



IUCN-The World Conservation Union
West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa (WESCANA) Regional Office
The 6th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF)
Community-Centered Conservation: Linking Local and Global
Knowledge
22-25 May 2007
Tehran-IR Iran

الإتحاد الدولي لحماية الطبيعة
المكتب الإقليمي لمنطقة غرب ووسط آسيا وشمال أفريقيا
المنتدى الإقليمي السادس لحماية الطبيعة
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In cooperation with



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In the Name of Allah,
the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

به نام خداوند بخشنده مهربان

Final Report – first draft July 1st 2007

**IUCN-The World Conservation Union
West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa
(WESCANA) Regional Office**

**6th Regional Conservation Forum
Tehran, IR Iran,
22-25 May 2007**

**Community-Centered Conservation:
Linking Local and Global Knowledge**

Prepared by:
Mehrnaz Pirouznik

IUCN-WESCANA Regional Office
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Table of Contents

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgements	
An Overview	
Immediate Objectives	
Main Topics of Focus	
<u>Day 1</u>	
<u>Session I</u>	
Opening Ceremony	
<u>Session II</u>	
Plenary Meeting:	
♣ IUCN 2009-2012 Plan and Programme Overview	
♣ IUCN Brief About the World Conservation Congress (WCC) 2008	
♣ Reports of National Committees	
♣ Conservation Strategies in Iran	
♣ An Overview of Iran's Ecological Potential and Achieving IUCN Objectives	
<u>Session III</u>	
Session III-a: West Asia	
Session III-b: North Africa	
Session III-C: Central Asia	
<u>Session IV</u>	
Closing Plenary Session	
<u>Day 2</u>	
<u>Session V</u>	
Plenary Meeting,	
IUCN WESCANA,	
Update on WESCANA Regional Office	
♣ IUCN WESCANA Strategies	
♣ IUCN WESCANA Work Planning	
♣ Presentation on Protected Areas	
♣ Presentation on the Water Programme (WP)	
♣ Presentation on Waqf Initiative	
♣ Presentation on Lebanon Task Force (LTF)	
<u>Session VI</u>	
Plenary Meeting: IUCN Commissions Reports	
♣ World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)	
♣ Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)	
♣ Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)	
♣ The Arabian Plants Specialist Group (APSG)	
♣ Nature-Based Tourism	
♣ IUCN WESCANA Situation Analysis	
<u>Session VII</u>	
Technical sessions	
Session VII-a: Protected Areas Management	
Session VII-b: Ecosystem Goods and Services in Drylands	
Session VII-c: Waqf Initiative	
Session VII-d: Poverty, Equity and Gender (PEG)/Hima	
<u>Session VIII</u>	
Plenary Meeting: Reports Back from Working Sessions	
<u>Day 3</u>	
<u>Session IX</u>	
IUCN Global Programme	
♣ IUCN Business and Biodiversity Programme	
♣ Future of Sustainability	
♣ Discussions on the IUCN WESCANA Situation Analysis	
<u>Session X</u>	

Plenary Meeting

- ♣ Update on IUCN WESCANA Resolutions
- ♣ Creating World Conservation (WCC) Committees

Session XI

Concurrent Working Groups

- Session XI-a: West Asia
- Session XI-b: North Africa
- Session XI-c: Central Asia

Session XII

Members only Plenary meeting

- ♣ Nominations and Elections for the Next Intersessional Period

Session XIII

Closing Plenary

- ♣ Closing Remarks by Dr Abdulaziz Abu Zinada
- ♣ Vote of Thanks by Ms Puri Canals
- ♣ Closing Remarks by Dr Amir Abdoos
- ♣ Vote of Thanks by Dr Enrique Lehmann
- ♣ Closing Remarks by Dr Odeh AL-Jayyousi

Day 4

Field Trip to Parvar Protected Area: Summary Report

Annex I

Final Agenda

Annex II

List of Participants

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An Overview

The 6th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) for the West Asian, Central Asian and North African countries (WESCANA) met in an overall attempt to prepare Member Countries for the upcoming 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (scheduled for 5 to 14 October 2008 in Barcelona, Spain) which is a periodic gathering of world leaders in environment in the pursuit of securing the world environment as the basis for human existence.

The RCF was held from 22 to 25 May 2007 in the Capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, and was organized by the IUCN-WESCANA Regional Office in joint cooperation with IUCN Headquarters, the Iranian Department of Environment (DOE), Ramsar Regional Centre for Central and West Asia, the Iranian Forest, Range and Watershed Management Organization and the Iranian Association for the Conservation of Mountainous Environments.

Host to more than 150 participants, this four-day forum put particular emphasis on "community-centered conservation: linking local and global knowledge".

In this regard, extensive debate was devoted to issues of community-based conservation that are of vital importance to the region along with related critical issues including:

- i. Environmental security and human well-being;
- ii. Poverty reduction and local actions; and
- iii. Business and biodiversity.
- iv. Nature-based tourism and sustainable development;

This forum specifically targeted members and partners of IUCN, environmentalists, university professors, relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, the larger conservation community, , specialists in the various fields of environmental security and human well-being, nature-based tourism and sustainable development, poverty reduction and so forth. Thus a platform was provided for lively and hot debate on environmental issues of global importance, linking policy to action, structural and organizational issues of concern, strengthening knowledge and networking for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the region and business and biodiversity, in addition to planning for the 4th World Conservation Congress in order to ensure effective and fruitful regional participation in Barcelona.

Immediate Objectives

The 6th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) specifically aimed to:

- i. Discussing the IUCN 2008-2012 intercessional programs with members in the form of initial consultation before moving to write the program by secretariat and commissions
- ii. Preparing for Barcelona Congress in October 2008
- iii. Enabling a substantive debate and exchange of knowledge and experiences on issues related to Sustainable Development, with particular emphasis on "community-centered conservation: linking local and global knowledge"
- iv. Providing IUCN-WESCANA membership and stakeholders an update on the IUCN-WESCANA programme for 2005-2008;
- v. Assisting the Membership in providing draft motions they would wish to submit to the Barcelona Congress;

- vi. Strengthening means for effective networking among constituting components of IUCN (members, commissions, constituencies and the Secretariat) and the larger conservation community; and
- vii. Facilitating learning about natural resources' conservation, paying particular attention to the Iranian rich millennium-old tradition, knowledge and experiences in issues of natural resources' conservation and related matters.
- viii. Facilitate learning about natural resources' conservation, paying particular attention to the rich Iranian millennium-old tradition, knowledge and experience in issues of natural resources' conservation and related matters.

Main Topics of Focus

In addition to the above, the 6th RCF provided a friendly environment for debate as well as dynamic grounds for an

- (a) effective transfer of knowledge and exchange of experiences on environmental issues of global and, in particular, regional concern, enabling various WESCANA member states to:
- (b) identify problem and priority areas in their region, helping them above all to:
- (c) scope out proposals for the new programme development and
- (d) initiate the process of drafting motions and resolutions for the Barcelona Congress.

Day 1 - Tuesday 22 May 2007

Session I Opening Ceremony

The 6th Regional Conservation Meeting was inaugurated by the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the national anthem of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr Hassan Tajik, Head of the Economic and Environmental Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, chaired the session. Welcoming the participants to begin with and wishing them all an enjoyable stay in Iran, he touched on the importance of environmental issues, environmental protection and the conservation of nature, and efforts to reach consensus on the idea and methods for appropriate environmental conservation. Sound ecosystem management was also among his main points of concern.

Second to speak was **Mr Khoda Karam Jalali**, Head of the Iranian Forest, Range and Watershed Management Organization. He delivered a keynote address dealing above all with:

- ♣ Community-centered conservation and the importance it needs to have attached to it by policy-makers;
- ♣ Biodiversity conservation;
- ♣ Sustainable management of renewable resources and its profound impact on conservation planning and implementation;
- ♣ Water crises as a threat to ecologic security in the Middle-East;
- ♣ Sustainable management of natural resources and its linkage to economic related matters;
- ♣ Desertification due to inappropriate economic conditions and forest degradation that call for the development of sound resources management policies; and
- ♣ A national plan for combating desertification.

Mr Jalali then continued by speaking about environmental policies and the importance of involving all stakeholders in biodiversity and forest conservation plan development and implementation as well as in initiating relevant pilot projects. He also brought examples of Iran's activities in this regard, namely in the Caspian Sea region.

He ended his address emphasizing the:

- ♣ Development of traditional knowledge based methods aimed at sustainable management of water resources;
- ♣ Establishment of a biodiversity databank;
- ♣ Provision of job opportunities for youth and women with emphasis on poverty alleviation;
- ♣ Promotion of ecotourism;
- ♣ Monitoring of changes in ecosystems and in biodiversity;
- ♣ Development of environmental-friendly mechanisms for conservation;
- ♣ Strengthening of regional cooperation in research;
- ♣ Need for networking among relevant conservation bodies; and
- ♣ Improvement of regional forestland management.

The third speaker at the opening ceremony was **Dr Delawar Najafi Hajipour**, Deputy Head for Natural Environment and Biodiversity of the Iranian Department of Environment (DoE). Speaking on behalf of the Vice President and Head of the Iranian DoE, Dr Fatima Vaez Javadi, Mr Najafi welcomed the participants to the Sixth RCF and began to explain that conservation has been defined and conceptualized in the present era as complementary to development and that Iran has put sustainable development on its

conservation agenda. Further, great strides have been taken in conservation while maintaining Iran's unique environmental and physiological features and respect for the local communities in regards to the necessity for strengthening cooperation with them and among them in order to further achieve appropriate environmental conservation.

Dr. Hajipour went on to explain that biodiversity includes cultural diversity, the two of which are inseparable. He wrapped up his speech by emphasizing the necessity of linking traditional knowledge with the modern in an attempt to achieve better and effective management of protected areas.

Dr. Javed Jabbar, IUCN Deputy President and Regional Councillor for West-Asia, was entitled to explain the aims and objectives of IUCN. Expressing his thanks to the organizers, his colleagues and panel members, Dr. Jabbar made reference to Iran's rich cultural and historical features, stressing that in this world of complex socio-political and economic concerns environmental issues can not be separated from social and economic matters. Considering the vital role of community-centered conservation and the necessity to link local and global knowledge for a better conservation of the living environment, he drew the participants' attention to the actual status of communities, questioning their stability, homogeneity and level of authority entrusted upon any community in general while explaining that today struggling for control over the happenings in one's community is in fact a struggle of powers. Dr. Jabbar called IUCN unique in structure and activities since it brought together a membership of over 800 governmental and non-governmental organizations (GOs and NGOs) as well as a number of 10.000 scientists and specialists from around the globe. In view of the above, he explained the objectives of this Sixth Regional Conservation Forum as follows:

- i. Discussing the IUCN 2008-2012 intercessional programs with members in the form of initial consultation before moving to write the program by secretariat and commissions
- ii. Preparing for Barcelona Congress in October 2008
- iii.
- iv. Enabling a substantive debate and exchange of knowledge and experiences on issues related to Sustainable Development, with particular emphasis on "community-centered conservation: linking local and global knowledge";
- v. Providing IUCN-WESCANA membership and stakeholders an update on the IUCN-WESCANA programme for 2005-2008;
- vi. Assisting the Membership in providing draft motions they would wish to submit to the Barcelona Congress;
- vii. Discuss regionalization and decentralization of WESCANA
- viii. Strengthening means for effective networking among constituting components of IUCN (members, commissions, constituencies and the Secretariat) and the larger conservation community; and
- ix. Facilitating learning about natural resources' conservation, paying particular attention to the Iranian rich millennium-old tradition, knowledge and experiences in issues of natural resources' conservation and related matters.

