world heritage site in 2016, and Jordan was awarded the bronze Future Policy Award in 2017 by the World Future Council (WFC) for its Updated Rangeland Strategy.

In her speech, she ensured the importance of members' efforts in designing visions, strategies and plans to conserve and sustainably manage some of the most biodiversity-rich areas in the world that is existed in West Asia region.

4. H.E. Ibrahim Al Shahahdeh; Minister of Agriculture and Environment, Jordan

H.E. Ibrahim Al Shahahdeh wished IUCN and Kuwait a successful RCF and ensured the importance of environmental issues and its effects on life and sustainability of natural resources for future generations.

He shared Jordanian government's efforts in conserving the unique ecosystems in Jordan, where there are 10 protected areas in Jordan; of which 2 were listed on IUCN Green List (Azraq Wetland Reserve and Ajloun Forest Reserve).

H.E. Al Shahahdeh also mentioned the strong partnership between Jordan and IUCN represented by Healthy Ecosystems for Rangeland Development (HERD) regional project that aims at strengthening restoration and sustainable management of pastoral rangelands for the provision of ecosystem services and protection of biodiversity in Egypt and Jordan.



5. H.E. Dr Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri; Secretary General of Environment Agency- Abu Dhabi

H.E. Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri showed her gratitude in participating in this RCF and the importance of finding effective solutions for increasing pressures on the environment in our region. This needs to put all efforts and potentials in minimizing the threats and adopt the sustainable development goals.

Through IUCN membership, countries in West Asia region can conserve the nature and improve the governance at a regional level. She shed light on Abu Dhabi's experience in shaping its strategy for nature conservation, benefited from IUCN experts and knowledge.

In her speech, H.E. Al Dhaheri showcased her achievements as a regional councillor such as establishing the Emirati national committee and activating the regional committee for West Asia region.



She also briefed the participants with the main achievements of the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD) in conserving nature and cooperating with IUCN to organize the first regional biodiversity forum in the preparation of CBD COP 14 and the Ramsar COP13 and to implement and activate the Green list in the region.

6. Dr. Hany El Shaer; IUCN West Asia Regional Director

Dr. Hany El Shaer thanked Kuwait for their generous hospitality, where they were hosting the RCF for the second time.

He shared his sympathy for Amazon fires and their unfortunate results and raised the question of how much do we have to lost to draw the attention of the world! He also shed light on the biodiversity richness and endemic species in West Asia region, where there are 524 protected areas, of which 4 are world heritage sites.





In his speech, Dr. El Shaer shared his concerns on the negative impacts of wars and conflicts on the future of biodiversity in our region. For example, war in Syria has led to the extinction of Northern Bald Ibis at a local level.

He also mentioned that providing precise and accurate data will enhance decision making processes and cooperating at a regional level will intensify the impacts of nature conservation.

Dr. El Shaer insisted on the importance of working together nowadays to ensure bright future and encouraged members to comment on the IUCN one programme 2021 - 2024 before September 30, 2019 in order to ensure adding West Asia region's priorities on the global environmental agenda.

Exhibition opening session

HRH Princess Bassma bint Ali, H.E. Mariam Al Aqeel; Minister of State for Economic Affairs in Kuwait, H.E Ibrahim Al Shahahdeh; Minister of Agriculture and Environment in Jordan, and H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Al Subah; Director General of Environment Public Authority in Kuwait opened the RCF exhibition.



During the exhibition, the participants visited the booth of Marine and Coastal areas programme at IUCN ROWA, where the programme manager raised the point of plastic and its negative impact on our oceans.

He also highlight the importance of big marine creatures, like sharks, in the sustainability of marine ecosystems.

Then they passed by the Protected areas and biodiversity programme's booth, where the programme manager showcased some of the knowledge products related to biodiversity conservation produced by the programme and IUCN members.



They were introduced to the impact of effective dialogue among multi stakeholders on the development of healthy rangelands ecosystems during their visit to the Drylands, Livelihood and Gender Programme's booth. and enlightened with the projects and initiatives that have been implemented in the Water and Climate Change Programme through visiting their booth.



Finally, they visited the booths of Kuwait Foundation for the advancement of sciences and the Environment Public Authority in Kuwait.



Session 1: Panel Discussion - Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The session was moderated by Dr. Said Damhoureyeh, and hosted 4 panellists; Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga; IUCN Global Director of Policy and Programme Group, Dr. Thomas Brooks; IUCN Chief Scientist in the Science and Knowledge Unit, Dr. Ayman Rabi; IUCN ROWA Regional Councillor, and Dr. Hany EL Shaer; IUCN ROWA Regional Director. They discussed the Post 2020 global biodiversity framework.



1. Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; Dr. Cyriaque N. Sendashonga

Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga showed the historic opportunity of IUCN Programme 2021-2024 to influence and support implementation of a bold and transformative suite of activities to ensure that the world steers a clear course towards 2030.

In her presentation she highlighted that biodiversity is in crisis and we are failing to meet the Aichi Targets we had agreed to back in 2010. Unless we are able to start making changes, we won't be able to reach the SDG goals.

Although there is an impressive conservation successes, such as re-increasing the numbers of endangered animals in the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the region, endangered species need more conservation efforts and actions.



The post 2020 framework will try to address whatever went wrong with the implementation of the SDGs by having stakeholders on board. As a new post-2020 biodiversity framework is developed, IUCN is of the view that we must see the 2030 Agenda as an opportunity.

Therefore, a task force from IUCN is contributing in defining the scope, shape, and content of the new framework. IUCN has been making submissions and members' input in what should be done is needed.



Dr. Thomas Brooks continued by highlighting the key of achieving biodiversity targets, which is to support implementation of conservation actions. Actions come from both the official or governmental platforms, through formal negotiation on development process, and from IUCN position, through the diversity of its members. This can, not only, shape and deliver a solid Post-2020 architecture for people and nature, but also to give a big push for different actors to commit to the best outcome in Kunming CBD COP15.



The first approach to achieve this is to establish an overall target in a quantitative way that works around the world. The proposals should focus on holding the loss of biodiversity by the end of 2030 as a stepping stone towards 2050 natural recovery. That global goal needs to be broken down into individual responsibility of each individual country. These should be structured in a way that shows the contribution of each country.

Another characteristic is that the previous approach can be also applied on a smaller scale by cities, private sector, civil society, local community, and indigenous people. This would ensure involvement of everyone who can contribute at all levels.

Then, Dr. Ayman Rabi shed light on the major needs to conserve biodiversity in West Asia region, which can be summarized by the need of:

1. Building partnerships and cooperation among all partners, countries, and organizations to unify the conservation efforts.
2. Raising awareness on environmental issues in the region.

3. Executing and implementing action plans, not just preparing them and setting them aside.
4. Aligning our plans and goals with international goals and plans.
5. Developing realistic goals and observable and measurable indicators.



IUCN vision for 2030 should be framed positively in cooperation with members and partners and must be reflected into measures.

Finally, Dr. Hany El Shaer said that our goals and plans should be achievable and realistic, otherwise it will remain strategic and put aside. By doing so, we will bridge the gaps in the previous plans. To achieve these goals, we need to implement the needed measures.



Most of protected areas are only on papers. The aim is not only declaring protected areas, but actually conserving biodiversity.

As a region, we should have a voice in the international goals and policies set by IUCN. The situational analysis we have is as comprehensive as we could get information, but it requires updating and validation.

The gap between the goal for 2030 and reality should make us work more efficiently and put much more effort into it. What was planned before should be reviewed and the gaps detected should be analysed to make sure we understand what failed and why we failed in order to plan more carefully and realistically.

