

Amsterdam, 1 December 2011

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

After more than 11 years working for IUCN National Committee for The Netherlands with great satisfaction - both in the Netherlands and internationally - the time has come for me to take a new step. I have decided to step down as general director as of 1 March 2012. I am going to explore possible options for my next move, and wish to focus more on building the connection between business, NGOs ecosystems and biodiversity. In the coming months I plan to investigate the best way in which I can make a significant contribution to the up-scaling and acceleration of this vital connection. I am happy to keep you informed about further developments.

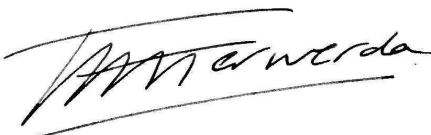
In the past years I was able to complete many initiatives together with you and all my colleagues at IUCN NL. These initiatives have contributed to many conservation and restoration efforts, and have made policy makers in The Netherlands more aware of this issue. In this context IUCN NL has supported around two thousand projects abroad, many of them implemented by IUCN member organisations. I am very grateful that the Dutch IUCN members, and donors such as the Netherlands government and Postcode Lottery has given our colleagues and me the opportunity to work on these issues. Together we were able to develop initiatives such as the Ecosystems Grants Programme, create the business network 'Leaders for Nature' which is the breeding ground for business to learn and act on biodiversity issues. I am happy to see that this will be rolled out also internationally.

For me it is a unique experience to have been shown such trust by you over the years. I can look back and see a great co-operation within the international IUCN network, with and IUCN members, the national committees and with my colleagues at the international IUCN secretariat in Switzerland. It has been a tremendous honour for me to have worked together with IUCN and its network, representatives from NGOs, business, scientists and governments. IUCN will always have a special place in my heart. It has been an enriching and invaluable experience to be in touch with the many hundreds of Civil Society Organisations who stand behind ecosystem management, conservation and restoration with such passion *on the ground*. As I firmly believe that it is *on the ground* where the actual change takes place.

In the coming months I will gradually hand over my work to my colleague Lena Euwens, who will be appointed interim executive director as of 1 March 2012. Moreover, the Board will begin the search for a new general director soon. I have agreed with the Board and members of IUCN Netherlands that I will be available to give ad hoc assistance and advice to IUCN NL after 1 March.

I look forward to keeping in touch with you, also from the perspective of my new destination. You will receive more details about this soon.

With warm regards,



Willem Ferwerda
Director

IUCN Nederlands Comité
Plantage Middenlaan 2K
NL-1018 DD Amsterdam
tel +31-(0)20-6261732
fax +31-(0)20-6279349

mail@iucn.nl
www.iucn.nl
Postbank: 5370215