Putting emphasis on the necessity of appropriate and effective use of local knowledge, he concluded by speaking about human rights and IUCN qualities, explaining that sustainable development and what it implies in the current era calls for in-depth debates on sustainable development and that meetings of the kind are most influential in creating effective interactions among participants on matters of global concern and should be continued into the future.

A second keynote address was delivered by the Director of IUCN Global Programme, **Dr William "Bill" Jackson**, who first and foremost expressed his gratitude to the organizers and his colleagues. He reflected upon changes taken place in our living world during the past years, emphasizing the end of the Cold War, economic conservatism, globalization, massive revolutions in technology, rise of multilateralism, security concerns and climate change as threats and influences to our daily lives as well as our living environment.

He spoke about globalization and how it affects daily lives of people and the environment. He explained that globalization can offer both opportunities and threats to communities and questioned the participants on how to optimize its opportunities and mitigate its threats on communities. Examples were then brought of some community-centered conservation practices in the region, explaining that some of these traditional practices trace back to more than a thousand years ago.

"Community-centered conservation plays a key role in the region and we must listen to the communities", he said. Communities should be given a voice to and good experiences must be shared.

Different related conventions/agreements, biopiracy, carbon-trading eco-marketing, misuse of energy resources, floods, subsidies and problems resulting from them were also among issues discussed by Mr Jackson.

The last speaker of the opening ceremony was **Dr Odeh Al-Jayyousi**, IUCN-WESCANA Regional Director, who took the floor with a vote of thanks.

First and foremost, Dr Al-Jayyousi, expressed his gratitude to the organizers, his colleagues and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He then focused on a description of the evolution of the WESCANA Regional Office, where it stands, its objectives and programmes, challenges faced and ways to overcome them. The creation of an identity for the Regional Office, developing a linkage by WESCANA Regional Office between culture and biodiversity, ways to promote effective dialogue among cultures, revival of the role of human as trustee and steward for nature, sharing the notion of Hima with others, socialization of knowledge, sustainable development and reviving the notion of "good life" in terms of caring for nature were among the issues discussed by the Regional Director.

To wrap up, Dr Al-Jayyousi, asked for the continuation of such gatherings as an effective means for finally developing an identity for the Region.

The opening ceremony was brought to an end as Dr Al-Jayyousi and Dr Jackson presented Iranian panelists and organizers with nature-based souvenirs.

Session II - Plenary Meeting

This session chaired five presentations each followed by questions and answers as follows:

♣ IUCN 2009-2012 Plan and Programme Overview Dr William "Bill" Jackson, Director, IUCN Global Programme

Developing a globally agreed upon programme for IUCN is necessary to meet the following three objectives:

- (a) Adding value to members and helping them focus on priorities;
- (b) Explaining IUCN activities for donors; and
- (c) Capacity-building by learning with and from donors.

The programme itself defined a unifying document that reflected global priorities as well as the contribution of the Commissions and the Secretariat to these priorities and an endeavour to align national priorities with global issues.

The aim of the Union, a changing model of sustainability, biodiversity (its definition and importance from various aspects), direct and indirect drivers of change and several influential processes in the formation of the programme (global situation analysis, future of sustainability e-discussions and participatory writing exercise) were further put to discussion.

IUCN was explained to be able to build:

- Credible, trusted knowledge and strong technical capacities;
- Consensus and partnerships for action; and
- A global and strategic reach from local communities to the UN.

"IUCN generates knowledge, builds capacities and encourages local and governmental actors to cooperate", emphasized Dr Jackson.

The IUCN Programme for 2009-2012 will focus on five important thematic priority areas of (a) Conserving biodiversity for life, (b) Changing the climate forecast, (c) Naturally energizing the future, (d) Improving life in healthy ecosystems, and (d) Greening the world economy; with the assumption behind the programme being that climate change can impact biodiversity and biodiversity can help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Each of these priority areas were also explained to have two global results with the global results leading to two separate component results each.

The conceptual bases on which the programme was planned was therefore outlined, and participants were asked to interact with Mr Jackson and express any comments/suggestions.

The session concluded with an overview of the time line for the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress and key messages that the global programme implies:

(a) an overall guiding programme for the Commissions and the Secretariat, (b) in conformity with global and local issues related to sustainable development, (c) a donor of clear priorities and owner of clear indicators to assess progress and (d) built on IUCN's values.

**Questions & Answers (Qs & As)
Comments/Suggestions**

("Q", "A", "C", "S" and "HQ" in this report are hereinafter used to refer to Question, Answer, Comment, Suggestion and Headquarters respectively)

Q1. How can a member influence the Programme by their comments/suggestion?

- A1. (a) By means of a consultation process
(b) Consultations with councillors
(c) Voting for or against the programme at the Congress*

Q2. Can a meeting for the North-African countries be supported by HQ, in an attempt to help them develop a solid programme of their own, within the framework of the already proposed programme?

A2. The HQ supports the idea of a get together of regional members and will be happy to assist this proposal.

Q3. Can some elements of the programme be changed to fit the needs of the region?

A3. This can be done through the consultation process already referred to.

C. The marginalization of North African States was presented as well as a need for their greater involvement in IUCN planning and implementation processes/programmes. Mr Jackson was asked to attend the North African working session that was to be held later in the day in order to gain a better view and understanding of main issues, gaps and priorities of North Africa.

The need for conducting extensive studies on climate change and its impacts on biodiversity in the North-African region was also emphasized.

North African states' representatives also commented on the absence of the IUCN Director General as a sign of HQ's disinterest in the region in general and in North-African related matters in particular.

In response to the comments of the North African states, HQ representatives present in the session explained that HQ does take North African concerns deeply into consideration such that this issue has been the subject of extensive debates among the members in their recent meetings. Addressing the representatives of North-African states, Dr Jackson said, "Please rest assured that your region is not left out".

♣ **IUCN Brief About the World Conservation Congress (WCC) 2008**
Dr Enrique Lahmann, Manager, 4th World Conservation Congress (WCC)
Ms Puri Canals, IUCN Vice President
Regional Councillor, West Europe
Chair, Preparatory Committee for WCC

"Towards the World Conservation Congress 2008", was the topic of this presentation. A new climate for change, healthy environments, healthy people and safeguarding the diversity of life were identified by the speaker as three sub-themes focused upon in the 2008 Congress.

This Congress, organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), is to be hosted by (a) the Government of Spain: Ministry of Environment and (b) the Government of Catalonia: Ministry of Environment and Housing.

The Congress opening was determined as 5 October 2008 followed by four days of forum, two days of members' assembly, one excursion day, another two days and the closing on 14 October.

The first four days –forum days- are allocated to introducing a new approach, under which a whole range of different activities such as conservation cinemas, poster preparation, knowledge cafes, press conferences etc can be organized and managed.

The Members' Assembly -4 days and 1 day-trip- is allocated to the election of the IUCN president, treasurer, regional councillors and commission chairs as well as the approvals of the next

intersessional programme, commission mandates, resolutions and recommendations, general policies and memberships.

The next item of discussion was the Congress agenda for each of the working days. Key dates for contributions were explained as follows:

- 1 June 2007, date for submitting proposals
- 31 July 2007, deadline for first round offers
- 31 August 2007, date for reviewing first round proposals
- 30 September 2007, deadline for second round offers
- 31 October 2007, date for reviewing second round proposals

Proposal submission methods, selection criteria, candidate nomination procedures and categories of motions were also among the items focused upon by Dr Lehmann.

It was explained that motions fall within three categories:

- Motions directed to IUCN
- Motions that amend IUCN's programme
- Motions directed to third parties

It should be noted that for a motion to be accepted its topic should either not have been previously addressed, or should be considered not effectively addressed and must be submitted to the Director General.

Activities of the Resolutions Working Group were later defined and the Congress Committees introduced as follows:

- Credentials
- Programme
- Governance
- Finance and Audit
- Resolutions

In the end Dr Lehmann identified goals set to achieve a "GREEN" congress.

Ms Puri Canals referred to achieving sustainability and ways of finding sustainable solutions to problems as a prime concern of IUCN during which diversities of knowledge, cultures and religions, in other words human diversities as a whole, should be taken into account.

"Peoples aren't separate from nature. We need to help people communicate and to share their knowledge, to work for sustainability but maintain their diversity. This is the main focus of the Congress", said Ms. Canals. She pointed out that the title of the Sixth RCF is very much related to the Barcelona Congress, in that community-centred conservation is a key element that can and should be taken to the Congress. Other themes of focus of the Congress were determined as human development issues and marine issues.

To wrap up, she explained IUCN's efforts for helping bring together members from different regions in an attempt to meet objectives in a more effective manner and welcomed any artistic suggestion that could contribute to a greater linking of humankind, since "arts are highly linked to nature".

Questions & Answers

Comments/Suggestions

Q1. What type(s) of transportation facilities are arranged for the participants to the WCC?

A1. Reliance will be on the public transportation system in Barcelona. Preparations will be made to have the WCC participants have special tickets designed for them.

Q2. Can the WCC allocate some time in its plenary session to brief the participants on ways of achieving a more fruitful participation?

Can the topics of focus of the WCC be narrowed down, to ensure greater contribution on the part of the participants?

A2. To ensure a greater participation of members, it is decided to have separate sessions with each focusing on a different matter.

C. There were comments from participating members to the 6th RCF concerning an increase in the number of WESCANA region participants to the WCC and yet a weak contribution to the Congress on their part.

♣ Reports of National Committees

Eng. Mohamed Shahbaz, Head, Jordan National Committee

Mr Shahbaz began by referring to the deep and challenging political and economic changes that had taken place between 2004 and 2007 (the time they had started in Amman and now in 2007 in Tehran); changes that had great influences upon peoples' lives.

He expressed his deep condolences to the Lebanese for the Israeli aggression on their land and referred to the various impacts of that and like aggressions on peoples' lives, while emphasising the implementation of resolutions that bear, above all, on the impact(s) of military actions on communities as well as on the living environment (reference was made to resolution 3.046).

He pointed to the importance of the renovation of North-African cooperation with the WESCANA regional office as well as with IUCN HQ and urged colleagues at the WESCANA regional office to take immediate and considerable action on this matter.

There were then suggestions from the floor regarding:

- Goods and services in drylands and the combination of related activities with other activities in the region;
- The need for enhanced capacity-building activities in the region;
- Promoting educational and training services with regards to matters falling within the scope of IUCN in general and WESCANA regional needs in particular;
- Development of integrated management plans for protected areas;
- Strengthening community-centred activities in the region; and
- The preparation and adoption of by-laws, similar to what the Jordanian national committee has done, for the West Asian and North African Regional Committees.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

C1. There were some comments from the floor regarding the development of a programme specifically focusing on the mitigation of conflicts and their impact(s) on biodiversity, emphasising the impact(s) of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon on the Lebanese biodiversity and the need for impact assessment subsequent to this and like happenings.

C2. Egypt's representatives called for the use of their endangered plant centre as a training centre.

