

## Professional Updating Session: Conveying IUCN's Message as a Councillor

24 November 2013, Hotel Villa-du-Lac, Divonne, France

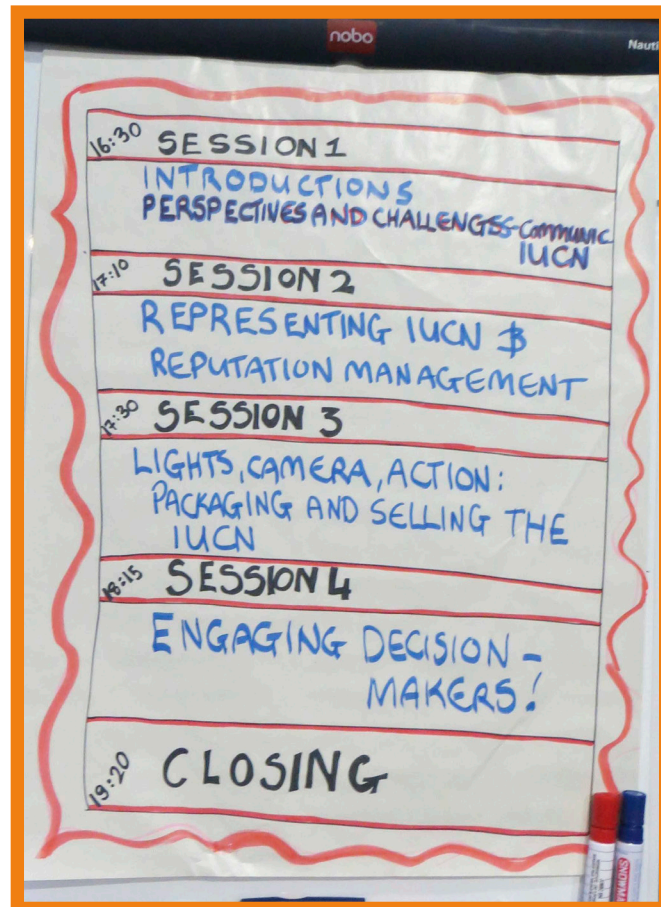


### Conveying IUCN's Message

As a follow up to the special communications session held at the January 2013 Council Retreat, the CEC in conjunction with IUCN Secretariat held another professional development session in November 2013. Aimed at strengthening Councillors' communication skills with regard to delivering a consistent and effective IUCN message.

Under the theme "Conveying the IUCN message as a Councillor" the session was facilitated by a team comprising of Juliane Zeidler, CEC Chair, Nancy Colleton the Deputy Chair, Borjana Pervan, Head of Communications, Xenya Cherny-Scanlon, the Executive Assistant in the Director Generals Office.

The session used a very interactive approach and participants had the opportunity to take part and offer constructive criticism to each other while getting hands on tips on how to uphold the IUCN reputation and be open minded about offering information in an interesting and engaging way. The session ended on a high note with evaluation from the participants who were very pleased with the engaging sessions and interested in more exposure to key stakeholder skills.





## Perspectives and Challenges of Communicating for the IUCN



Panel Discussion on the challenges of communicating for the IUCN

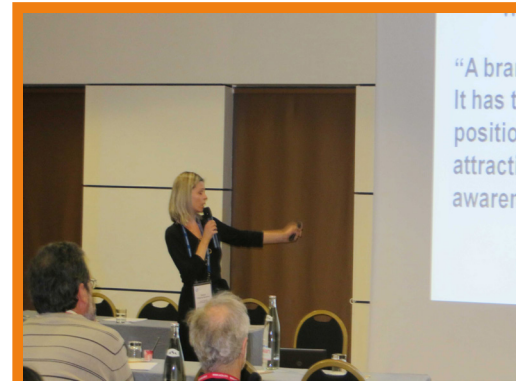
In an engaging panel discussion hosted by CEC Deputy Chair, Nancy Colleton, the IUCN President Dr Zhang Xinsheng, the Director General Julia Marton-Lefevre and SSC Chair Simon Stuart reflected on some key challenges of communicating on IUCN.

Nancy opened the floor by stating that, communicating for the IUCN is one of the key responsibilities that fall upon highly placed representatives within the organisation, who engage regularly with media and other key stakeholders. Some of the challenges identified included communicating to a very diverse audience and the difficulty in creating one core message. However the panel also concurred that communicating on positivity and offering inspiring stories and solutions are great angles which reflect on IUCN's credibility.