After this session, a questionnaire was sent to ROWA members to be filled in order to inform IUCN's position on the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The questionnaire highlighted the threats to biodiversity, responses and solutions, key objectives, IUCN's role and added value, and stakeholders to engage.

Interventions:

- Could IUCN analyse the gaps in Biodiversity hot spots 2020 and why it did not work? What are the lessons learnt?
- We always think that states have the power to change, but sitting with the local communities at the same table and discussing solutions could be the reasonable way.
- Let us set reasonable feasible goal such as conserving biodiversity at a certain rate, let say 80 per cent, instead of the goal mentioned by Thomas, because I believe there were some losses that we need to accept.
- More coordination is needed. National committees should do their own work in terms of evaluation of work done in each state and then share results with other to learn from.
- Lack of resources and accessibility to information are causing some challenges.
- Our regional goals should be aligned with international goals, yet contextual elements do not allow that to happen. These could be related to lack of specialized human resources and others. I think some fine tuning is needed due to that.
- Usually environmental issues and priorities are set separately from other domains such as economic projects which results in setting other priorities that rarely coincides with conservation priorities. How can we make sure these links exist? Decision makers do not have conservation as priority on their agenda.
- IUCN can invest in a regional observatory that does studies and captures situational analyses and works on policies.
- Israel has caused deforestation in large areas of land in Palestine and Jordan which has led to problems in biodiversity conservation. Also the racial genocides taking place affect biodiversity in the region. I demand this features as a main point in our plan.
- IUCN needs to recommend minimizing conflicts in the region because they are affecting biodiversity.
- Before restoring we need to keep biodiversity. Nowadays, tourism, technology and others are priorities and are harming biodiversity. Sometimes the damages are irreversible. Development in some countries is good but for what price.



- What is the role of IUCN in setting the role and contribution of each country? We have no data about that. We also work in closed circles, we do a lot of studies that go into ministries in order to take decisions. Why doesn't IUCN ask for these studies and the available data instead of doing projects that cost money and the use of budget for the same objectives? This effort could be put in reaching the goals.
- After the overall goal, we need action plans at the level of countries, then this should be monitored through reports to be sent. Ministries and NGOs fight instead of working together to be focal points. Politics is also influencing ecosystems; migrating birds will not take Iran's siege into consideration.
- IUCN strategies implementation usually focuses on large scale organizations, whereas the local small-scale NGOs are the ones working and making impact in local communities. Working with such NGOs could make more impact and reflects the bottom-up approach. We need to think on how to involve them in the planning and not just in financing their projects.
- Local communities are also represented by individuals, not just organizations, because these individuals know the context. Plans usually come from top down not taking this into consideration. Municipalities and other executive entities should be involved and they need to take our goals as priorities.
- We do not have access to data and studies, so we conduct campaigns without evidence.
- Let us communicate with decision makers and try to come up with compromises. Support needed for some motions to become achievements is not only financial but also related to capacity building and others.
- Olive trees in Palestine are unique and I second the idea that what is happening there is serious. Also we need to analyse past efforts to learn from them.
- Sharing experience of Kuwait, where all ministries in Kuwait have now departments for the environment to ensure respecting biodiversity.





Conclusions from Panellists:

Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga:

- The comments you are making are part of the process of the framework of 2020. The 2010 slogan of hot biodiversity came without concrete and quantifiable targets or timelines. Target 11 is an example where there was some progress made since it was clear and measurable, yet it does not mean we are achieving the biodiversity goal set.
- There are some local studies and data which can be used. One of the reasons for hope for the next 10 years that it seems biodiversity is getting international attention including ecosystem-based interventions to achieve climate change control measures such as CO₂ emissions control.
- The SDGs gave potentials for the emphasis on conservation goals such as the one related to water provision and aligning it to the conservation of the ecosystem that allows nature to use and produce water.
- Working on both local and global levels is crucial because when there is coherence at these two levels we can start seeing progress.
- How to formulate a target that covers all aspects of conservation and how to break it down into actions?
- How to make sure commitments will be met? What kind of monitoring can be put into place? States such as France and



China are working on bringing biodiversity agenda at the same level as climate change.

Dr. Thomas Brooks:

- Bottom-up approach and quantifying targets that are feasible are important issues.
- We can stop losing biodiversity at a short term whereas restoration comes at a longer term.
- The mobilization of data across 20 years made it possible to understand local variations and what needs to be done.
- The illegal killing of migrant birds is a local issue that needs to be addressed.
- Red list data from the region exist.
- There is an increasing interest beyond governments in taking actions.

Dr. Ayman Rabi:

- We agree with all comments and appreciate collective thinking; learning from previous gaps, evaluating achievements of previous goals, coordinating among committees and commissions, collaboration among large and small scale entities, producing knowledge to be used for decision making, making information accessible and using language that could be understood by non-professionals.
- Regular monitoring should be ensured.
- The conflicts in the region should be taken into consideration.

Dr. Hany El Shaer:

- The problems you mentioned should lead you to plan and write proposals.
- Scientific and evidence-based studies and decisions need to be made accordingly.
- Local entities can be very helpful in implementing plans in collaboration with governments.



Session 2: Panel Discussion - Draft Intersessional IUCN programme 2021-2024

The session was moderated by Dr. Ayman Rabi, and hosted 4 panellists; Dr. Grethel Aguilar; IUCN Acting General Director, Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga; IUCN Global Director of Policy and Programme Group, Dr. Said Damhoureyeh; IUCN ROWA Regional

Councillor, and Dr. Hany EL Shaer; IUCN ROWA Regional Director. They discussed IUCN Programme 2021- 2024.



1. IUCN Vision, Dr. Grethel Aguilar

Dr. Grethel Aguilar briefed the participants with IUCN vision, mission and structure. She also shed light on the members, of which 77 members are in West Asia region, and commission members. IUCN generate knowledge products, analyse data, do field work and make recommendations for policy makers and conservationists.

She mentioned some the tools used in IUCN to assess ecosystems and its management such as Red list of ecosystems, Red list of threatened species, Green list, etc. These along with the conservation actions will make us achieve our common goals. She insisted that SDGs cannot be achieved if we do not conserve our natural resources. And we need to keep repeating that so that people see nature in the very heart of all possibilities for future generations.

She also highlighted the draft programme of IUCN 2021 - 2024 that is on IUCN portal and website and encouraged members to add their comments on it before 30th of September. The programme will focus on main 4 subjects; healthy oceans, healthy lands and waters, climate change mitigation and adaptation and equitable governance of natural resources.



She ensured that achieving the programme will be through working with the members, learning from some and building the capacity of others. It is the diversity and richness in our members that makes IUCN unique and will help us generate knowledge and develop IUCN.

Dr. Aguilar shared her impression in the amount of work members done in the region, and encouraged them to showcase their work to others, especially in Marseille, because the potential of this region is unknown internationally. She also presented a short video named “We are the generations.”

2. IUCN regulations on Programme, Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga

Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga explained the reasons of having a programme and encouraged the participants to know the definition and purpose of programmes that is in the policies and programme section in the IUCN document.

She shared some core principles of programme development including: participation and engagement of the Union’s constituents, inputs from framework donors and other strategic partners, clear niche identification and value proposition, relevance to global conversations on sustainable development, and learning from experience.

Dr. Sendashonga mentioned that the Hawaii programme framework was somehow aligned with the SDGs (biosphere, society, economy, partnership) and raised the question of what will the coming framework be aligned with? She also explained that everything rests on the biosphere/nature and if we do not preserve ecosystems, there is no way we can achieve the socio- economic goals.



3. IUCN Programme 2021 – 2024, Dr. Hany El Shaer

Dr. Hany El Shaer ensured that IUCN programme 2021 – 2024 provides the framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the conservation work undertaken by the commissions.

