

# IUCN World Parks Congress 2014 Bulletin

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## IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS SYDNEY 2014

### IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS 2014 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2014

Participants convened in plenary throughout the day. In the morning, speeches were delivered by high-level representatives from Australia, the Pacific Island States, and US, as well as leaders from UN organizations, the private sector and the youth movement. In the afternoon, three panel discussions addressed issues on regional ways to “make space for nature”, achievements of the last decade and the challenges and opportunities of the next one, and adventures in the wild.

### MORNING SESSION PART ONE

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director-General, IUCN, and Ernesto Enkerlin, Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, welcomed participants and introduced the speakers.

Patrick Dodson, Australian Aboriginal leader and former Chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, emphasized the interconnectedness of humans with each other and nature. He observed that what we demand in “the quality of our livelihoods” on any part of this planet has a direct correlation to our survival as a species. Highlighting the work of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance, he said the challenge is “whether we want to be courageously truthful about our predicament” and face the need to modify our ways.

Julie Bishop, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, recalled the rehabilitation of the Sydney Olympic Park from its former functions as an armament factory, abattoir and eight rubbish dumps. She described her government’s efforts in managing threats to the Great Barrier Reef, concluding that, “while it’s a big job to be caretaker for a nation the size of our landmass – the sixth-largest country in the world – we are more than up for the challenge.”

In an “underwater interview” with a diver at the Great Barrier Reef, Marton-Lefèvre posed questions about the multiple uses that impact the Reef. He described an initiative to increase understanding of one of the world’s most threatened ecosystems by engaging the public through the Eye on the Reef Mobile Application.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director, presented on developments since the previous WPC in Durban and said the environment agenda has progressed from that of “being in the last line of defense, to being in the front line.” On the challenges of the decade, he highlighted the financial crisis that has sapped countries’ financial resources, and commended the African countries that substantially increased their PA coverage in spite of being among some of the poorest nations.

Participants gave a standing ovation to the crews of four Pacific voyaging canoes who journeyed 6,000 nautical miles across the Pacific to attend WPC 2014. Through a traditional “haka” performed by the crew and a video documenting the voyage, the crew delivered the “Mua” Message, highlighting the global value and significance of Pacific islands, and calling for global partnerships to advance the conservation and climate change agendas.



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Sally Jewell, US Secretary of the Interior



Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UNEP

Plenary then heard messages from leaders of Pacific Island States.

Tommy Remengesau Jr., President of Palau, stressed that climate change, pollution, and overharvesting of natural resources are undermining the legacy of Pacific people and weakening the resilience of a region crucial to global climate stability. He announced the upcoming establishment of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary encompassing the country's entire EEZ and the end to all commercial export of fish from Palau's waters.

Reminding participants that low-lying island states are at the frontline of climate change, Anote Tong, President of Kiribati, commended the announcement made the previous day by the US and China on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets. He explained that Kiribati's Phoenix Islands Protected Area, comprising 11% of the country's EEZ, will enforce a commercial fishing ban from January 2015.

Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, described conservation efforts in his country's EEZ, including: passing of legislation; a participatory governance model; the establishment of a whale sanctuary promoting safe passage to humpback whales; and training and research activities with Pacific countries and organizations.

Sally Jewell, Secretary, US Department of the Interior, emphasized that connectivity of species and ecosystems necessitates transboundary cooperation. Citing the US and China climate agreement, she noted that achieving sustainable development and reduced emissions require long-term commitments. She underlined that PAs preserve natural

heritage for future generations, urging transfer of knowledge and wisdom to the next generation, and said: "we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors but borrow it from our children."

In a video message on parks, people and climate, a representative of the Zuleta Community of Ecuador reported on communal efforts, or "mingas," to conserve natural landscapes.

## MORNING SESSION PART TWO

Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General, emphasized that PAs play an important role in strengthening stability of communities, and contribute to peace and socio-economic development. She underscored the need for PA management to achieve these goals, citing the case of the Virunga National Park in Democratic Republic of Congo, where destruction of ecosystems and the massacre of gorillas have led to increased insecurity and vulnerability of communities.