C3. Iranians called for the promotion of ecological education, development of an integrated management plan for protected areas and enhanced community-based actions in the region.

♣ Conservation Strategies in Iran

Mr Amir Abdoos, Director General, Bureau for Habitat and Protected Area, Iranian Department of Environment

Mr Abdoos briefed the session participants on the Iranian National biodiversity and conservation strategy and action plan. In this regard he explained the overall objectives of the plan as being:

- Strengthening cooperative mechanisms of related bodies for an enhanced and effective biodiversity conservation; and
- Pooling collective participation of various related GOs, NGOs, associations, institutions, universities etc in the field of environmental conservation.

Achieving sustainable development on the basis of healthy environmental processes was explained as a qualitative objective of the above-mentioned plan and general guidelines for achieving the above objective were discussed.

Awareness raising at governmental and community levels with a view to biodiversity and its significance, systematic management of natural resources, adoption of modern means and technologies for conservation purposes, were referred to as important elements that needed to be developed in an attempt to achieve objectives sought by the National Plan.

Mr Abdoos then briefed the audience on the different kinds of protected areas in Iran (national parks, national natural monuments, wildlife refuges, protected areas, no-hunt zones and biosphere reserves) and actions taken with regards to their preservation.

He ended his discussion by bringing examples of good practices for environmental conservation and management applied to the coastal Iranian Hyrcanian forests as well as to Bamou national park.

♣ An Overview of Iran's Ecological Potential and Achieving IUCN Objectives

Dr Morteza Sharifi, High Council Member, Iran

Dr Sharifi explained in short about Iran and old beliefs of the ancient Iranians regarding their living environment, saying that "Iranians believed the earth to be a mother, nature to be sacred and polluting the environment to be an unforgivable sin".

He further explained the environmental structure of Iran, its considerable geological and geomorphic diversity, its ecological diversity and environmental specifications as well as its phytogeographical diversity.

Iranian protected areas and their specifications, eco-tourism development and promotion and an estimation of Iran's carrying capacity in eco-tourism were among other topics of discussion brought to the fore by Dr. Sharifi.

Session III - Working Sessions

Under this session, based on the theme of the Forum, presentations were made by the three programme sub-regions on their main issues, gaps, priorities etc.

Session III-a: West Asia

The West Asian programme sub-region focused on the following:

♣ By-laws for the Regional Committee for West Asia (RCWA)

In accordance with article 71 of the IUCN statute and regulations and following a decision of IUCN members present at the Regional Conservation Forum held on 12-14 February 1988 in Amman, Jordan, members from West Asia, at a meeting on 14-16 September 1998 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia formally decided to constitute a Regional Committee for West Asia with certain bylaws.

In this regard, it was decided to:

- Establish a small working group chaired by Dr Mohammad Sulayem and the membership of Dr Ali Darwish, Mr Yehya Khaled and Mr Tarek Abul-Hawa to review the bylaws. They were asked to take in comments from members of the West Asian region and turn them in to the group coordinator, Mr Abul-Hawa, for further harmonizing of objectives with global policies and the IUCN legislative framework.
- Finalize bylaws by August 2007 and submit for final endorsement.

♣ Priority thematic Clusters:

The group brainstormed on the main priority thematic areas for the sub-region as follows:

- 1- Natural resources management, “ecosystem management” and protected areas:
 - Local community involvement in natural resources management and protected areas;
 - Gene banks-networking;
 - Integrated water resources management;
 - Environmental governance and law enforcement;
 - Mountain ecosystem-mountains in the desert;
 - Ecotourism and local communities-impacts;
 - Conservation and livelihoods;
 - Rangeland management;
 - Sustainable agriculture-linkages to climatic conditions;

- Marine environment-coastal zone management plans;
- Identification of the region's biodiversity hotspots and including them to the Protected Area system plans;
- Red listing, medicinal plants (traditional knowledge, IPR), training in the Egypt Centre for Medicinal Plants;
- Protected areas categories-regional harmonization;
- Trans-boundary conservation e.g. protected areas; and
- Solid and liquid waste management-e.g. toxic waste;

2- Climate change:

As for the climate change topic, it was agreed that the sub-region's priority focus needs to be:

Developing an appropriate understanding of climate change "global change" and its impacts on the region's terrestrial and marine biodiversity-networking-dating approaches (climate reconstruction);

- Renewable energies, their promotion and influential policies on them;
- Impacts of bio-fuel trends;
- Energy extraction-Caspian Sea case
- Promoting sound and coherent technology transfer; and
- Carbon sequestration.

3- Environmental Security

- Impact(s) of war and armed conflict on the region's biodiversity
- Marine and coastal zones management
- Traditional management techniques and indigenous knowledge
- Promoting indigenous and traditional knowledge of BD
- Response to free trade-IPR and indigenous knowledge, access and benefit sharing (ABS)

4- Cross-cutting themes

- Participation and local communities involvement
- Knowledge and information:
 - Communication and networking
 - Regional management information system
- Environmental education:
 - Conservation and education-environmental curricula
- Promoting ecosystem level approaches.

Other General comments:

- Need to be specific on elaborating programmes
- Linkages to CBD-links are needed e.g. Arab league on environmental conventions
- Consider the Secretariat's capacity-financial and technical resources

Session III-b: North Africa

Participants to this group included representatives from the five North African states (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) as well as IUCN HQ and WESCANA RO members staff.

To begin with the session participants were briefed on the actual situation of the North African countries and their current problems and needs.

Lack of sufficient and appropriate participation on the part of the stakeholders, absence of IUCN in general and a WESCANA regional office in particular in the region, a need for greater participation of the civil society, biodiversity assessment and conservation issues, identification of technical capacities in North Africa countries and guiding them to address Sustainable Development and Biodiversity issues and so forth were drawn upon by the representative of Tunisia.

Different fields in which the WESCANA Regional office could have an effective role in were explained as:

- Creating effective assessment and consultancy tools;
- Identifying the capacities and capabilities of the region; and
- Mobilizing resources of different kinds as required by the region.

A great problem was noted to be the unclear situation of the North African countries as regards their relation with either Malaga Regional Office, or WESCANA Regional Office as well as the inattentiveness of IUCN HQ of their needs.

Morocco was concerned about the low visibility and presence of IUCN in the region, explaining that governments were thinking about pulling out of IUCN and that ever since the transfer of IUCN to Amman, many unfulfilled visits were promised by the Regional Office.

Egypt offered to host a meeting for the North African countries to reach an agreement on their needs to be submitted to the Barcelona Congress and suggested that the North African countries establish a sub-regional committee of their own. Emphasis was also put on

(a) goods and services of dryland ecosystems in the region with special emphasis on the case of "mountains in the desert", and

(b) having the Centre for the Conservation of Endangered Plants in Egypt organize training workshops on medicinal plants and other related topics of concern for North African countries.

Algeria voiced governance, lack of appropriate programmes and projects directed to North African countries despite the great potentials and capacities these countries possessed, the need for effective participatory measures and participation as well as a lack of transparency on the part of both IUCN HQ and the regional offices concerned as major problems of the region. IUCN's total disinterest in the Region and the fact that since the Amman meeting none of the commitments made were adhered to were also considered a major concern.

In addition to the above, the Association for Friends of Birds in Tunisia asked IUCN to have the conservation of the endangered "Hubara" bird species given prime attention.

Tunisia also voiced the need for the development of a regional programme in an attempt to further enhance North Africa's presence in the region and proposed the establishment of a regional centre for capacity-building.

As regards the relationship of the North African countries with WESCANA Regional Office, the session members mentioned that they were not receiving any information whatsoever from the WESCANA office; they were neither made aware of the Office's activities, programmes, strategies, nor technical issues dealt with by the Regional Office.

With a view to the above, IUCN HQ representatives present at the meeting responded that the DG will certainly see into the governance problem and finalize arrangements that clarify the mandate over north Africa (the WESCANA Regional Office or the Mediterranean Centre).

It was further explained that the Mediterranean Centre was set to work with North African countries on programming issues and not on membership matters.

The North African members were then given a proposal for a one-month deadline to come up with a clear indication of the areas in which they can effectively participate and to identify to which of the regional office they would prefer to be linked to.

IUCN also accepted to support a meeting of the North-African members as requested by them and to help them establish a sub-regional committee.

Session III-C: Central Asia

Participants to this group included Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan as well as members from IUCN HQ and WESCANA Regional Office.

The Region's gaps and priorities were identified as follows:

♣ **Gaps:**

- Low membership;
- Weak coordination for project implementation, overlapping; and
- Weak communication

♣ **Priorities:**

- Biodiversity; and
- Climate change.

Session IV - Closing Plenary Session

This session was allocated to a brief presentation of the results reached at the technical meetings by each of the separate three programme groups of West Asia, North Africa and Central Asia.

In this regard, the reports of each group were delivered as already referred to in full detail under Session III-a,b and c of the present report.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

C1. There was a comment from Egypt on the West Asian group's use of the term "natural resources management" and it was suggested that it be replaced by "ecosystem management", since according to the speaker, natural resources could not be effectively managed whereas the situation was quite different with ecosystems. There was also a call for the revival of traditional management methods and strategies. Egypt also emphasised the necessity of an effective participation at the Barcelona Congress by all regional members in general and North African countries in particular, urging the need for North African members to have a meeting before the congress to come up with a unanimously agreed upon proposal for submission.

C2. There was a request on the part of the councillors for further clarification of the WESCANA Regional Office activities, plans, strategies, etc for the audience, to further meet the principle of transparency.

C3. The WESCANA secretariat was asked to send out a copy of the West Asia group report to all West Asian members for further coordination on prioritizing their programmes.

Day 2 - Wednesday 23 May 2007

Session V - Plenary Meeting-IUCN WESCANA Programme-Update on WESCANA Regional Office

This session chaired six presentations followed by questions and answers.

♣ IUCN WESCANA Strategies

Dr Odeh Al-Jayyousi, IUCN WESCANA Regional Director

Under the IUCN WESCANA Strategies for 2005-2008, Dr Al-Jayyousi explained the objectives pursued and strategies adopted by the Regional Office.

Securing living in a just and healthy environment was said to be the cornerstone of the strategies adopted by the office in an attempt to ensure peoples' equitable access to natural resources and to better understand the interdependence of poverty and the environment. To secure an equitable, culturally-oriented and sustainable development in the region, natural resources and biodiversity conservation is a must, while taking account of local knowledge, experiences and capacities.

WESCANA priority themes for 2005-2008 were identified as:

- ♣ Biodiversity
- ♣ Drylands and desertification
- ♣ Water
- ♣ Protected areas
- ♣ Marines and costal ecosystems
- ♣ Environmental law
- ♣ Education and communication
- ♣ Equity and sustainability

To follow up, Dr Al-Jayyousi explained that strengthening the Secretariat's presence at regional and sub-regional levels, consolidating and expanding the membership base of the regional Office, awareness raising with regards to the Union and its specifications, serving to bridge the gap between the regional and the international, the government and the civil society as well as acting as a catalyst for furthering coordination and cooperation among the regional actors are specific objectives of the Regional Office.

Dr AL-Jayyousi further briefed the audience on the Office's recruitment strategy, approaches adopted to strengthen IUCN Commissions, the Regional Office's strategic partners (ROPME, PERSGA, GCC, OIC and the League of Arab States) as well as the communication and fundraising strategies adopted by the WESCANA Regional Office.