He shed light on the challenges we face in our region such as land degradation, collapse of marine ecosystems, threat of climate change, and disempowerment of people and

nature. He also shared some of the lessons learnt from implementing the previous programme including the sustainability of results and the indicators.

In his presentation, he explained the IUCN programme 2021 – 2024 in details, where the programme focuses on 4 main pillars:

1. Healthy lands and waters
2. Healthy oceans
3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation
4. Equitable governance of natural resources



4. IUCN Programme 2021 – 2024, Dr. Said Damhoureyeh

Dr. Said Damhoureyeh ensured that our programme has objectives that we can evaluate later and we should contextualize it based on our region. He insisted that we need to show our potential and focus on the needs of our region in order to reach our goals.



Interventions:

- I hope that Acting Director General work on our region's union and its members' visibility around the world, which has effects on memberships and influence.
- The governance issue is a huge demand due to politics, government sovereignty, and conflicts. If we start building a regional database after specifying characteristics of the database, we would have achieved much. We should also, as a neutral organization, work on conflict resolution especially in this region when conflict is on natural resources. This would be a huge favour for the benefit of our region and its people.
- I do not see the priorities of this region, but only a mention of peace. If we want change, we need to address the issue of conflict and occupation. This is a very relevant issue not just in our region, but also in Africa and other places. Some motions were presented related to these topics, but we haven't seen anything on the ground. I suggest working on our priorities as a region.
- I have some suggestions for the draft; in page 15- commitments and reliance on past conflict resolution: add motions of 2004 and 2008 related to conflict





resolution and focus on assessment of the effect of wars on the environment. In page 16: add a sentence to just independent and fair legal system that protects...and other manmade crises such as conflict. Also adding: and water to protection of indigenous land.

- I feel that we will go into bureaucracy again. Why not give each region the opportunity to develop their own programmes, because if regions will adopt international programmes it won't be as effective.

- Internationally, political contexts highly influence the environment. The uniqueness of IUCN in having members of both governments and NGOs can become a potential if each region has the right to develop programmes that fight against the politics in the region, which could change the dynamics.
- Focusing on governance, based on the bottom-up approach, the local community should be involved since they know the field much more. Some major concepts were developed in the region, such as Hima, so why adopt concepts from other contexts? Local people in our countries are ready to re-adopt such concepts, so why search for others?
- In Lebanon we are gathering KBAs data. We should collect data scattered and use it.
- Environmental migration is an important topic for the region and it was not mentioned.
- We can adapt international topics so that it suits our region. We look at the integration and complementarities between IUCN programmes related to different themes, which we have found to be inseparable and would like to hear your feedback.
- I would like to focus on the gap between strategy and implementation of programmes. We as members should be implementing the projects. However, we did not see IUCN doing that during the past years. Also visibility should be for the members and their work not for IUCN.
- I found that IUCN drafted away from the main focus of biodiversity. Also commissions and committees were not mentioned. We were talking about bottom up approaches, why did not every commission work on a draft proposition for the programme instead of



preparing one for us to give comments on. Also when we will be stop using words and concepts irrelevant to our region such as indigenous people?

- We should combine all treaties together because every country has several commitments due to several treaties. So why not come up with a programme that covers them all?
- In every country we need to define an ecosystem service for studies.
- Natural disasters in our region influence our communities. Also local communities' best practices should be considered a lever because usually they perform technically better during times of crises. We need to build the capacities of our local communities to defend the environment.
- Work needs to be done related to relationships between the secretariat and the commissions. The role we play, other than conference, is unclear. Sometimes experts who work for IUCN are not invited to important events.
- Comments on the programme from Bahrain; point 4.5: when you mention education, does it cover ethical values and principles? If the concepts of values and principles are not mentioned justice will be affected. Younger generations, even children, not just youth, should be included, because they will become the future investors and decision-makers. Also influence can be exerted on ministries of education in order to work on these values.
- We have a privilege in IUCN because we have both NGOs and governments, whereas others have only NGOs which prevents them from progressing and collaborating with governments. The existence of laws that force collaboration with



NGOs promotes the implementation of all programmes. This should be an example to follow.

- There are many treaties related to the same issues, how can we ensure complementarity between them or else countries will be distracted and confused by that. Also the topic of genetically-modified substances and their effect on health should be added.

Conclusion from panellists:

Dr. Grethel Aguilar:

- Visibility is one of the challenges, but if we make an impact then we become visible.
- Working on the regional level is always beneficial and IUCN will support that.
- Topics related to conflict resolution will be visible.
- The programme does not belong to the secretariat, you as members will approve the programme, and every region will develop work plans based on the needs of the region, and then we monitor that.
- The programme is for IUCN members and commissions to work together, and if we can contribute to the work of other conventions, we should do that with our unique power, because we are not here to compete.
- The first draft is agreed upon by councillors that you elected and it is a draft that you can modify and even the second draft can be also modified.
- We can support communities and governments, but we need the programme as a tool to start working.
- Community-based conservation is very important for IUCN and if it is not clear we will make it more visible.
- Youth is also younger generations and I believe in the role of education starting from home and we are working on involving them through events and activities.

Dr. Hany El Shaer:

- Regarding the gap between planning and implementation, each project has an action plan that is approved by secretariat.
- Capacity building depends on funds and expression of specific needs.
- We are ready to collaborate with whoever wants to work. Our work complements that of other conventions and we support the governments in developing programmes and implementing them.

Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga:

- We use youth term, because we mean specific age range and that is for metric purposes.
- Many countries mention support they received from IUCN to fulfil commitments to other conventions, because we provide technical help and knowledge.



Dr. Said Damhoureyeh:

- We have been re-evaluating the governance of IUCN.
- We are practicing bottom-up approach, and you can bring the attention to our region.

Birds Migration Movie - Kuwait International Lens

Eng. Omar Al Sayed Omar highlighted the work of Kuwait International Lens and presented the Birds Migration Movie from Al Kober Island.



Back to the Wild Movie - Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD)

Dr. Shaikha Al Dhaheri highlighted the work of EAD on re-increasing the numbers of endangered species, the African Maha Gazelle, in Abu Dhabi and re-introducing it in the wild. She presented the Back to Wild Movie.



DAY 2- TUESDAY; 10.09.2019

Session 3: IUCN Congress 2020

The session was moderated by Dr. Said Damhoureyeh, and hosted 3 panellists; Luc De Wever; IUCN Senior Governance Manager, Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga; IUCN Global Director of Policy and Programme Group, and H.E. Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri; IUCN ROWA Regional Councillor. They discussed IUCN Congress 2020.



1. Improvements of IUCN's Governance, Dr. Shaikha Al Dhaheri

Dr. Shaikha Al Dhaheri highlighted that it is the duty of the IUCN Council to contribute to improving the governance of IUCN based on requests from the membership through WCC resolutions, its own experience and challenges encountered in day-to-day governance (“learning on the job”).

She presented topics that are currently under consideration in Council with the view of presenting solutions to Congress for discussion and adoption. She raised these issues in the RCF on behalf of the Council to listen to what members have to say about them. The Council will take members' views into account when deciding whether to pursue these issues and make a proposal to Congress, and in which form.



Dr. Al Dhaheri clarified, in details, the improvements of IUCN's governance that include:

1. Including subnational governments in IUCN membership.
2. Election procedures and inclusiveness of dependent territories.
3. Establish an elected Indigenous Councillor position.
4. Modification of the term “Regional Councillor.”
5. Improvements to the motions process.
6. Role of Commissions in National and Regional Committees.
7. Follow-up to the External Review of IUCN's governance.