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, presented examples of the Fund's work in supporting countries to build capacity for management of PAs through payments for ecosystem services, fees and other instruments, based on the concept of "biodiversity pays," whereby the proceeds are invested in improving biodiversity conditions. She stressed that parks can help address climate change, and strengthen the resilience and adaptation capacity of thousands of communities around the world. Noting that PAs do not exist in isolation but rather are often located in mixed-use landscapes and seascapes, Ishii called for managing PAs "from the outside in" to ensure their survival, including through partnerships that share management costs with the private sector.



Caroline Harvey, slam poet



Tommy Remengesau Junior, President of the Republic of Palau

Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro, President, WWF, noted a trend for PAs to be downgraded or de-gazetted, stressing that, “we can’t afford to have ‘paper’ parks.” She urged governments to prioritize PAs in relation to their climate adaptation goals, and urged participants to call on the G-20 Summit to “responsibly address the risks of climate change.” She welcomed the previous day’s news of the US-China agreement to cut emissions, and called for investment in parks and PAs to inspire youth to connect with nature, and to create new parks where they are most needed, calling this “the ultimate gift to the generation to come.”

Jochen Zeitz, Zeitz Foundation and the “B Team” initiative, discussed shifting narratives to recognize natural capital and the economic costs of biodiversity loss. He underscored the need to harness the business sector in the PA movement, both for finding solutions and driving innovation. Highlighting the role of private PAs, he discussed the creation of 12 million acres of land and seascapes through the global Long-Run Initiative.

Chloe Dragon Smith, youth representative and Canadian First Nations, took participants on a virtual journey through her homeland, highlighting close connections between her people and the land. She underscored that fostering change requires engaging children at an early age, and shifting education systems to deliver authentic experiences and holistic learning.

## AFTERNOON SESSION PART ONE

Kathy MacKinnon, Deputy Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), and Taholo Kami, Regional Director, IUCN Oceania Regional Office, opened the



Chloe Dragon Smith, First Nations youth Indigenous representative

afternoon plenary session, followed by a recital by “slam poet” Caroline Harvey of a conservation-inspired poem titled “Praise the Butchered.”

IUCN WCPA Chair Ernesto Enkerlin Hoeflich presented a message from the President of Costa Rica Luis Guillermo Solís, stressing the need to develop governance systems that facilitate the direct participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation. He affirmed Costa Rica’s commitment to strengthening the sustainable use of its natural resources and developing a robust network of PAs.

A panel discussion, titled “Making Space for Nature: Regional Views,” was moderated by Sally Ranney, IUCN Patron of Nature.

Henri Djombo, Minister for Forestry, Environment and Sustainable Development, Republic of Congo, noted the lack of climate financing for PAs reporting that REDD+ excludes protected forest areas. He further noted that the prohibition of economic activities from PAs renders them even more vulnerable to encroachment and further deterioration. Djombo proposed zoning sections of PAs for sustainable utilization.

Fengxue Chen, Deputy Director, State Forestry Administration of China, explained specific measures taken by his country to promote nature conservation, including: laws and regulations; administrative agencies and law enforcement units at all governmental levels; several major national ecological conservation programs, with a total investment of up to US\$100 billion; the extension of PAs; participation in multilateral conventions; and promotion of the participation of civil society organizations in conservation. He highlighted China’s announcement to peak national carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)



Panel (L-R): David Stratton, TrailRider and advocate for PA access for people with disabilities; Sibusiso Vilane, Chief Scout, South Africa; Paul Rose (moderator), Vice-President, Royal Geographic Society; and Jessica Watson, Australian sailor

emissions by 2030 and increase the share of non-fossil fuel energy to 20% by 2030, adding that China will also aim to increase the proportion of PAs to 20% of the country's total land area.

Rob Stokes, New South Wales (NSW) Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, Australia, reported that PAs in NSW have doubled in the last 20 years. He highlighted several steps undertaken to address challenges of PA connectivity, including through: co-management of PAs with local communities; partnerships with the private sector, academic and research institutions in the reintroduction of locally extinct species; and involvement of landowners in fostering wildlife protection in areas adjacent to PAs and habitat range expansion.

Adele Catzim-Sanchez, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, Belize, highlighted Mesoamerican collaboration to advance conservation area protection in the region. She reported the development of regional PA policies and a regional strategic plan on the environment to be approved in December 2014. She highlighted key activities in PA management, such as enhancing connectivity through the establishment of networks and utilization of technology to complement site controls and traditional knowledge.

