

Brief Statement by IUCN Director General Julia Marton-Lefèvre at the UN Secretary-General Round table 4 on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals

**United Nations
New York, 25 September 2013**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues

The MDGs were the result of a hard-earned consensus among nations and that alone is something we should all be proud of.

They gave us all an important framework for galvanizing collective action towards sustainable development.

Clearly, not all of them were achieved — MDG7 on environmental sustainability being a case in point.

The question is: how can we do better in the post-2015 development agenda?

Through the MDG process, we had 15 years of ‘learning-by-doing’.

We learned for instance that achieving access to safe, clean water does not just depend on the availability of pipes and taps. And that pipes and taps by themselves do not guarantee access!

What we need is to remember where the water comes from — from wetlands, rivers and glaciers — in other words, from NATURE.

Today, we know that one in three of the world’s largest cities take their water from protected areas.

We also know that the benefits that forests provide each year to the world’s poor are greater than the total development aid!

This is why IUCN believes that, NATURE should underpin the entire post-2015 development framework given the importance acknowledged in the Rio+20 Outcome document to the crucial role of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for human development and well-being.

The idea is to harness the potential of natural infrastructure —healthy forests, rivers and coral reefs — to provide a steady flow of benefits, such as clean air and water, flood and drought protection, food security and climate regulation.

There are specific actions, already agreed by governments, which represent such **nature-based solutions**:

- **To restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands by 2020** and thereby contribute to the target of reducing global carbon emissions that come from deforestation and forest degradation;
- **To ensure that no known threatened species goes extinct by the year 2020.** Today we have roughly 20,000 threatened species on the IUCN Red List, which was used as an indicator for MDG7;

- **To achieve some form of protection for at least 17% of land and 10% of marine environments by 2020.** Our World Parks Congress next year will present an opportunity to advance this important work.
- **To recover global fish stocks by launching, without delay, negotiations** on the implementing agreement under **UNCLOS**.

We believe that these actions are specific, measurable, time-bound and, above all, achievable and would contribute to taking forward the unfinished business of the MDGs.

IUCN looks forward to working with all stakeholders in making this happen, including as a part of the discussions about the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.