She encouraged members to send their feedback on the suggested improvements of IUCN governance, through the Union Portal by September 15th, and Post IUCN Member proposals to amend the IUCN Statutes on any other topics by December 11th, 2019.

2. IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, Luc De Wever

Luc De Wever explained what IUCN World Conservation Congress means, which is where IUCN, as a Union, sets priorities and drive conservation and sustainable development action.

He highlighted the congress themes, which are:

1. Managing landscapes for nature and people.
2. Conserving freshwater to sustain life.

3. Restoring ocean health.
4. Accelerating climate change mitigation and adaptation.
5. Upholding rights, ensuring effective and equitable governance.
6. Leveraging economic and financial systems for sustainability.
7. Advancing knowledge, learning, innovation and technology.



De Wever also shared with the participants some logistical and technical details about the IUCN WCC; the venue, the forum, the exhibition, etc.

2. Introduction to the Motion Process, Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga

Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga explained the IUCN policy cycle, from Motions to Resolutions and Recommendations, and highlighted Key dates to remember.

She encouraged members to submit motions, where by submitting, discussing, voting on and adopting motions, members participate in this highly democratic and unique decision-making process.



Dr. Sendashonga mentioned that motions can:

- Focus on a diverse range of conservation issues and advance environmental policies.
- Be linked to IUCN's Programme or Commission mandates.
- Address internal governance issues of IUCN.

Interventions

- We need a clear report on the two motions we had presented about conflicts. It is clear that we all insisted on the importance of this issue. IUCN should be responsible and do not neglect this issue. We had previously insisted on getting updates and Inger had promised to follow up on that, but now allow us to express our anger and to demand a report.
- Is there a way for members to select a working group to join during the congress, ahead of time?

- We had presented a motion on the electronic trade/cyber-crime of wildlife. We have conducted studies on how serious the effect of electronic trade is since it is 24 hours a day accessible. Within 6 weeks of the year 2018, 12,000 trade operations were discovered in European countries. This motion is a novelty, so we hope it gets support.
- Will there be financial support for the regional NGOs and individuals from local communities to cover the costs of participation in the congress?
- Who nominates individuals for the IUCN award? We appreciate having more information about this process.
- Should motions be aligned with the latest IUCN programme(s)?
- For Iranian NGOs it is impossible to cover the costs of participation, what is the solution?



Conclusion from the Panellists:

Dr. Grethel Aguilar:

- The participation of Iran is highly valued by IUCN. We need to sit and work together and find ways to improve our collaboration.



Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga:

- Referring to the slide entitled “retirement of resolutions-the archive”, this exercise allows us to look at a huge list of active motions and why they were selected to be active.
- If the two motions about conflict resolution are not part of the list, they would be kept aside with explanation of their status. We will provide you a report on the status of these two motions before the next Congress.
- The motion submitted by IFAW will be reviewed by the council.

Dr. Said Damhoureyeh:

- It is our responsibility in the region to make sure that this motion gets sufficient votes.

- Motion needs to be sponsored i.e. agreement from another commission member that the motion is important.

Luc De Wever:

- To increase members' responsibility to endorse working on the motion they sponsor, they are required to express what they are willing to offer for the implementation of the motion such as activities, budget, etc.
- Referring to slide entitled "sponsored delegates" including information on covering costs of travel, accommodation and other offered for sponsored delegates.
- Priorities will be given to low-income countries.
- At the moment there are no funds to cover the participation of individuals.



- Referring to slide entitled "members' assembly-awards," nominations must be submitted by IUCN authorized member. Honorary memberships may be proposed by council and commission members. The details are on the IUCN Congress website.
- Regarding the problem with VISA rejection for some members from some countries, an email had been sent to the IUCN explaining the expected problems, but till now we don't know if it can be resolved.

Session 4: IPBES and Synthetic Biology

The session was moderated by Dr. Said Damhoureyeh, and hosted 2 panellists; Dr. Thomas Brooks; IUCN Chief Scientist in the Science and Knowledge Unit, and Hein Ngo, IPBES Secretariat. They discussed two main topics; IPBES and Synthetic Biology.



1. IUCN-IPBES strategic partnership, Dr. Thomas Brooks

Dr. Thomas Brooks shared some follow-up of the two IUCN resolutions related to IPBES. He briefed the participants on what is IPBES and shared some insights on the major outcomes of the IUCN IPBES strategic partnership.

He raised the need to address direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss at the same time and at all levels. It also emphasizes the role in these processes of social values that drive behaviors.

He mentioned that members can get involved in the IPBES processes through union portal (call for experts, or review processes). They can also participate to and support IPBES national platforms.

Dr. Brooks highlighted the strategic partnership between IUCN and IPBES that was started in 2016 that has main three outcomes; expertise provided by IUCN, sharing of data (RedList, KBA, heritage sites), and stakeholder engagement. This partnership should rely on all IUCN constituency (members and experts from regions).



2. The IPBES Global Assessment, Hien T. Ngo

Hien T. Ngo highlighted the IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the complementary objectives of the next work programme of IPBES (to 2030).

She also shed light on an array of underlying causes of biodiversity loss that all ultimately rooted in societal values. These underlying causes are called the “indirect drivers of change” and they include, prominently, trends in population and consumption, in technology and economy including trade, conflicts and social unrest, and prominently institutions and governance.

Interventions

- How was assessment done in our region? Because this is a struggle for us. And who takes decisions regarding the information produced in our region?

- What is your evaluation of the contribution of West Asia region on progress towards the Aichi biodiversity targets and how can it be improved? How much work is taking place on the ground?

Conclusion from panellists:

Hein T. Ngo:

- Some countries have data, others don't. IPBES identifies knowledge gaps, and provides regionally-balanced numbers of experts to ensure same level of data.
- IPBES give attention to accessibility of reports in English and local languages.
- IPBES is policy informing and work with agencies who are policy makers or influencers by providing accessibility to the knowledge products.
- IPBES fetches validated data from sources like OECD, WORLD BANK, IUCN. They have 150 core experts and other international experts who evaluate the credibility of findings based on the most updated set of data they have access to. Their work is transparent with credible data sources.

Dr. Thomas Brooks:

- The governance of IPBES is under the government.
- IUCN supports by making connections to experts and members and maximize opportunities of using IUCN network of members for dissemination too.
- There are currently calls for expert reviews of draft reports by IPBES, there are also calls for nomination for scoping exercises on different topics, and members are encouraged to seek these opportunities.



Dr. Said Damhoureyeh:

