

Reactions from Council Members on the Collaboration Agreement between IUCN and Rio Tinto

From Miguel Pellerano-IUCN Regional Councillor for Latin America (Argentina)

Dear Julia,

Many thanks for the mail and the information about this very important decision. As we discussed during our last Council meeting and before it as well, the whole theme of engagement with the private sector is one of the most important issues in our common agenda. I believe that in delicate matters like this timely and transparent information and communication is essential in order to avoid misunderstandings. The package of information that is being sent to Members early this coming week is also key in ensuring adequate exchange of data and opinions among the different components of IUCN.

All the best,

Miguel P.

From Hans de Jongh-IUCN Regional Councillor for West Europe (Netherlands)

Dear Julia,

I have followed the information flow on the new Rio Tinto agreement with great interest. We want to congratulate you with this achievement. I also appreciate the information on the signing ceremony in London. It helps us to get a better understanding of the complexities around such agreements. It will also enable us to better address queries from IUCN members. Kind regards,

Hans

From Keith Wheeler- Chair of IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication

Julia

Thanks for this excellent work. This is exactly the level of transparency and commitment to engagement that I think the Council and members are expecting. I look forward to the engagement with Rio Tinto and other private sector players that we could potentially engage with. I am especially interested in seeing how we can engage effectively with the financial sector moving forward.

Best wishes

Keith

Note from Piet Wit-Chair of IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management

I attended the IUCN-Rio Tinto launch in London at the Darwin Centre of the Natural History Museum. Our Julia Marton-Lefèvre infected her audience with her enthusiasm for nature and the role of IUCN in conservation. Rio Tinto's CEO stated his personal and company's commitment to the best possible integration of conservation in the company's operations. I spoke with experts from other companies and Green NGOs (including IUCN members) that attended. There were biological drinks and cocktail bites illustrating that creativity can lead to tasty innovations. There was confidence in the potential of the collaboration among IUCN staff.

I did go to London in recognition of the importance of the impacts of the mining sector on the ecosystems where their mining operations take place. We make a lot of noise about the damage done from the sideline of the mining operations, but so far it has not altered mining practices fundamentally, not for the sector as a whole. WCCs since 1996 have realized that and have consistently asked IUCN for more involvement with the private sector so that important conservation gains may be made through constructive cooperation.

Commissions, as part of the IUCN family tree, have to follow the decisions of congress with loyalty, but I also feel personally that these resolutions about private sector involvement have been very welcome. Of course, we are not selling IUCN or nature out, allowing companies to green wash their company profile with our logo. We should learn from the past, not being paralyzed by previous mistakes by partners that are honestly trying to improve their record. The mining sector certainly has caused much harm to the environment, and in too many instances continues to do so with unnecessary negative impacts on biodiversity. They need to be critically followed. But the blame for their negative record should not be solely put upon the mining companies. Governments have their share in the damage. And let us not forget the consumers of mining products, including those of us that are united in IUCN's membership!

IUCN is in an excellent position to bring these different stakeholders together, working with those elements that have proven to be genuinely interested in conserving our world and its biodiversity. IUCN played a pivotal role in the past in getting the World Commission of Dams off the ground, which at that time was as touchy as the whole issue about private sector involvement is now. The WCD has developed into an internationally accepted authority on dam construction and operation with due consideration for the importance of ecosystem functioning. We contributed to a positive change of the water sector from within.

Our collaborative agreement with Rio Tinto is a first step only. A first step that should lead to improved access to the mining sector as a whole and the sector-wide adaptation of environmental standards and application of best practices of ecosystem management. This will require instruments like Clearing House mechanisms, benchmarking, guidelines, all typically products where the Commission on Ecosystem Management can and will contribute. That is why I went to London.

Piet Wit

Chair of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management

From Brahim Haddane-IUCN Regional Councillor for Africa (Morocco)

Dear Julia,

Congratulations. In fact the due diligence and the wise discussions undertaken by you and your staff were productive and concluded by the first collaborative agreement with Rio Tinto to be signed on 12 July and I believe in your willingness to bring other partners from the private sector to sign similar agreements. Bon courage,

Brahim

Response from Mohammad Shahbaz-IUCN Regional Councillor from West Asia (Jordan)

Dear Julia,

I must start by thanking all of those people involved in the materialization of this agreement, in fact the future of the well being of nature lies in such prudent initiatives by organizations like us. Without rushing into a decision, I am looking forward to explore the package promised. Best wishes.

Mohammad

Response from Piet Wit—Chair of IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management

Dear Julia,

I like to join Mohammad in his appreciation for the work of you and your staff. Ever since I came to the first World Conservation Congresses (in Montreal 1996), I have seen resolutions being adopted about the necessity to get involved with the private sector, and especially with those that are heavily impacting biodiversity values. I feel that this sensitive issue has been addressed very well by you and your staff and such not only in conformity with the text of these resolutions, but also within the spirit in which they were discussed, as exemplified by the present agreement with Rio Tinto. My congratulations.

Piet Wit