To conclude, he mentioned the adoption of more coherent structures, building on the strengths of Members States, linking culture and conservation, consolidating the Office's thematic programmes, further activating the Commissions and further harnessing regional partners as a way forward for the Regional Office.

♣ IUCN WESCANA Work Planning

Mr Tarek Abul Hawa, Acting Regional program Coordinator and Protected Areas Programme Coordinator, IUCN, WESCANA

A brief overview of the WESCANA Planning Process was presented by Mr Abul Hawa. The planning process is a reflection of the Regional Office's emerging programme and strategy. This process is both flexible and stable; it seeks to respond to regional and national priorities and tries to create linkages between global strategies and the Regional Office's programme as well as linking culture with conservation.

The plan was explained to cover a four-year period thus being of a quadrennial nature and requiring intensive consultations on the outset.

The current structure at WESCANA was another point that was dealt with, and explained to include the:

- a) Water programme
- b) Protected areas programme
- c) Poverty, equity and gender
- d) Lebanon taskforce
- e) Waqf initiative
- f) Marine program
- g) Communication and membership unit
- h) Operations unit

Internal reporting, global reporting and financial and HR reporting were said to be used as a means for ensuring the effectiveness of the Programme in addition to which quarterly reviews of the Programme followed by a number of six annual retreats were also identified as parts of the Programme assessment procedure, not to mention various performance assessments.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

Q1. Why a four-year programme duration and not a five-year one unlike other international organizations?

A1. Simply because the IUCN global intercessional Programme is the basis of the WESCANA Regional Office's activities.

C1. Lack of an efficient consultation process for the preparation of the Programme and little or no communication with Members States was the subject of various comments from the audience. The reply was that consultation has been carried out electronically and through the establishment of advisory committees and that the Regional Office welcomed and looked forward to receiving inputs from Members States on both the Programme and ways of furthering consultations with Members.

C2. Greater cooperation of IUCN WESCANA Regional Office with other international organizations was sought on watershed management and related issues. The explanation was that on this specific matter, WESCANA has in close cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies in the region such as UNEP as well as cooperation with FAO and the Arab League.

❖ **Presentation on the Protected Areas (PA) Programme**

Mr Tarek Abul Hawa, Protected Areas Programme Coordinator, IUCN, WESCANA

Promoting local knowledge, collaborative management and benefit sharing were altogether referred to as requirements for an effective management of protected areas. A situation analysis of protected areas in the region followed by an assessment of their points of strength and weakness was used to further clarify the speaker's point on PAs as a whole. Growing regional technical capacities on PA management, strong relevant policies and legislations and so forth as well as a lack of appropriate knowledge on the issue at the regional level, lack of a unified regional language, guidelines and best practices on PAs, underutilization of existing international knowledge on the topic etc were respectively referred to as points of strength and weakness of PA management in the region.

Opportunities, threats and limitations were next on the agenda followed by a definition of the current PA strategy and its main underlying strategies as follows:

- a) PA WESCANA – WCPA MENA – One Program Approach
- b) Primary Focus on West Asia
- c) North Africa delegated to Med. Centre
- d) Initial intervention strategy for Central Asia
- e) Direct country/member/partner technical engagement based on individual needs and priorities

The WESCANA Regional Office's vision of the current PA strategy was explained as the development of a representative and effective regional network of PAs that contributes significantly to social and economic development in the region and is comprised of a variety of regionally based approaches to participatory and collaborative management.

To follow, the main foreseen outcomes, main expected output for each of the expected outcomes as well as a summary on main areas of progress for the 2005-2006 biennium in terms of country-oriented progress with a view to achievements in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, North Africa, Central Asia, and the need for furthering activities in Iraq, Iran and the Gulf countries were considered. Organizational progress in terms of maintaining regional strategic links was also discussed.

Consolidating and better coordinating joint strategies with WCPA MENA in addition to paying due attention to national needs and priorities of Members States and partners were considered, among other elements, as influential in the Programme's way forward and wrapped up the discussion on PAs.

Questions and Answers

Comments/Suggestions

C1. The reach of the Regional Office's programmes for PAs in terms of topic was considered admirable but in terms of geographic outreach, much was mentioned that still needed to be done. For example, reference was made to Himas as community-conserved areas that were asked to be spread throughout the region and not only stay limited to a specific country.

A need for developing and enhancing communication strategies was also called upon, since instances were said to have existed of no or inappropriate publicizing of certain activities in the region. This, besides lack of faith in governance, was referred to as a point of weakness experienced in the region.

WESCANA was asked to lead the way to aligning the tremendous traditional regional knowledge with governmental activities. The potential, willingness and resources are there but the Regional Office does not seem able to mobilize existing resources as it should.

C2. A comment on part of other North-African countries explained that WESCANA should promote its cooperation with other countries in the region as well and not only limit its activities to Egypt.

C3. Palestinians called for greater technical support of IUCN in Palestine. Lebanon also asked for a strategy for protecting its PAs.

C4. The need for the development of an applicable model for the region for protected areas and effective networking at local, national and regional levels was emphasized on.

A. WESCANA Regional Office representatives explained that they welcomed a get together of Members States to work out a good strategy for PAs in the region. As for Palestine and other countries, they offered to willingly look for ways to strengthen ties and cooperation.

♣ **Presentation on the Water Programme (WP)**
Dr Odeh Al-Jayyousi (Substitute for Mr Peter Laban)
IUCN WESCANA Regional Director

The IUCN WESCANA regional water programme was explained to focus on a systematic approach to planning and management of water resources on a watershed/river basin basis with special attention to:

- a) Developing practical methodologies;
- b) Influencing policies through networks; and
- c) The involvement of local communities.

Environmental and economic concerns were also said to be taken into account in this process.

The Programme was said to build on six to eight demonstration projects in Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and other places as yet to be identified as well as on a participatory water resources planning and stakeholder dialogue.

Pr

ogramme implementation was said to be carried out through a selected number of water nodes (knowledge centres) in order to ensure effective water resources management and sound water governance.

♣ **Presentation on Waqf Initiative**
Mrs Inas Obeidat, Waqf Programme Manager, IUCN, WESCANA

The Waqf is and has been a cultural mechanism for sustainable conservation, development and financing.

In this presentation, the purpose of Waqf, the relation between Waqf and sustainable development and IUCN WESCANA's approach to Waqf were explained.

In an attempt to draw a line between Waqf and endowment it was clarified that Waqf differs from endowment in its original purpose, legal strength, means of investment and overall effect on development. One of the biggest differences between Waqf and endowment was mentioned to be "legal strength".

Waqf is not only about giving charity, it is about maintaining Waqf endowments (Waqfiyeh) with time and it very much contributes to sustainable development.

As regards the approach adopted to Waqf by WESCANA Regional Office, certain challenges exist that need to be confronted with. These challenges include:

- ♣ The diversion of the regional mindset from the mentality of collective responsibility and conscience;
- ♣ Fundraising!!
- ♣ SUSTAINABILITY of funds; and
- ♣ Donor inclination towards national projects.

The Regional Office was explained to be at the point of conducting regional studies of Waqf laws, establishing contact with possible partners and researching funding mechanisms and investment tools.

To wrap up, Mrs. Obeidat declared to Members States that the time had come for them to rely on themselves and build solidarity amongst themselves and help revive the culture that has been of so much help to them in the past.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

C. There were comments on the scope of application of the Waqf initiative and whether it could be extended to the environment or not? How the profits of Waqf were to be taken care of as well as the existence of a similar concept in Christianity.

It was also suggested that to be on the safe side, the Regional Office should take the initiative of also consulting religious scholars in this regards.

❖ **Presentation on Lebanon Task Force (LTF)**

Ms Hala Kilani, Poverty, Equity and Gender Programme Coordinator, IUCN, WESCANA

This presentation focused on main environmental impacts of the Israeli invasion on Lebanon and activities undertaken by IUCN, its commissions, members, councillors and partners in an attempt to face and overcome the problems faced by the Lebanese.

Environmental impacts of Israeli bombings were reported to appear in the Lebanese PAs, key biodiversity areas, Tyre nature reserve and in the Himas. The major environmental disaster in Lebanon which is the worst in Lebanese history was reported to be a massive oil spill of 15,000 tons of heavy fuel oil, leading to the pollution of the Mediterranean resulting in the fisheries sector being greatly affected.

In response, WESCANA Regional Office took up extensive awareness raising activities on the war's impacts on Lebanon's livelihoods and natural resources. IUCN members, under the support of WESCANA, proposed the implementation of resolution 3.046 to the DG. Another action undertaken by WESCANA Regional Office was to provide the means for the connection of the Lebanese to other members/partners who offered to deliver humanitarian aid to the war stricken country.

The IUCN Task Force, formed directly by the DG undertook to:

- a) Assess the scale of environmental damage and its corresponding impacts on livelihoods;
- b) Contribute to the creation of the Oil Spill Operation and Coordination Centre (OSOCC);
- c) Coordinate work on the oil spill with UNEP-OCHA field and central team and other agencies involved in emergency response;
- d) Carry out a rapid assessment of the impacts of war on key biodiversity and protected areas;
- e) Develop innovative communication tools;
- f) Mobilize funds for the clean up of Palm Islands, nature reserves and a marine protected area in the North of Lebanon that were all heavily polluted by the oil spill;
- g) Collaborate with UNDP in the preparation of the chapter on "War and Biodiversity" of a compendium assessment and remediation report entitled the "Greening Recovery of Lebanon

A most important finding of IUCN in Lebanon was the resilience of the Hima system at times of war and as a result, IUCN decided to promote its global conservation initiative for poverty reduction in the WESCANA region.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

C. Comments on inappropriate support of IUCN HQ of Lebanon Task Force (LTF), such as that of the twelve people chosen, only three went to Lebanon. Yet this activity of IUCN must be encouraged and lessons should be learnt from it since wars are on the rise in our world.

Session VI - Plenary Meeting: IUCN Commissions Reports

Six presentations were delivered at this session, followed by questions and answers.

♣ World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Mr Mohamed Sulayem, WCPA for MENA Region, WCPA

As an integral contribution to IUCN's mission, WCPA's mission is to promote the establishment and effective management of a worldwide representative network of terrestrial and marine protected areas.

In terms of organizational matters, WCPA was explained to be supported by the Programme on Protected Areas (PPA) at IUCN HQ. It covers sixteen regions and works specifically on two mountain and marine biomes and is composed of sixteen task forces.

WCPA has now about 40 members and is keen to increase membership with special emphasis on increasing the roles of women and youth.

MENA members per country are as follows:

Algeria	1	Bahrain	1
Egypt	7	Iran	3
Iraq	1	Israel	3
Jordan	1	Kuwait	2
Lebanon	4	Morocco	3
Saudi Arabia	4	Syria	3
Tunisia	2	Turkey	3
U A E	2	Yemen	1

Appointment of WCPA members was said to be done upon recommendation of the vice chairs and under the direct supervision of the WCPA chair.

Main regional activities carried out by WCPA were identified as follows:

- Improving regional membership;
- Translation of WCPA Best Practices and a number of PA guidelines (4 by 2007);
- Establishment of an African Task Force on PAs, equity and livelihoods;
- Establishment of a federation for Protected Areas in the Arab countries;
- Establishing the 1st world heritage site in the Persian Gulf; and
- Updating the UNEP-WCMC WDPA.