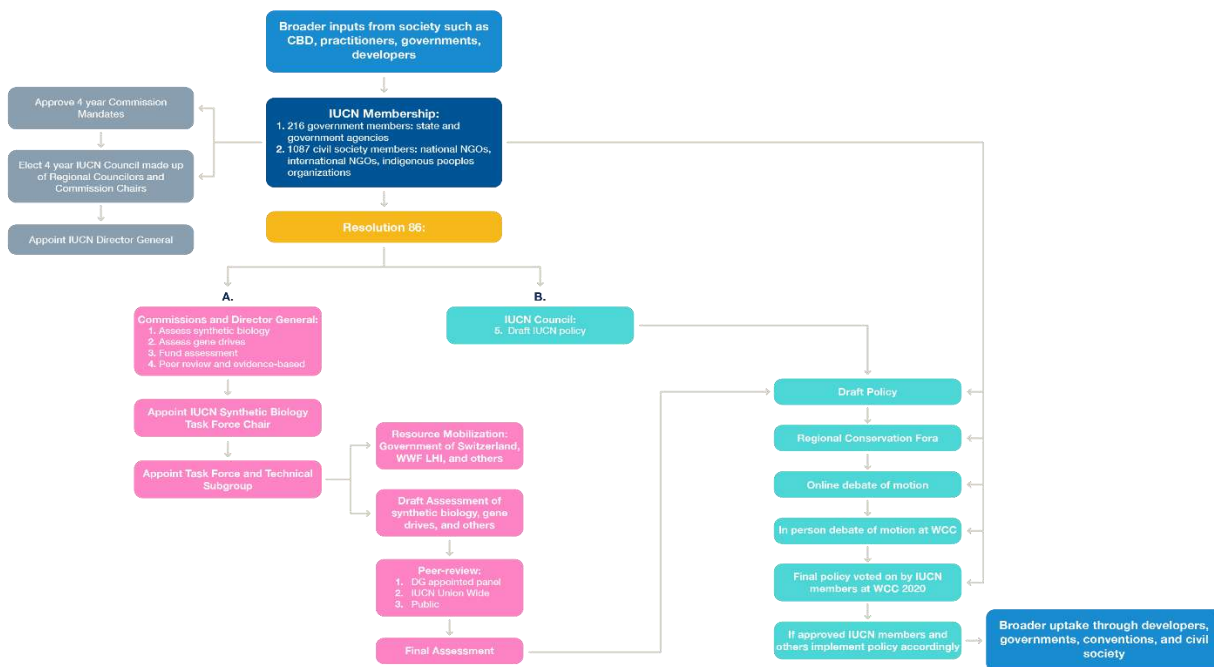
- Members can refer back to their governments for nominations.

3. Synthetic Biology, Dr. Thomas Brooks

Dr. Thomas Brooks explained the concept of Synthetic Biology as it is a rapidly expanding field that in some sectors is already well into industrial scale application. He also highlighted how we can use this concept as a conservation tool.

He also shed light on the tools that powering synthetic biology as well as synthetic biology relationship with different perspectives.

Dr. Brooks explained the framework for operationalizing the idea of an evidence-based assessment on the potential impacts of synthetic biology on biodiversity. The below figure situates the resolution’s mandates within that broader context.



He also briefed the participants on the drafted IUCN Principles on the Intersection of Biodiversity Conservation and Synthetic Biology and encouraged members to send their input in the draft principles by the end of September.

Interventions:

- Worries about concentration of genes for certain species since it would affect their survival in the region.

- Invasive species in one area may not be invasive in another, how would you resolve that?
- How would you make sure the negative effect of synthetic bio does not harm biodiversity?
- Will the members have roles in the work related to the effect of synthetic biology on biodiversity? Will there be internal work on that? Are we going to be partners and will our experiences be taken into consideration in that field?
- Should we be taking a more proactive measure in this field? In education, for example, the young generation is keener in contrast to the more reluctant older generations.
- There are two views regarding this issues; one is with putting money into saving endangered species, and the other prefers investing in more creative possibilities.
- Why isn't West Asia involved in the assessment?
- Worries about the governance of synthetic biology. Will it remain scientific or will it be used for commercial and industrial purposes like what happened with genetic modifications? There is a need for a scientific body that monitors this and takes decisions.
- Worries about the impact of synthetic biology which might lead to irreversible transformations. If this knowledge is controlled by ill-willed entities what could happen to humanity? It is the same trend with all previous scientific innovations such as pesticides and genetic modifications which started with promises of positive potential and then became uncontrolled and harmful.



Conclusion from panellist:

Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga:

- For clarification, IUCN is not working on synthetic biology as the presentation might have caused you to understand. It is happening; this new technology is there and it may start to impact biodiversity. We are bringing this topic into discussion so that IUCN members are aware of it and will not be hit by its effects suddenly.



- IUCN still does not have a policy with regard to this issue. In Hawaii, there was a proposition of discussing this issue, so IUCN drafted a suggested position on the issue and wants the members' input on it.
- Why did we choose IPBES and synthetic bio to put on RCF agenda? We think that the Global Report is important and members should know about it which could help them make decisions. As for synthetic bio, we did not want to wait for you to put the subject on the table, we started the discussion to begin to socialize it with you and to get a context when the debate on the issue begins.
- Recommendation to include the resources in Arabic as requested.

Dr. Thomas Brooks:

- Your input is much needed so that IUCN can present a position on synthetic bio.
- There is a diversity in the views from extreme concern about the privatization of this technology and extreme enthusiasm on the potentials of this technology.
- What brings responsible decision making is knowledge and we will make sure the process is inclusive.
- The key message from the assessment is understanding the risks of implementing this technique in the regional context.
- We need to engage in the discussion of this subject or else it would finally roll over us.
- As for synthetic bio application to invasive species, it is a valid point to think about based on the context of the invasive species, so, for example, on islands water barriers help mitigate the effect of this technology on the species on other lands.
- The role of IUCN is to steer the already happening changes to the less bad, less harmful and more useful for conservation directions.
- As for extinction, the key message is that there is no one size fits all answer; it depends on the time since extinction and the freshness of tissues and the existence of current proxies of the species and the ecosystems where they used to live.



Dr. Said Damhoureyeh:

- This technology exists and cannot be stopped, yet we need to be aware when we buy products if they contain biologically synthesized substances so that we can make conscious choices.

Session 5: Membership and commissions main achievements

The session was moderated by Dr. Cyriaque Sendashonga, and hosted 5 panellists:

- Dr. Shaikha Al Dhaheri; IUCN West Asia Regional Councillor,
- James Hardcastle; Programme Developer, Global Protected Areas Programme,
- Ehab Eid; IUCN SSC Regional Vice-Chair for West Asia,
- Tamer Khafaga; IUCN CEM Regional Chair for West Asia, and
- Firas Abd-Alhadi; IUCN CEC Regional Vice-Chair for West Asia.

They highlighted the progress in each commission.

1. IUCN Membership Strategy, Dr Shaikha Al Dhaheri

Dr. Shaikha Al Dhaheri shared the IUCN membership strategy, which is updated to help address how current constituents of the Union work together. New expertise, new partnerships and new approaches may be required. Similarly, new ways and means may be needed to inspire a new generation that has a deeply personal stake in the future of our shared planet.

She summarized some of the recurring issues that were raised during the online consultation to update the strategy earlier this year. Most of the issues had also been raised during Member Survey last year and IUCN have tried to ensure that they have been included in the strategy.

Dr. Al Dhaheri shared the main objectives of the Strategy and the thinking behind them and ensured that the Value Proposition is reflected in the objectives of the Strategy which when implemented, will bring together its three pillars – the Members, Commissions and the Secretariat – to give IUCN the ability to generate a value greater than the sum of its parts. She also encouraged members to comment on this strategy and its objectives.



2. Green List initiative in West Asia Region, James Hardcastle

James Hardcastle shed light on IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the priorities for WCPA West Asia Region to 2020. He also explained the Green list, which is a list of well-conserved protected areas and the standards for eligibility to be on the list. It has four interlinked components, the most important of which is successful conservation outcomes.



He also mentioned the EAGL pioneers and presented a video about Shouf Biosphere Reserve in Lebanon as an example of well-conserved areas on the green list.

During this presentation, EAGL pioneers in West Asia region were honoured, who are:

1. Leina Al Awadi
2. Mina Esteghamat
3. Ehab Eid
4. Khaldoun Al-Omari
5. Nabegh Ghazal Asswad
6. Tamer Khafaga
7. Gregory Simkin.
8. Sulafa al Shaalan
9. Thuraya Said Al Sariri
10. Khaled Allam Harhash
11. Daniel R- Paleczny
12. Nizar Hani
13. Mohammed Zaarour



They also highlighted the candidate sites committed to achieve the IUCN Green List and honoured those already on the list, which are:

- Ajloun Forest Reserve – Jordan,
- Azraq Wetland Reserve - Jordan,
- Shouf Cedars Reserve – Lebanon,
- Wathba Wetland Reserve - United Arab Emirates.



3. IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), Ehab Eid

Ehab Eid highlighted the 6 IUCN commissions and focused on the Species Survival Commission (SSC) that aims to advise the Union on the technical aspects of species conservation and mobilizes action for those species that are threatened with extinction. He highlighted the main specialist groups under SSC.



4. IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), Tamer Khafaga

Tamer Khafaga talked about IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) that aims to promote the adoption of, and provide guidance for, ecosystem approaches to the management of landscapes and seascapes and build resilience of socio-ecological systems to address global changes. He highlighted CEM priority areas, structure, membership and the main achievement from 2017 to 2019.



5. IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), Firas Abd-Alhadi

Firas Abd-Alhadi talked about IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) that aims to strengthen the work of the Union through creative, innovative, and effective communication and education, ultimately influencing behavioural change for conservation and sustainability. He highlighted CEC membership in the region,

achievements and future plans. He also shed light on Nature for All initiative that works on Increasing support and action for nature conservation globally.

During his presentation, he presented a short video entitled “Living Nature,” and honored the winner of CEC regional award.



DAY 3- WEDNESDAY; 11.09.2019

In the beginning of this day, there were two parallel sessions about the region thematic priorities as the following.

Session 6: Region Thematic Priorities-Parallel Session of Messilah Ballroom 1B

The session was moderated by Ehab Eid, and hosted main two IUCN ROWA programmes, and related members.

- Ziad Samaha; Marine and Coastal Zone Management Programme manager at IUCN ROWA.
- Natalia Boulad; Protect Areas, World Heritage and Biodiversity Programme manager at IUCN ROWA.



1. Ocean and Plastic, Ziad Samaha

Ziad Samaha shed light on Marine plastic pollution. Following the WCC 2016 in Hawaii, IUCN GMPP launched multiple strategic programmes to tackle marine plastics. The programme has addressed micro-plastics, their sources, and impacts and possible solutions. These solutions are highlighted in IUCN's Plastics Portfolio and its objectives to reduce the inflow of plastics in the world's oceans and to overcome plastic pollution with smart adaptable solutions.



This requires a lot of research to weed out the inaccurate alternatives and solutions that are mushrooming on the market every day, engage with businesses which is also a complex activity yet crucial to work together to “close the plastic tap”. This requires strong commitment on local, regional and global level

2. Towards Representative, Connected and Climate Resilient Networks of protected areas in West Asia, Natalia Boulad

Natalia Boulad shed light on biodiversity and protected areas in West Asia region, where there are 319 designated protected areas, of which 4 are natural or mixed World Heritage sites, 19 are UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves, 46 are Ramsar sites and 4 on IUCN Green list.



She also explained the linkage between Protected Areas, World Heritage and Biodiversity programme objectives and main achievements and the draft IUCN program 2021-2024. She shed light on the ongoing projects in the programme and the upcoming events and activities.

3. Relevant Presentations from ROWA members

- Bird KBAs in Palestine, presented by Ibrahim Awda from Palestine Wild Life Association.
- Natural Reserves Experience in Jordan, presented by Yehya Khaled from Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN).
- Marine and Coastal Protected Areas of Iran; Threats and Participatory Conservation, presented by Dr. Mina Esteghamat from Zepak.
- The Lebanese Strategy for Public Beach Management, presented by Iffat Edriss Chatila from Operation Big Blue Association.

- The Protection of Marine Mammals in Iran, presented by Hamed Moshiri from Plan for the Land Society.
- Regional Challenges due to Illegal Species Trade, presented by Akram Darwish from IFAW.

Interventions:

- In Qatar, a research was conducted with students about plastics, where they sent the data to the companies to stop using plastics. The reaction was that some started removing their brand names from the plastic bags. In this case, what is the role of ISO in reinforcing such measures?
- More info about the Saudi Arabian project, and how to go about interlinkages between projects?
- There is lack of visibility of the data provided from Syria and we are ready to provide them.
- Shouldn't there be a curriculum to raise awareness on the effects of micro-plastics introduced by ministries of education?
- Can IFAW collaborate with governments and other NGOs in other countries?



Conclusion from Panellists:

Ziad Samaha:

- Regarding brands: Most of the companies are involved in Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), such as Nestle, Coca Cola and Dow Chemicals, and are already on board. Yet, most companies tend to lean toward double standards, especially when operating in countries that lack necessary regulations and regulatory frameworks on plastics and single use plastic and do not reinforce such initiatives. Local NGOs have roles in supporting governments to win the fight

against plastic. For us, cleaning campaigns are not sufficient. They account to only one component of a full cycle that needs to be implemented.

- We are partners in the platform www.ibat-alliance.org. You can check the missing info by country factsheets, and follow up with your country's focal point to make sure that the data is updated and shared, by so it will be published. Usually it is the Ministry of Environment or relevant protected area authorities that provide such data. If you find gaps, and you don't know who to address, please send us the missing data you have and we will follow up with the country's focal point for validation and then online update.
- Regarding education: many projects are done in this regard, such as comics and resources for children online and printed versions. We are planning on working with countries on preparing educational programmes that can be integrated into schools' curriculum.

Natalia Boulad:

- One of the important topics is to ensure the conservation of biodiversity hot spots located outside designated protected areas by integrating these areas in land use plans with appropriate land use guidelines to protect them. Developing guidelines for environmental impact assessment studies for development project that could take place around these areas will also contribute in conserving these biodiversity hot spots.
- Our current projects in Saudi Arabia are mostly related to capacity building of local communities to ensure cultural and environmental belonging.
- Regarding interlinkages and IUCN's strategy in working jointly with members in funded projects: priorities should be aligned. IUCN is not a donor but supports members in mobilizing budgets for projects with IUCN's priorities.
- For Syria: we know there are reserves, but the references do not list them. I can provide contact with the persons that ensure visibility of data.

IFAW:

- IFAW is ready to collaborate while respecting the authority of others.



Session 6: Region Thematic Priorities-Parallel Session of Messilah Ballroom 1A

The session was moderated by Dr. Nedal Al Ouran, and hosted main two IUCN ROWA programmes, and related members.

- Ali Hayajneh; Water and Climate Change Programme manager at IUCN ROWA.
- Bassima Khatib; Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL).
- Rania Al Zoubi; Drylands, Livelihood and Gender Programme manager at IUCN ROWA.
- Khaled Maarafi; Hashemite Fund for Development of Badia Jordan (HFDBJ)



1. Nature based Solutions (NbS) for water management and climate change resilience, Ali Hayajneh

Dr. Nedal Al Ouran enlightened the audience with IUCN ROWA and its programmes. Then he introduced Ali Al Hayajneh who talked about nature based solutions for water management and climate change resilience.

Ali Hayajneh started his presentation with a brief about Water and Climate Change programme at IUCN ROWA that aims to promote good water and climate change governance in the region and ensured that our work will be in alignment with the IUCN one programme 2021 – 2024, especially with the Healthy lands and water and climate change mitigation and adaptation.



He highlighted the main challenges in our region, which are the gap between water demand and water availability, conflicts in our region, which are a real challenge for water. In Jordan for example, the Dissi ground water aquifer was supposed to meet the needs of Jordanian people, but in 2011 the Syrian influx increase the water demand and the gap remains the same, if not worse.