## Representing IUCN as an Organisation and Reputation Management-

What does it mean to be a spokesperson for IUCN at various platforms to a variety of stakeholders? What opinions and views can an individual publicly relay on behalf of IUCN? These are some of the questions which Xenya Cherny-Scanlon, Special Adviser to the IUCN Director General, addressed in her presentation on Representing IUCN and Brand Management.

"A spokesperson who is sought after by the media is one who is accessible, cooperative, knowledgeable and quotable" she stated. Although councillors are urged to honour media requests that fall within their range of particular expertise, there is also a need to keep in mind the overall brand of IUCN. She further explained that not all opinions of Councillors were necessarily that of IUCN and this has to be emphasized.



Xenya Cherny-Scanlon presents on IUCN reputation management

## Lights, Camera, Action: The Art of the Interview



Borjana Pervan with key tips on speaking to the media on camera

Acting Head of IUCN Global Communications and Senior Media and Communications Manager, Borjana Pervan gave an overview of some of the key elements of dealing with media questions and interview skills. Highlighting that correct and relevant information is key "You have to have your facts and figures ready before starting to answer any questions from media". She also outlines the need to be genuine, "You need passion for what you are talking about and you also need to exude energy." Borjana also urged Councillors to be very honest and straightforward about their ability to answer questions. In offering tips about speaking on camera "Resist the urge to ramble on after you have answered the question. Use the time between questions to pause and think about the following question." Councillors then got the opportunity to view how some of their colleagues did in pre recorded interviews and listen to critique on what could have been done better.

## Engaging Decision Makers: Developing Elevator Pitches

Key decision makers and potential funders are busy people and accessibility is limited for presenting IUCN in its entirety. A short presentation on how to develop elevator pitches, using the AIDA formula for elevator speeches- Attention, Interest, Desire, Action offered an overview of what an elevator pitch should entail.

Participants got to try their hand at developing their own 30 second elevator pitches which are brief but persuasive speeches. These are used to spark interest in what IUCN does and can also to generate interest in a project or possible funding opportunity. In an interesting role play activity, participants relayed their elevator pitches to two very highly placed and busy potential donors, while the rest of the group offered critique as to how effective the pitch was.



Councillors try their luck with elevator pitches

## Feedback from Councillors on the Updating Session

### What did you find to be most useful today?

"Key points to say to the media, about IUCN and interesting IUCN stories to tell to the media."

"Practical examples of how to maintain and enhance the brand value."

"I like the example "How to talk to the media"."

"Preparation for an extended hostile interview, getting across the idea that you want to communicate"

### What do you think of the format of the session?

"Timing was excellent. The individual sessions were of a nice length – it flowed well at the end of a day of fairly intense meetings."

"It was good to have kind of a "buffet" of options, then we can go deeper in certain matters."

"Material proposed quickly and expeditiously."

### General Comments:

"Very enjoyable and useful."

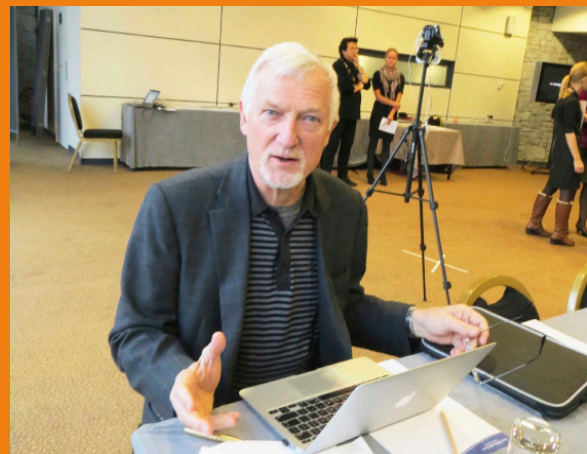
"We need more of this."

"Make it into a good part of IUCN culture."

"Please repeat it in the beginning of each council meeting, because we need to be more trained in this issue."

### What You Would Like to Learn About in Future Sessions:

- How to deliver speeches
- How to answer hostile questions
- Developing relationship with media
- How to increase policy influence on governments, policy makers
- Preparing and delivering more effective presentations
- Crisis management
- Creating relevant information material
- How to enhance and maintain IUCN brand value



Further collaboration with other Commissions and IUCN Secretariat are scheduled for the near future as Council Updating Sessions continue to be informative and engaging platforms for building capacity.



CEC

Commission on Education and Communication