Collaboration with IUCN WESCANA Regional Office:

- Concluding the IUCN / NCWCD contract;
- Providing technical assistance to Abu Dhabi;
- Work on the CBD convention;
- UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, WCPA Delegation to DDCR/UAE;

- Organizing a workshop on Hima, Lebanon April 2007;
- Working with WESCANA Regional Office to strengthen regional networks of experts and to develop a world database on PAs.

Joint Strategy with WCPA MENA:

- Linkage with other commissions like CEESP;
- Planning to assess the state of PAs in the region; and
- Certification of PAs (This would help to evaluate and improve managerial issues in protected areas).

Main issues envisaged to be discussed during the Protected Areas session of this RCF included the following:

- Coming up with one programme approach for MENA;
- Providing feedback on the strategy for the WESCANA PA programme;
- Supporting regional members and partners on reporting on the CBD; and
- Reorganizing the regional steering committee established in 1975.

♣ **Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)**

**Professor Kamal Batanouny, CEM Vice Chair,
Head, IUCN Egypt National Committee**

"Goods and services in drylands ecosystems in the WESCANA region" was the main focus of Prof. Batanouny in his presentation.

To begin with Professor Batanouny explained the objective of the CEM with a view to ecosystem services as:

- Improving the knowledge base on ecosystem services and values; and
- Planning and decision making for sustainable ecosystem management through development of case studies, guidelines and dissemination of related information.

Some key questions raised by CEM in this regard included the following:

- 1- To what extent are ecosystems able to provide goods and services in a sustainable way and how can we measure the effects of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss?
- 2- How can we measure the importance (value) of ecosystem services, not only economically, but also from an ecological and cultural point of view?
- 3- How can we identify the users/beneficiaries of ecosystem services and involve them in structural financial streams to maintain ecosystems and their services?
- 4- How can we communicate the knowledge on ecosystem services and values to decision makers and the general public and thus build local and political support?
- 5- How can we convince (potential) donors that benefits of conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems usually outweigh their costs?

In view of the above, CEM has planned to:

- Stimulate and facilitate the incorporation of ecosystem services and values into ongoing case studies on ecosystem management and stimulate the development of new case studies;
- Develop guidelines and handbooks for ecosystem service assessment, valuation and financing in collaboration with other IUCN programs and regional offices; and
- Facilitate access to available data in close collaboration with existing databases and clearing house websites such as www.naturevaluation.org.

Further, for the purpose of clarification, a definition was given to the term "ecosystem services", as stated in the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, as follows:

- Ecosystem services are simply defined as the benefits people derive from ecosystems which fall within the four categories of provisioning services, regulating services, cultural services and supporting services.
- Drylands were also identified as the natural habitat of a relatively high number of endemic species, thus enjoying high biodiversity, and most necessary to be conserved.
- Coming to the WESCANA region and characteristics within this region that called for immediate attention to drylands' goods and services, the speaker referred to (a) land degradation and desertification, (b) unsustainable water extraction and water scarcity and (c) biodiversity and habitat loss, as critical issues facing the region.

To wrap up, Professor Batanouny once again drew the attention of the audience to the importance and value of drylands and recommended the (a) further development of rangelands formed in drylands, (b) conservation of genetic resources of drylands, (c) inclusion of environmental issues to school textbooks, and (d) adoption of participatory approaches with a view to drylands management.

♣ Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) Dr Taghi Farvar, Chair, CEESP

CEESP was introduced as the "IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy" and one of the six IUCN commissions resurrected in the Amman Congress by members.

CEESP's response to our current world challenges of (a) security crises, (b) international trade and globalization, (c) implementation of MDGs and WSSD goals, (d) poverty eradication as a key policy issue, (e) climate change-our living world's major environmental threat with enormous socio-economic consequences, (f) growing marginalization of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, (g) the world's slow pace in understanding and acting upon environmental degradation and poverty, abuse of human rights, loss of cultural diversity, violence and war etc, and the ongoing challenge for the Union that is (h) understanding the implications of the current situation for environmental conservation and sustainable development and promoting relevant action, is to:

- Focus on the linkages between conservation and crucial socio-economic and cultural concerns; and
- Approve certain related resolutions including its resolutions on:
 - o Governance of Natural Resources
 - o Community Conserved Areas
 - o GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms)
 - o Food sovereignty
 - o Mobile indigenous peoples
 - o Against the privatisation of water
 - o Landscape/ seascape approach
 - o Transparency of the IUCN Council...

Further on, CEESP's vision was identified as endeavouring for (a) a world where equity is at the root of a dynamic harmony between people and nature, as well as among peoples, (b) a world of diversity, productivity and integrity of natural systems, (c) a world in which production and consumption patterns are sustainable, and (d) a world where cultural diversity is intertwined with biological diversity and both generate abundant livelihood opportunities.

The new CEESP mandate was also explained as follows:

- Governance of natural resources, equity and rights;
- Sustainable livelihoods and pro-poor conservation;
- Economics, markets, trade and investment;
- Culture and conservation;
- Human and environmental security;
- Social and environmental accountability of the private sector; and
- Indigenous peoples, local communities, equity & protected areas.

The following “flagships” were highlighted for CEESP:

- Improving governance through a rights-based approach;
- Energy revolution;
- Economics, markets, trade and investment;
- A worldwide inventory of community-conserved areas;
- Biodiversity, food sovereignty and citizenship;
- Ecological risk zones;
- Culture and conservation;
- Knowledge products
- Etc

In conclusion, extensive examples were brought of different activities undertaken by CEESP in various countries, points of weakness and strength of the Commission were highlighted, membership issues were explained and the challenges and opportunities the Commission was confronted with were identified.

♣ **The Arabian Plant Specialist Group** **Professor Abdul Aziz Abu Zinada**

The Arabian Plants Association was established in 1985 with the main aims of (a) conserving plant species, (b) restoring habitats and (c) identifying and confronting with problems facing the plant community.

The Arabian Plant Specialist Group (APSG) was established in 1995 with its mandate being developed in Riyadh a year later in 1996. The APSG consists of 100 botanist members. This specialist group has planned to have two meetings in Amman on climate change and plants. The group has also in mind to design a botanical garden network for the Arab World (the Quarmic Botanical Garden) in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Other activities of the Group include the preparation of a five-volume title on the flora of the Arab peninsula and a publication on important plant areas in the region. Preparing a redlist of the region's endangered plants is also on the agenda of the specialists group.

A challenge the group is confronted with is the lack of an appropriate and constant source of funding, calling for fundraising steps to be taken, which have already been initiated.

Questions and Answers **Comments/Suggestions**

Q1. Is there the possibility of taking members from CBOs?

A1. This is not an impossible request since it is good to increase membership.

Q2. What are the regulations for pricing goods and services? For instance, in the case of pricing transboundary waters, some countries find downstream countries paying for upstream countries.

A2. Pricing goods and services are only done in an attempt to evaluate and value goods.

Q3. How can more sophisticated approaches be taken into account for efficient landscape management? (Upholding the fact that no fundamental studies have been conducted on this issue in arid-regions). Is there an updated map of Protected Areas available?

A3. The state of the world PAs is available on the Internet. As for efficient landscape management, WCPA has published some useful guidelines on community-centred conservation available at: www.iucn.org

C1. With a view to the importance CEESP and its activities has for IUCN, it was suggested that this commission's activities be integrated into the activities of the other five commissions as well. CEESP was also asked to put the activities of WTO on its agenda as top priority initiatives.

To ensure greater and more effective outreach, CEESP was asked to have its documents translated.

A1. Socio-economic issues are of prime importance for the Union and well added to the CEESP working document. As for integration of CEESP's activities with those of the other commissions, this has been successfully done in many cases. Regarding the point made on translation, CEESP will do its utmost.

C2. CEESP's relationship with the WESCANA secretariat is not as extended as its relationship with other relevant bodies and therefore WESCANA RO was asked to nominate individual focal points for each of the commissions to ensure greater accountability and help strengthen ties.

♣ Nature-Based Tourism

Dr Hadi Soleimanpour, Scientist Member, High Council for Environment, National Ecotourism Committee

Dr Taghi Farvar, Chair, CEESP

A general definition of tourism was given as the fastest growing industry in the world. A main characteristic of NBT was said to be its ability to lead to Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a qualitative sustainable development indicator rather than GNP as a quantitative SD indicator.

Other characteristics of NBT include:

- Community based activity
- Respects local culture
- Low cultural and environmental impact
- Observes carrying capacity considerations
- Occurs in an educational environment
- Fulfills wishes and aspirations of visitors
- Improves economic conditions
- Creates employment in rural areas
- Prevents internal displacement and migration
- Needs minimum capital investments

The socio-economic and political dimensions of NBT were also explained. Members of the Ecotourism National Committee and its mandate, the national ecotourism action plan, latest developments in nature-based tourism in Iran, the draft International Covenant on NBT, the legal framework within which falls NBT and the framework of the international covenant itself were altogether considered and discussed in this presentation.

To wrap up, it was suggested that, in order to harmonize regional activities on nature-based tourism, to enhance intergovernmental cooperation on policy-making and planning, to implement and exchange experiences on NBT programmes and to provide our communities with joint initiatives on NBT development, an IUCN Regional Centre on Nature-Based Tourism be established.

♣ **IUCN WESCANA Situation Analysis**

Tarek Abul Hawa, Acting Regional Program Coordinator and Protected Areas Programme Coordinator, IUCN, WESCANA

Common environmental features shared by all WESCANA countries include the following:

- Aridity
- The high value of water resources
- Extensive rangelands
- Fragile marine and terrestrial biomes
- A wide variety of migratory species
- Shared cultural values, religion, and traditions
- Rapid social, economic and political changes
- Emergent civil societies
- Developing economies

These features will remain valid in the next few years and be considered as major elements upon which the WESCANA programme will be built.

The WESCANA region consists of the West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa sub-regions, each facing critical issues particular to their sub-region.

In view of the above, main regional programme themes include:

- Biodiversity
- Drylands and desertification
- Water
- Marine and Coastal ecosystems
- Protected Areas
- Environmental law
- Education and communication
- Equity and sustainability

WESCANA RO is currently working on six thematic areas, three of which are at an advanced level with the remaining three being still new:

- Water Programme
- Protected Area Programme

- Communication Programme
- Marine Programme
- Environmental Law Programme
- Poverty, Gender and Social Equity Programme

The IUCN global situation analysis was also discussed and it was explained that the conceptual framework of this document is based on the notion of "ecosystems goods and services" delivery. Special attention is directed to biodiversity, emphasizing the declining status of biodiversity amid the improving world economic well-being and impacts of climate change on biodiversity that is becoming increasingly evident at both ecosystem and species levels.

In this view, emerging challenges to biodiversity are considered as follows:

- Habitat change and degradation
- Climate change and extreme weather events
- Over-exploitation of natural resources
- Invasive species
- Pollution

Knowledge, empowerment and governance were identified as the main pillars of the 2009-2012 programme. This programme will be re-oriented to adapt to IUCN's niche in the global environmental governance system by providing engagement in the direct linkages between biodiversity and major economic activities (energy, climate change, poverty, security and market mechanisms).