Hayajneh also defined the Nature Based Solution (NbS) concept and how we can use this definition in water resources management. Water managers can harness NbS through protection, restoration and extension of the ecosystem services. The benefits of

NbS water management can be summarized in water supply regulation, flood mitigation, water purification and erosion reduction. He also highlighted the main projects under the Water and Climate Change programme in the region and presented a short video about MINARET project.

Dr. Al Ouran summarized the presentation that showed the flexibility of the programme approach and focusing on the importance of human aspect in water management. The video showed a successful approach in facing the threat of climate change.

2. Al Hima; A Way of Life, Bassima Khatib (SPNL)

Bassima Khatib highlighted the Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) and the water crisis in Lebanon in spite of the availability of water as well as SPNL partnership with IUCN.

In her presentation, she highlighted the Hima concept and their work in Hima Anjar Kfar Zabad; the objectives of establishing this Hima and its importance as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBBA).

Khatib also summarized the criteria for selecting a Hima, which are ownership, biodiversity value and socio-economic aspect. She also highlighted the progress in Hima revival from 2004 till now and the project under Hima programme; Hima School – SNOW Programme, Homat Al Hima programme, Hima to Hima Programme, Souk Al Hima Programme, and Hima Farm.

Hima approach has approved that it is a good approach in reducing conflicts on land management between the tribes and that Hima sites were more resilient during the war in Lebanon.



3. Investing in People, Rania Al Zoubi

Rania Al Zoubi displayed facts about Drylands and its importance at different aspects, globally and regional. She declared that our region is a highly degraded area and we need to intensify our work to rehabilitate these lands.

She highlighted the IUCN Global Drylands Initiative, its knowledge products, strategic goal and priorities and the Drylands, Livelihood and Gender Programme at IUCN ROWA programme and their projects in the region.

Al Zoubi showed the Hima concept and IUCN's work on reviving Hima at a regional level, and strengthening the governance in rangelands. IUCN updated the National Rangelands Strategy that won the bronze award in 2017. She also briefed the audience with HERD project; its objective, partners, components, implementation approach, and its interventions at different levels.

Dr. Al Ouran summarized the presentation by showing its importance in ensuring the importance of traditional knowledge.



4. Jordanian Badia Ecosystem and Livelihoods project, Khaled Maarafi (HFDBJ)

Khaled Maarafi highlighted the Jordanian Badia Ecosystem and Livelihoods project that was characterized by integrating the local community and their traditional knowledge in the implementation of the project as well as the strong partnership between IUCN members in implementing this project.

He displayed a video, which showcased drylands' richness in natural resources, so we need to take care of it.



Interventions:

- The water crisis in West Asia is water harvesting techniques. We need to think out of the box and use the new technologies and new researches to collect and conserve water. We also need to develop a strategy for water management for the upcoming 30 years in order to work effectively and efficiently.
- Regarding NbS and our interaction in water resources management, how can we reduce human activities' impacts on nature resources under this concept, while we are building dams and changing water valleys?

- we worked on different aspects of integrated water resources management, we need to have a project that
- Water crisis in Lebanon is severe in spite of the availability of water. We are using wells and dams in Lebanon to meet the water demand, but how can we raise the awareness in water conservation and reduce water consumption among local communities?
- When we talk about water resources, we talk about fresh water, but what about the brackish water that we can use it in fish breeding and agriculture?
- We need to add the misuse of water resources to the challenges we face in west Asia region.
- Rangelands restoration needs time and budget, and we need to focus on the sustainability of these projects.
- Hima is affected by different aspects including the political aspect; therefore, we need to rethink about Hima concept and its implementation on the ground.
- Could you explain how you protect the land in Hima and the role of local community?
- There is a gap between the implementation of projects and the needs of local communities. But, on the other hand, traditional knowledge is really important and using it in our project is a step forward.
- We can learn from the solutions for rangelands used in Africa.
- How can you manage Rangelands in an open area? Could you explain what the rangelands schools are?
- How SPNL deals with local community in Lebanon to encourage them to adopt the approach of Hima.



- We need to work together and build strong partnerships to achieve SDGs and unify our goals. Integrating local communities in these projects ensures the sustainability of these projects.
- Hima approach is an old approach that used since ever, but we need to modify this approach to meet the changes in populations, climate change, demand, etc. How can we manage our natural resources in a sustainable way based on an old approach?

Conclusion from Panellists:

Ali Hayajneh:

- NbS is part of the solution and this does not mean we are forgetting other parts of the solution.
- We need to think out of the box and to adopt new technologies and data processing in order to achieve the goal of the programme and IUCN is working on this.
- Giving the local community the ownership will ensure the sustainability of the projects.
- One of the problems in Lebanon that there is no water tariff in Lebanon; therefore, MINARET project focused on renewable energy. But on another note, I agree that we need to focus on monitoring water consumption.

Session 7: IUCN ROWA members Plenary Meeting

IUCN National Committees Presentations

The session was moderated by Eng. Raed Bani Hani, and hosted 5 National Committees' representatives:

- Zaher Redwan; Lebanon National Committee.
- Mohammed Al Rumaithi; United Arab Emirates National Committee.
- Dr. Matara Al Mutairi; Kuwait National Committee.
- Simon Awad; Palestine National Committee.
- Yehya Khaled; Jordan National Committee.



1. Lebanon National Committee, Zaher Redwan

Zaher Redwan presented a video that showcased the achievements of national committee in Lebanon. They were able, within the past 6 years, to reinforce the relationship with the ministry of environment and aiming to create links with everyone.

He highlighted the members within the national committee and their achievements and their willingness to know about other initiatives and proposals to be able to support them. He thinks that we need to be collaborative and focus again on the impact of conflicts on the environment.

2. United Arab Emirates National Committee, Mohammed Al Rumaithi

Mohammed Al Rumaithi highlighted the members within the national committee and the main three programmes they are working on. He shared the committee's achievements and targets.

3. Kuwait National Committee, Dr. Matara Al Mutairi

Dr. Matara Al Mutairi mentioned that Kuwait had joined IUCN since the 1980s. After years of lack of activity due to several reasons, the national committee was reformed recently, and they are working on expanding the membership and increasing the numbers of members.

She highlighted the achievements of the national committee, especially on monitoring and capacity building, and requested IUCN support and collaboration.

4. Palestine National Committee, Simon Awad

Simon Awad mentioned that Palestine membership had been approved in 2012, and after that NGOs started joining IUCN. He highlighted the crisis of Israeli occupation that highly affect the environment in the country such as deforestation, building the separation wall, harmful management of natural resources such as water and others.

He also briefed the participants with achievements of the national committee, where most of their work was on raising awareness, listing of Palestinian bird types, sustainable resources and water management, scientific research, biodiversity conservation, protection of wildlife.

Awad summarized the environmental needs in Palestine, including:

- Baseline assessment of biodiversity.
- Projects related to climate change, deforestation, and drought.
- A national bank for local and national seeds especially that Israelis deprived us from some of these seeds.
- A research institute.
- An environmental observatory to record Israeli breaches and put an end to harmful measures.
- Natural museums.
- Solutions for waste management.



5. Jordan National Committee, Simon Awad

Yehya Khaled summarized the main problems faced environment in Jordan such as illegal hunting and lack of water resources. He highlighted the members within the national committee and their main achievements.

RCF Closure

Regional councillors expressing challenges and members reacting and giving feedback. Nominations of Councillor Candidates and of Regional Candidate running for the position of IUCN President.