Monitoring and evaluation system, SA survey, selected priorities, WESCANA situation analysis for 2007, expected future trends and IUCN WESCANA priorities, cross-cutting issues (education and communication, gender and equity, governance and poverty and capacity-building) were also among other issues discussed in this presentation.

Session VII - Technical Sessions

During this session, four separate technical sessions were held with each focusing on (a) protected areas management, (b) ecosystems goods and services in drylands, (c) the Waqf initiative and (d) poverty, equity and gender (PEG)/Hima respectively.

Session VII-a: Protected Areas Management

Main topics discussed in this session were:

- Agreement on supporting the WDPA process by WESCANA PA and WCPA MENA;
- Overview of the process of the re-establishment of the WCPA regional steering.
- Mr Tarek Abul Hawa from WESCANA Secretariat and Ms Mehrasa Mehrdadi from the Iranian Department of Environment attended the PA summit in Spain and gave a brief report;
- Support from IUCN to its members on CBD reporting. This could include the organization of a workshop in WESCANA Members States on the CBD and its implementation, the outcomes of which will be disseminated by the Secretariat among the Members;
- A review of the 2005-2008 WESCANA Programme on PAs;
- Overview on the joint strategy on PAs for the MENA region; and

- The action plan for the translation of developed guidelines on PAs' management.

Session VII-b: Ecosystems Goods and Services in Drylands

- ♣ Taking account of ecosystem goods and services is a way to pursue the objective of improving the existing knowledge base on ecosystem services and values and using this knowledge in planning and decision-making aimed at conducting relevant case studies, developing appropriate guidelines and disseminating information gathered.
- ♣ For an appropriate management of ecosystems it is necessary to:
 - Conduct a measurement of the impact(s) of ecosystem degradation;
 - Conduct a measurement of ecosystem goods and services; and
 - Carry out an effective communication/dissemination of the knowledge of ecosystem goods and services.
- ♣ Efforts should be taken to incorporate knowledge on ecosystem goods and services into textbooks and to develop relevant new curricula.
- ♣ Efforts should be put into the creation of a database for ecosystems goods and services.
- ♣ Development of rangelands, conservation of genetic resources, integration of main and basic environmental ideas and adopting a participatory approach altogether call for the development of a regional related project.
- ♣ Planned activities by the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM):
 - To stimulate and facilitate the incorporation of ecosystem services and values into ongoing case studies on ecosystem management and motivate the development of new case studies;
 - To develop guidelines and handbooks for ecosystem services assessment, valuation and financing in collaboration with other IUCN programmes and regional offices; and
 - To facilitate access to available data using the existing database and clearing house websites i.e., www.naturevaluation.org

Session VII-c: Waqf Initiative

The following were the main topics discussed and conclusions reached in this session:

- A need for public awareness raising on environmental Waqf;
- Introducing environmental studies as part of the curriculum at schools;
- Establishing Waqf as an organization;
- Funding mechanisms for an organization on Waqf;
- Laying and enforcing regional laws for Waqf;
- Definition of Waqf;
- Considering the Waqfed property or Waqfiyeh as a legal entity;
- WESCANA office to contact the Iranian government about establishing an environmental Waqf project in Iran; and
- Developing a technical group of specialists in different related fields of science and the Sharia to work on the Waqf issue.

Session VII-d: Poverty, Equity and Gender (PEG)/Hima

Hima was defined as a reserved pasture, where trees and grazing lands are protected from indiscriminate harvest on a permanent or temporary basis. It is a traditional system revived in the region and it is widely believed that its revival and promotion for land improvement purposes based on cultural principles would be successful.

There are equivalents for the word Hima in Iranian (Gorok) and other languages as well. Hima differs from Protected Area (Mehmie) in that protected areas are nature-focused systems whereas Himas are human-based systems and are formed in an attempt to conserve areas for sustainable use of resources by people and for the people.

Members suggested converting PAs of the region into Himas for their proximity to this region's cultural heritage.

Any damage to a Hima can lead to peoples' deprivation of their resources; re-establishing Hima the way they were in the past is not enough to reduce poverty and more is needed to help alleviate poverty. Capacity-building activities, which fall within the framework of IUCN's empowerment policy, in the Hima system, can be of considerable help in lowering the level of poverty. In addition to capacity-building, knowledge-building and establishing pilot projects in an attempt to come up with concrete projects in the region would be of great use in this regards as well.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

Q1. How can a Hima be different from a Protected Area?

A1. Himas differ from protected areas in that they are human-based systems whereas PAs are nature-based. Governmental support is also important in having a well protected area.

C1. There was a comment on the success of the Waqf initiative in Tunisia. "Waqf issue was not a failure in Tunisia and people had their share of waqf", explained a participant.

S1. There was a suggestion for the organization of a training workshop in Morocco, linking Himas with Biosphere Reserves.

Session VIII - Plenary Meeting: Reports Back from Working Session VII

This session was allocated to a brief presentation of the results reached at under the four individual technical sessions on Protected Areas Management, Ecosystem Goods and Services in Drylands, the Waqf Initiative and Poverty, Equity and Gender (PEG)/Hima. The results of the four above-mentioned technical sessions are brought in full detail under sessions VII-a, b, c and d of the present report respectively.

Day 3 - Thursday, 24 May 2007

Session IX - IUCN Global Programme

This session was allocated to two presentations followed by questions and answers each as well as a brief discussion on the IUCN WESCANNA situation analysis.

♣ IUCN Business and Biodiversity Programme (BBP)

Dr Mohamed Rafiq, Head, Business and Biodiversity Programme, IUCN

On engaging business for conservation within the framework of the IUCN Business and Biodiversity Programme, Mr Rafiq first embarked on an explanation of the BBP genesis with more than a hundred related resolutions being adopted by IUCN members and the private sector, with the private sector developing a strategy for the engagement of business in the work of IUCN and with the development of operational guidelines by the private sector in 2006 and so forth.

The importance of incorporating environmental issues into business was then explained through a series of examples, such as land use conversion (mangrove forests to shrimp farms) etc. Business was explained to have the potential to positively influence biodiversity but also to have a responsibility with regards to wise use and conservation. The carbon market (carbon sequestration) is a good example of the role of biodiversity in business considerations and well known as one of the best ecosystem services. Consumer demands (eco-tourism, organic foods, certified "sustainable" products and biodiversity-friendly carbon storage etc) and the Goldman Sachs were identified under the term "opportunities" in addressing biodiversity issues in business.

The basic premise of the Programme was defined under the following statements:

- ♣ Business should be responsible
- ♣ Markets can aid conservation
- ♣ Development regardless of conservation is self defeating
- ♣ Conservation and profits are not mutually exclusive; but entail trade offs.
- ♣ IUCN can help make informed choices.

The purposes of the Programme were explained as (a) supporting environmental responsibility in business, (b) assisting companies reduce their environmental footprints, (c) enabling the positive contribution of business to conservation, (d) seeking to synergise business and conservation and (e) supporting economic value addition on natural capital.

Raising businesses' understanding of conservation needs, removing barriers of integrating nature conservation and development, increasing the understanding of conservation communities of businesses' imperatives, roles and potentials, expanding interaction between business and IUCN, enhancing IUCN's capacities etc were altogether identified as actions undertaken by the Business and Biodiversity Programme (BBP).

This description was followed by examples of the Sakhalin energy project in Russia, Allanblakia-an alternative for palm oil, Shell, deep-sea trawling, ICMM and so forth; emerging relationships were explained and examples were brought of IUCN's capacity-building activities.

Dr Rafiq then put forth the questions of:

- How do conservation and business interests differ?

and

- How can the differences be converted into opportunities?

He explained that challenges are various and opportunities are many, bringing various examples of both challenges and opportunities facing the Programme.

Finally Dr Rafiq offered a series of suggestions/ideas for future activities and called for further contributions on the part of the Members States to the Programme.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

C1. Some participants asked for a simpler language to be used for explaining business matters when addressing Members, to ensure their full understanding of the issues discussed.

A1. Mr Rafiq explained that certain language courses were being organized, to enable partners get used to their business jargon.

C2. Dr Rafiq was congratulated by the participants for the work done and IUCN was encouraged to continue the Process.

Q1. How can this knowledge be applied in and extended to the Caspian Sea region as well?

A1. You should identify your needs and we would willingly respond to them. Should you have a specific issue in mind, you should identify it and we will respond in any way you desire.

Q2. What about the weapons industry and the mining industry? How can they minimize their evident influence on the natural environment and biodiversity within the framework of the BBP?

The mining industry as well as the weapons industry (factories) in Europe should be approached in an attempt to find out the best way(s) they can minimize the impact(s) of their activities on natural resources, or to define the way(s) through which they can contribute to making up for or repairing damages caused to nature, or to help conserve endangered species and their habitats within the destroyed ecosystem.

A2. We have not yet spoken with the weapons industry that we shall soon do. As for the mining industry, we have already spoken with them. We are thinking of a net positive profit to biodiversity in business and for this, the idea is that we should set informative examples.

Q3. Are there any strategies developed for informing the general public and the industries of the value of biodiversity as well as the economic loss of biodiversity degradation?

A3. For quite some time IUCN has been working on the economic valuation of biodiversity, but an informative strategy has yet to be developed.

♣ Future of Sustainability

Dr Sally Jeanrenaud, Coordinator, Future of Sustainability Programme, IUCN

Dr Javed Jabbar, IUCN Deputy President

Regional Councillor, West Asia

The mandate and objectives of the Programme were explained to:

- ♣ Develop a statement which would capture the conceptualization of conservation and sustainable development as it stands today. The statement should attempt to bridge the human and environmental agendas, set the direction for the evolution of the field and serve as a clarion call for the Union, the environmental movement and society at large.
- ♣ Convene a meeting of renowned thinkers to assist in the development of positioning IUCN and developing a strategy for achieving it. (*Decision C/63/16*)

Dr Jeanrenaud explained that it is necessary to change peoples' behaviours which would have a very big impact on achieving sustainable development. She then defined sustainable development as being "development that meets the needs of the present, enabling future generations to meet their needs as well", while pinpointing the need to rethink the current concept of sustainable development. She then gave examples of how science and technology (S&T) are looking into understanding how nature works and the issue of how we can engage with new technologies to advance the cause of sustainability.

Explaining that sustainability was not a mere scientific concept and that it should be rethought with a view to our present world conditions, she briefed the audience on different conceptions of sustainability as follows:

"The human race needs an evolutionary leap from materialistic and ego-centric values to eco-centric and more spiritualistic values and belief systems". (Finland).

"I think sustainability is more related to social awareness, which in turn is not so much connected to scientific innovations or economic advancement. I feel that sustainability be considered a social paradigm with a great thrust on awareness and spirituality" (India)

"When we talk about progress, we would do well to recall what our wisdom traditions have taught for millennia: that moderation produces the greatest advances for human beings. In wealthy countries, we have completely lost sight of this wisdom" (USA).

"When rethinking sustainability we must rethink what we mean by development as well", she said. Further on, she brought different definitions of "good life" and explained the relationship between sustainable living and living a good life. She explained that sustainability is equal to bio and cultural diversity.

The need for new economic tools to achieve a green economy, to engage poor people in environmentally friendly income-generating activities, to remove barriers to sustainability and so forth was called on. She then drew on technologies that are inspired by nature and brought various examples in this regard. The need to adopt new informative approaches rather than staying committed to the old "Doom and Gloom" scenario for awareness raising purposes was emphasised as well as the need to reach out to new audiences and involve the new generation.

Dr Jeanrenaud wrapped up by giving some messages to the Union and explaining future steps to be taken.

In approval of the above, Mr Javed Jabbar, also emphasised the need for the development of a singular definition of sustainable development and the standardization of SD if possible since, "however we interpret the term, it becomes an overarching umbrella for our activities, thus we have to be reasonably clear about the terms we use", he stated.

There now exists wide-spread awareness concerning SD and the environmental movement among the concerned audience, the time has now come to have state members and governments informed. There is a

lack of appropriate regulations and policies for SD that has to be overcome, while existing regulations in the field are not implemented either. "We must synergize and redefine the two words of 'sustainable' and 'development'. The environment is not static and is constantly developing therefore, the environment is not devoid of development", concluded Dr Javed Jabbar.

Questions and Answers Comments/Suggestions

C1. There were several comments on the absence of supporting documents on regional activities (concerning business and biodiversity and the sustainability programme in particular and other topics of concern in general), at the 6th RCF.

C2. Some found it unnecessary to redefine the term "sustainable development" whereas some wanted a rethinking of the term and for some others, "sustainable development" was explained to be not a matter of definition but a problem of implementation.

A2. Every 10 to 20 years there is a need to rethink through those concepts and to revisit like ideas and help give them a new look that is adaptable to our living world conditions.

♣ Discussion on the IUCN WESCANA Situation Analysis

The discussion was allocated to gathering comments/suggestions of Members States on the IUCN WESCANA Situation Analysis.

S1. There was a suggestion regarding the incorporation of the BBP into WESCANA's future programme and greater emphasis by the regional office to be put on business issues in the next four years.

C1. There was also a call for comparing WESCANA's process of programming with that of IUCN's global programming process, since IUCN's approach was identified as being more project-oriented (donor-chaired). IUCN was also said to benefit from better funding sources and capacities as well as applying more effective mechanisms for involving Members States.

A1. In terms of money, IUCN is not a donor agency; it is about value creation and about linking local and global knowledge. We have the ideas and the right people. We must be more coherent and more strategic. We have contacted many partners in the region. We have constructed the Waqf model. As for capacity, we are because you are.

C2. IUCN should not limit itself to narrow options in the business sector and it should use all its capacities to help its members deal with like issues.

C3. Greater attention must be paid by HQ to WESCANA. WESCANA needs also to take a better look at resource disparity for the region and to see how much of those resources are mobilized for WESCANA. Regarding Page 21 of the Situation Analysis document, a shift to governance, implementation and legislation is needed.

C4. Great effort is put by the councillors in the meetings, an example of which is the issue of Palestine. Value creation, networking and elevating knowledge needs money to be done and we do not have the money.

WESCANA should take account of the complaints of the North African and Central Asian countries. As regards the commissions, more contact should be sought with them by WESCANA.

A way to collect money is to send project proposals to donors.

A meeting for the West Asia region was requested from WESCANA Secretariat.

(Dr Darwish was asked to propose what he had in mind regarding the sending of project proposals to donors).

C5. Do not plan based on your present capacities, since that would be a reductive approach. Plans should be made based on what could be done.

C6. In the recent expert group meeting in Amman (April 07), it was proposed that GMOs and agriculture become part of the work programme under the Biodiversity theme. Special focus should be thus given to conservation of Agricultural Genetic Biodiversity and wild relatives from Genetic Pollution, and privatisation through patents. Livelihoods and indigenous knowledge need also be taken into account.

However, in the Situation Analysis, under the Consultant's note, it is stated that IUCN did not develop the conceptual and practical tools to tackle this issue and the consultant suggested that this Programme be omitted from the main WESCANA programme perspective.

Going back to the third WCC, four resolutions on GMOs and food sovereignty were adopted by IUCN members. These resolutions refer directly or indirectly to matters of trade liberalisation and its impacts on livelihoods and natural resources.

Upholding the above-mentioned resolutions, WESCANA RO is requested to work in close cooperation with HQ, to develop additional conceptual and practical tools to deal with this very important issue in our region, which is one of the main centres of origin for wild species of crops and plants.

Additionally, WESCANA RO is requested to work on the recruitment of specialised staff that could manage this important issue and interact with those of the Members who are skilled in this specific field. This process should be similar to what we are doing in other domains where the regional secretariat does not have the required expertise.

Session X - Plenary Meeting

This session included two presentations followed by questions and answers.

♣ Update on IUCN WESCANA Resolutions

Dr Ali Darwish, Regional Councillor for West Asia, IUCN

Dr Ali Darwish, Regional Councillor for West Asia, briefed the audience on progress made to date on the implementation of resolutions related to the WESCANA region, adopted in the WCC in Bangkok in 2004. He went on to explain the difference between a resolution that becomes binding on the Union and recommendations, which the Union can facilitate but the implementation is out of its control.

One resolution he explained was related to efforts taken against poverty and endeavours to help promote food security within the region, which the Union was asked to incorporate into its quadrennial programme for 2005-2008. It was further explained that resolutions of an environmental direction were primarily policy-oriented and implemented according to the availability of resources.

CEESP for instance, within the past years, has made an attempt to prioritise issues arising from like resolutions.

A second resolution was related to migrants who move from one habitat to another and the necessity to preserve their habitats. The relationship between these two resolutions is inherent within the fact that should poverty be alleviated in these areas, a better preservation of the mentioned habitats will come about by reducing pressures on the resource base. Responsible bodies for the implementation of this resolution were identified as both the WCPA and CEESP. Some countries in the region have also attempted to set up task forces for the implementation of these resolutions in the region.

There was also a recommendation on war zones in West Africa and strengthening measures to reduce the impacts of war. Some questions had been raised on the availability of resources for the implementation of this recommendation in Bangkok - there was also the suggestion for the establishment of a task force - but there were no funds available to do this. The Secretariat had also been asked to raise funds for work in both Palestine and Iraq.

Another topic which had come from the Central Asian countries dealt with the preservation of certain species of deer and recommendations had been made on how to prevent their extinction.

From the total number of a hundred resolutions and fifty recommendations submitted to the last WCC, only the above-mentioned belonged to the WESCANA region.

The need to finance the six IUCN Commissions in an attempt to help them better meet their responsibilities and ways to effectively participate in the upcoming Congress with a view to resolution and recommendation preparation were also among issues discussed by Dr Darwish.

♣ **Creating World Conservation Congress (WCC) Committees**
Dr Mohamed Ali Abrougui, Head, IUCN Tunis National Committee

Dr Abrougui, briefed the session on the various working committees of the Congress, set up for the upcoming WCC in Barcelona.

He explained that in total there exist six committees of the following nature:

- Planning
- Resolutions follow up
- Supervision
- Recommendations follow up
- Evaluation and assessment
- Election committee

The supervision committee would invite international observers to supervise the process. The planning committee would deal with the programmes and submitted project proposals, and any point to be included to the Congress agenda will have to pass through this committee (participants were asked to submit their project proposals to this committee). The evaluation and assessment committee evaluates activities undertaken by all the other five committees. The committee on resolutions would be headed by Dr Ali Darwish.

Questions were then raised on:

- How to have a resolution passed in Barcelona?
- and

- How the respective committee deals with submitted resolutions?

Questions and Answers

Comments/Suggestions

CI.

- *Necessity to ensure active participation of all members in the WCC;*
- *Necessity to ensure active leadership from administrative committees;*
- *Necessity to adopt operational methods;*
- *All members should have an active presence in the elections committee;*
- *Follow up committees should be established by WESCANA countries and remain active until the end of the Congress;*
- *The follow up committees need a secretariat and the supervision of the Regional office as well as appropriate funding;*
- *Training should be provided to members on how to enjoy an effective participation and have something to say for the region;*
- *Effective communication strategies should be adopted by each of the working committees and maintained even after the Barcelona Congress;*
- *Necessity to appoint focal points to whom the resolutions should be submitted in an attempt to reach consensus on the resolutions submitted; and*
- *Necessity to establish active communication among IUCN members even after the Congress.*

A1. The panel responded by saying that resolutions must be stronger this time and greater attention must be paid to their formulation. It was decided to have a coordinator for this purpose even though it would be a very difficult task for a single person to accomplish. Another suggestion concerned the setting up of a three-member committee one of whom could serve as a coordinator. Focal points could be from each of the three programme sub-regions. The resolutions process is a very serious one and this time the Council has asked for fewer resolutions, therefore resolutions should be in great shape to be adopted.

S1. A suggestion was to have three separate committees established, one for each of the three programme sub-regions, instead of having one single person deal with all the resolutions. The heads of these committees were asked to be in close cooperation with one another and with the Regional Office and give feedback on their work to the RO; the RO will then have a supporting role to the process as a whole.

The Regional Office accepted to act as a coordinator. It was further accepted to have three committees established, to facilitate the Process at a sub-regional level and it was noted that the three sub-committees must coordinate among themselves. Mention was also made that it is the Members Assembly at HQ that the resolutions should go to.

Session XI - Concurrent Working Groups

Under this session, the three programme sub-regions discussed in separate working groups the three items of (a) reviewing IUCN's role in their region, (b) election and reconstitution of a regional committee, and (c) participation and contribution to the 4th WCC.

Session XI-a: West Asia

As already planned, West Asian countries had the following on their agenda for this session:

- e) Review of IUCN's role in West Asia

- f) Election and reconstruction of the regional committee
- g) Participation and contributions to the Barcelona congress

The first item discussed from the agenda was the election and reconstitution of the regional committee for West Asia, which was decided to take place according to the bylaws of the West Asian countries.

All members unanimously agreed upon the establishment of the Regional Committee for West Asia (RCWA), emphasising the need for the bylaws to be revised and amendments made to them (upon their approval by the Council) by a task force to which Iran will also have a member.

Each member in West Asia was entitled to having one representative in the RCWA as per article 4 of the IUCN Statute which states that:

"Each State within the Statutory Region of West Asia having at least one IUCN member shall be represented at the RCWA in accordance with the following formula:

01-19 IUCN members one representative

20-39 IUCN members two representatives

40+ IUCN members three representatives.

Regardless of a State's total entitlement, no more than one individual from any one IUCN member may become a member of the RCWA".

Composition of the RCWA:

Jordan: Mr Mohammad Shahbaz

Syria: Ms Fatima Haj Mousa

Palestine: Mr Imad Atrash

Lebanon: Mr Assad Serhal

Saudi Arabia: Mr Mohamed Sulayem

Kuwait: Mr Tala Al-Azimi

Bahrain: Mr Meena Kadhimi

Iran: Ms Mehrasa Mehrdadi

Pakistan: Later nominate their representative and possibly may have two as per the article referred to above.

Chair: Mr Mohamad Shahbaz from Jordan

Vice Chair: Mr Mohamed Sulayem from Saudi Arabia

Secretary: Ms Mehrasa Mehrdadi from Iran

Treasurer: Ms Fatima Haj Mousa from Syria

RCWA has initiated the process of the establishment of a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), which is to be headed by Dr Abu Zinada.