AGENDA

... for Nature, People and Future Generations

Wednesday 11th of September **Agenda**

06:30 – 11:00 **Session VI: Region Thematic Priorities – Parallel Sessions**
Mesalliah Ballroom 1 A
Moderator: Dr. Nedal Al Qurain

Nature Based Solutions for Water Management and Climate Change Resilience
Ali Hoyalghor, Programme Manager - Water and Climate Change Programme

Investing in People: Platforms for stakeholders dialogue toward healthy rangelands
Rania Al Zoubi, Programme Manager - Drylands, Livelihood, and Gender Programme

Relevant Presentations from ROWA members

08:30 – 11:00 **Session VI: Region Thematic Priorities – Parallel Sessions**
Mesalliah Ballroom 1 B
Moderator: Ehab Eid

Ocean and Plastic
Zaid Samaha, Programme Manager, Marine and Coastal Zone Management

Towards Representative, Connected and Climate Resilience Networks of protected Areas in West Asia
Natalia Boulad, Programme Manager, Protected Areas, World Heritage & Biodiversity Programme

Relevant Presentations from ROWA members

11:00 – 11:15 **Coffee break**

11:15 – 13:00 **Session VII: IUCN ROWA members Plenary Meeting**
Moderator: Eng. Raed Bani Hant

11:15 – 11:45 **IUCN National Committees Presentations**

11:45 – 12:15 **IUCN Governance Reflections and Challenges**
Reflections from IUCN West Asia Regional Councilors on Role of councilors, Challenges, Communication with members, etc...

12:15 – 13:00 **IUCN Governance Improvements and Nominations**
Improving visibility and voice of West Asia Region in IUCN
Active participation of members across all IUCN constituencies, programs, etc..
Expectations from nominated Councilors
Nominations and Election of Councilor Candidates for the Next Inter-Sessional Period
(Secretariat Staff will not attend unless called in for any assistance)

Closing Remarks by the Hosts

Vote of thanks

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

16:00 – 19:00 **Visit to "Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre"**

IUCN **KFAS** **الهيئة العامة للبيئة**

المنتدى الإقليمي التاسع لحماية الطبيعة لغرب آسيا

IUCN West Asia

9th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF)

09 - 11 September 2019 **٠٩ - ١١ سبتمبر ٢٠١٩**

... للطبيعة، للناس ومستقبل الأجيال القادمة
... for Nature, People and Future Generations

IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS Marseille 2020 **REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM KUWAIT 9-11 SEPTEMBER 2019**



REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM KUWAIT 9-11 SEPTEMBER 2019



... for Nature, People and Future Generations ... الطبيعة، للناس ومستقبل الأجيال القادمة

Sunday 8 th of September	Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel	Agenda	Tuesday 10 th of September	Messilah Ballroom	Agenda
<p>Arrival of participants to Jumeirah Kuwait hotel</p> <p>18:00 – 20:00 Early Registration of participants</p> <p>20:00 – 21:30 Dinner at the hotel for participants</p>			<p>08:30 – 11:15 Session III: IUCN Congress 2020</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Said Damhoureyeh</p> <p>IUCN World Conservation Congress Marseille, 11-19 June 2020 Luc De Wever, IUCN Senior Governance Manager, Secretary to Council</p> <p>Introduction to the Motions Process and update on the implementation of IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations Dr. Cyrleque N. Sendashonga, IUCN Global Director, Policy and Programme Group</p> <p>Improvements of IUCN's governance Dr. Shaikha Saleem Al Dhaheri, IUCN West Asia Regional Councillor</p>		
<p>Monday 9th of September</p> <p>08:30 – 09:00 Registration of Participants</p> <p>09:00 – 09:45 Forum Opening Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Mariam Al-Aqeel, Minister of State for Economic Affairs - Kuwait Mr. Zhang Xinqiang, IUCN President Dr. Gretel Aguilar, IUCN Acting Director General H.E. Ibrahim Al Shehahdeh, Minister of Agriculture and Environment – Jordan H.E. Dr. Shaikha Saleem Al Dhaheri, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi Secretary General Dr. Hany El Shaer, IUCN West Asia Regional Director <p>09:45 – 11:00 Exhibition Opening Session</p> <p>11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break & Networking</p> <p>11:30 – 13:00 Session I: Panel Discussion Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Seld Damhoureyeh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Cyrleque N. Sendashonga, IUCN Global Director, Policy and Programme Group Dr. Thomas Brooks, IUCN Chief Scientist, Science and Knowledge Unit Dr. Ayman Rabib, IUCN West Asia Regional Councillor Dr. Hany El Shaer, IUCN West Asia Regional Director <p>13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break</p> <p>14:00 – 16:00 Session II: Panel Discussion Draft Interseasonal IUCN programme 2024-2021</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Ayman Rabib</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Gretel Aguilar, IUCN Acting Director General Dr. Said Damhoureyeh, IUCN West Asia Regional Councillor Dr. Hany El Shaer, IUCN West Asia Regional Director <p>Feedback and discussion with RWVA members and commissions' on draft IUCN Programme 2021 - 2024</p> <p>16:00 – 16:15 Coffee break</p> <p>16:15 – 18:45 Birds Migration Movie Kuwait Environmental Lens</p> <p>Moderator: Eng. Omar Al Sayed Omar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bird Migration movie Questions and Answers <p>16:45 – 17:30 Back to the Wild Movie Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD)</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Hany El Shaer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back to Wild movie Questions and Answers <p>17:30 – 17:45 Wrap up and conclusion of the day</p>			<p>11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break</p> <p>11:30 – 13:00 Session IV: IPBES & Synthetic Biology</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Said Damhoureyeh</p> <p>IPBES - Resolutions WCC-2012-Res-117 and WCC-2012-Res-118 Synthetic Biology - Resolution WCC-2016-Res-086 Dr. Thomas Brooks, IUCN Chief Scientist</p> <p>13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break</p> <p>14:00 – 16:00 Session V: Membership and commissions main achievements</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Cyrleque N. Sendashonga</p> <p>IUCN Membership Strategy Dr. Shaikha Saleem Al Dhaheri, IUCN West Asia Regional Councillor</p> <p>Green List initiative in West Asia Region James Hardcastle, Programme Developer, Global Protected Areas Programme</p> <p>The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Ehsab Eid, IUCN SSC Regional Vice-Chair for West Asia</p> <p>IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) Tamer Khalifa, IUCN CEM Regional Chair for West Asia</p> <p>IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) Nature for All Firas Abd-Allah, IUCN CEC Regional Vice-Chair for West Asia</p> <p>Award ceremony for the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication CEC Regional Award</p> <p>16:00 – 16:15 Coffee break</p> <p>16:15 – 17:00 Wrap up and conclusion of the day</p> <p>20:00 – 21:00 Musical Event by Kuwaiti Traditional Band</p> <p>21:00 Dinner</p>		



REGIONAL
CONSERVATION
FORUM
KUWAIT
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PRESENTATION AND PHOTOS

All presentation and photos are uploaded on Google drive and can be found in the following links:

[Presentations](#), [Opening Session](#), [Day 1](#), [Day 2](#), [Day 2 – Musical Event](#), [Day 3](#)

Or by scanning the following QR codes:





MEDIA COVERAGE

The RCF was covered by different national newspapers in the region and the official website of members and partners as well as the social media platforms. To list some of the articles and news, follow the below links:

- [Al Dostour Newspaper – Jordan](#)
- [Jordan News Agency](#)
- [Injaz News - Jordan](#)
- [Emirates News Agency](#)
- [Al Bayan Newspaper – United Arab Emirates](#)
- [Al Istiqlal Newspaper - Kuwait](#)
- [Al Dostour Newspaper - Kuwait](#)
- [Moroccan Agency Press](#)
- [Jordanian Ministry of Environment's website](#)
- [Arab Organization for Agricultural Development \(AOAD\)'s website](#)
- [Jordan Environment Society's website](#)
- [IUCN ROWA website](#)