Dr Abu Zinada then opened the floor to all interested participants who wished to become a member of the RAC to voice their membership request.

Next item to be discussed was "Participation and contributions to the Barcelona congress". To this end, a committee composed of *Greenline* from Lebanon as leader, *CENESTA* as coordinator, and including the *Kuwaiti Institute for Scientific research* was elected in an attempt to further facilitate West Asian members' participation and contribution to the 4th WCC. Emphasis was put on the need for the full support of this Committee by the Secretariat.

As for the first item on the agenda (a review of the role of IUCN in the region) the following were suggested:

3. More members recruited;

4. Keep the region together;
5. Strong fundraising programmes adopted for the region;
6. Increased transparency;
7. Adopting greater participatory approaches;
8. Seek commission collaboration actively;
9. Work on realizing Arabic as an official language of IUCN by the time of the Barcelona Congress, as per the Amman resolution, and have translations of documents into Arabic as well as other languages;
10. Try to prioritise staff travel in an attempt to have them spend more time at the Office;
11. Not to be merely a consultancy house;
12. Identify projects of regional interest in a prioritised manner;
13. Involve regional experts in projects and work of the Regional office;
14. Share advantages with all countries in the region;
15. Facilitate from a financial point of view regular meetings of the newly elected committee;
16. Consult regularly with councillors;
17. Reform the membership process to facilitate membership; and
18. Consider justice in programme implementation.

Session XI-B: North Africa

North African Members to IUCN have achieved much in the field of conservation in the region over the past ten years from 1992 to 2002. The outcomes of their activities as well as the implementation of regional projects have had lasting impacts. However, during the past five years IUCN's role has diminished to the extent that it has almost disappeared from the Region.

The members, believing in their role in achieving their objectives, and in realisation of IUCN's mission and with a view to the revival of their activities recommend the following:

10. Establishment of a regional office in one of the countries of the Region. Countries are invited to submit to IUCN HQ, offers of services and assistance they could render to this prospective regional office; and
11. Development of a programme within the framework of the IUCN programme in the following manner:
 - It is expected that there will be a members' meeting held in Malaga in early September 2007. It is thereupon recommended that the organizers of the Malaga meeting allocate a reasonable time to a session for preparation of a draft programme for North Africa;
 - Members are expected to submit their views on the above-mentioned programme to Professor Batanouny at kbata@link.net. He will then compile the ideas into a working paper to be submitted to the Malaga meeting;
 - It is recommended that the draft document prepared in Malaga will be submitted to a meeting to be held in Egypt by the end of September 2007;
 - The members welcomed and approved the proposal of Professor Batanouny put forth on behalf of the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of Egypt, a Member State to IUCN, to host the mentioned meeting in Egypt;
 - The members of the Egypt meeting should include 2 members from each North African country and 3 members from IUCN HQ. It is highly recommended that Dr Bill Jackson attend the Egypt meeting; and
 - IUCN is expected to cover all expenses of the Egypt meeting.

As for the establishment of a regional committee, a statute already exists for this purpose that needs to be amended by the five members of the North African region, thus a temporary follow up committee was established which is composed of:

- Mr Mohamed Ali Abrougyi – Tunisia (Coordinator)
- Mr Abdelhadi Bennis- Morocco
- Mr Kamal H Batanouny-Egypt
- Mr Macer Riad Bendaoud-Algeria
- Libya's representative will be announced later, since no one from Libya was present at this meeting.

Session XI-c: Central Asia

The present composition of Central Asian countries was stated as follows:

Two members from Tajikistan, one member from Kazakhstan, one from Turkmenistan and one from Uzbekistan.

The fields of activity of the Central Asian countries were identified as:

- Protected areas;
- Biodiversity and conservation;
- Education for use;
- Public awareness; and
- Community-based activities.

It was further explained that in 2004, when they had the CA Regional Centre, there used to exist very strong ties among Central Asian countries, but upon closure of the above-mentioned centre in 2004, coordinations were limited to projects on protected areas among these countries. Thus, it was stated very important for them to bring together as many scientists as possible (some 20). They also explained that they will have various resolutions on biodiversity conservation, protected areas and water management in central Asia submitted to the 4th WCC.

Session XII - Members Only Plenary Meeting

♣ Nominations and Elections for the Next Intersessional Period and Introduction of Candidates for Elections in the Barcelona Congress

Dr Talal Al Azimi, Director, Environment Public Authority

Dr Taghi Farvar, Chair, CEESP

Items discussed under this title included:

- Nomination of candidates for the 2008 Congress;
- Election of the head of the Advisory Council and other members subsequent to this election. According to the mandate the number of proposed candidates for each of the three programme sub-regions will be as follows:
 - 3 for North Africa
 - 3 for West Asia
 - 3 for Central Asia
- Candidatures should be submitted to the Nominations Committee, which will look into the candidates' qualifications. Upon approval, the candidatures will be submitted to the Council and should a nominee be selected by the Council, then they could attend the Congress;

- A candidate for Council needs to be nominated by five IUCN members from the region;
- Commission chairs' nomination process goes through two different channels;
- Councillors' nomination process (24 councillors as a whole, 8 regions, 3 for each region);
- Deadline for nominating councillors: 31 January 08;
- Geographic considerations for nominations of new Council members;
- Nomination of Mr Brahim Haddane from the North African region;
- Deadline for Council nominations and chairs of commissions: 10 September;
- Dr Ali Darwish showed interest to go for Council for the 2nd time;
- Nominations from Central Asia encouraged;
- The Secretariat was asked to review the criteria looked at for choosing councillors.

Session XIII - Closing Plenary

♣ Closing Remarks by Dr Abdulaziz Abu Zinada

It is a real honour to be able to convey our thanks on behalf of you all and appreciation to our host country, Iran, for organizing this meeting and their outstanding hospitality should be remembered. Thanking them for making it possible for us to come to this country and see Iran and meet the Iranians.

This meeting has been one of the best meetings we have participated in due to the hard work of the Regional Office, Dr Odeh Al-Jayyousi, and the support of the Iranians.

Congratulations to the elected members of the RCWA and to wish our chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary and others success. I herewith invite everybody to support me for the Regional Advisory Council and send me all your comments/suggestions as well as your proposals to join the Council.

♣ Vote of Thanks by Ms Puri Canals

A best experience I have had these days here. What's nice about being with people regardless of what they wear and what they do is that we all share common concerns for the nature.

I would like to come back again to Iran.

Please look at the next WCC as a big opportunity you can have to influence the Union. The opportunities you people have in WESCANA are unique and unusual so use it all.

We will be happy to receive you in Barcelona.

♣ Closing Remarks by Dr Amir Abdoos

In the Name of Allah

Maybe or actually definitely all members of the Iranian delegate also share my feeling that we could continue the session.

I apologize on behalf of the distinguished Deputy of the Department of Environment who could not reach you because of the traffic problem for the football game. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the WESCANA Regional Office Director and his colleagues.

Thanks to Dr AliKhani, Director General of the DoE Public and International Relations and Dr Barmaki, Deputy of the General Directorate for Environmental Issues of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thanks to all environmental organizations and institutions. Thanks to Ms Mehrasa Mehrdadi, an expert of the Bureau for Habitats and Mr Ghasemipour for logistics presentation. Thanks to Ms

Rajabkhah and all our distinguished guests. We enjoyed being with you and we will take home very good memories from this gathering.

♣ **Vote of Thanks by Dr Enrique Lehmann**

Salam

It is a great honour to have the opportunity to express on behalf of IUCN-The Union as a whole- our deepest gratitude to the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular the DoE for the magnificent welcome we have received in this beautiful country.

I have no doubts I can safely speak for all participants in this 6th Regional Conservation Forum that the IR Iran and its people have been magnificent hosts.

Dr Dealwar Najafi Hajipour, Deputy Head for Natural Environment and Biodiversity,
His Excellency Mr Hassan Tajik, Head of the International Environmental and Economic Affairs of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Mr Amir Abdoos, Director General for Protected Areas and Habitats Bureau of the Iranian Department of Environment,

Mr Masoud Alikhani, Director General for International and Public Relations of the Iranian Department of Environment,

Your hospitality, generosity and overall your warmth and friendship have been outstanding. A vote of thanks is just a very small token to express our gratitude.

My dearest Iranian friends, you have a very special place in our hearts.

Mot Shakeram (Thank you in Persian)

♣ **Closing Remarks by Dr Odeh AL-Jayyousi**

This is a defining moment for IUCN; it demonstrates that IUCN is about collective action. It is through members, organizations and the Secretariat that the Union can bring new energy to the conservation movement. The Union is simply about the whole is greater than the smaller parts. Work carried out in the last three days is a fruitful dynamics and creative tension to evolve and co-create a shared vision for IUCN.

It is through this dynamics that the Union stays as a river not as a stagnant swamp. This Forum provides the oxygen so as IUCN stays alive.

Thanks for all members and the host country and every single one of you and everyone who made this event a reality.

Day 4

Friday 24 May 2007

Field Trip to Parvar Protected Area: Summary Report

On Friday, May 24, the department of environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran organized a field trip for the RCF participants to the Parvar Protected Area, managed by the department. Around 60 participants representing various countries of the region took part in the field trip accompanied by at least ten Iranian colleagues.

The aim of the field trip was to introduce IUCN members and staff of the region to some of the national efforts undertaken by the department of environment in cooperation with other national and local institutions to establish and manage the national system of protected areas in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The excursion also aimed to share the experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran and exchange ideas and knowledge to further its national program through direct interaction and advice from other regional experts and practitioners.

The almost 65,000 hectares Parvar Protected Area is located in the northern most part of the Semnan province to the east of Mazandaran province some 250 km east of Tehran.

The protected area represents a mixture of forest and desert ecosystems yielding an outstanding mosaic of landscape and biodiversity richness.

The protected area comprises a wide variety of fauna and flora representing a wide spectrum of globally and locally significant species and habitats. This includes several species of Oak and Maple in addition to Juniper forests inhabited by globally threatened brown bear, leopard, wild goat, wild sheep, gazelles and many other animal species living in their natural pristine environment.

The protected area has great potential for ecotourism development and community based development, a program which is being currently developed by the site management with the objective of harnessing its potentials for local economic and social development and expanding possibilities for local and national awareness raising and support.

Travelling to the site took around four hours each way. The group was warmly received by the protected area management team accompanied by representatives of the department of environment, the ministry of foreign affairs and the local government. The reception included speeches from the various host institutions welcoming the group in Iran and emphasizing the intention for cooperation and collaboration in the field of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

In response, the IUCN's councillors, members and secretariat representatives expressed their profound gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran and in particular to the Parvar protected area team for their extended generosity and warm welcome. The reception was followed by a short field visit to some of the natural landscapes of the protected area and was guided by the site team who provided interpretation of the site's habitats and species in addition to explaining the main challenges facing the conservation efforts on the ground.

The visit to the protected area was concluded with an afternoon feast offered by the host country where traditional food and drinks were graciously served by the Iranian organizers. The group then moved back to Tehran concluding a very rewarding experience and encounter with the national efforts undertaken by

the department of environment and its partners to protect and sustain biodiversity and natural resource in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

End of report ...

Annexes

Annex I – Summary of Key Recommendations of the Regional Conservation Forum

Annex II – RCF Final Agenda

Annex III- List of Participants