Heremoana Maamaatuaiahutapu, Minister of Environment, French Polynesia, shared his country's intention to expand MPA coverage to 30%. He emphasized his country's greatest challenge is balancing economic development needs with cultural and natural preservation goals.

Soichiro Seki, Director-General in the Ministry of Internal Vice-Minister for Global Environment, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, described the organization of the Asia Parks Congress in November 2013 in Sendai, Japan, and highlighted the launch of the Asia PA Partnership on 18 November 2014 at WPC in Sydney. He noted the significant role that PAs have played in rehabilitation of areas affected by the 2011 earthquake off north-eastern Japan and anticipated contributing from this experience to the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in 2015.

Paula Caballero, Senior Director, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice, World Bank, urged participants to rebel against "the receding reality" of slow-onset degradation of the planet. Arguing that PAs should be seen as a means of



Henri Djombo, Minister of Environment, Republic of Congo

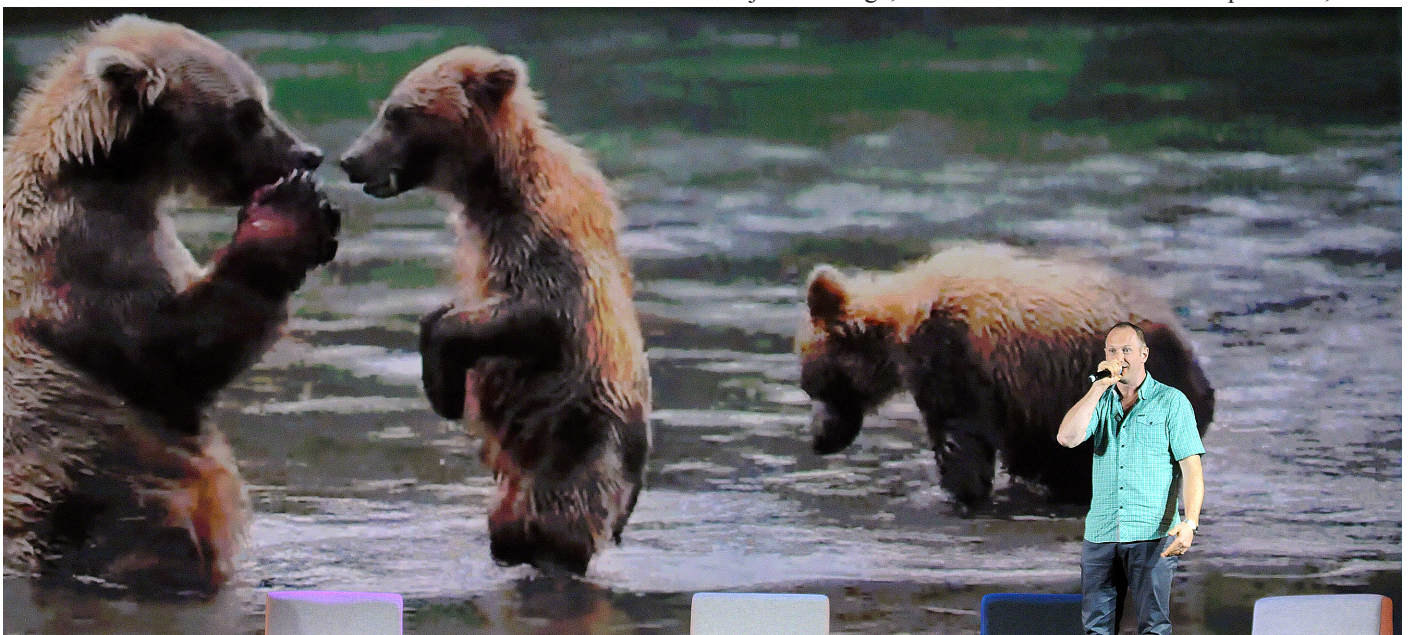
addressing the challenges of poverty, food security, climate-smart agriculture and restoration of degraded landscapes and seascapes, she gave examples of Bank projects in Tanzania, the Amazon, and Indonesia that successfully advanced sustainable development through PAs. She called on everyone to "live up to the Promise of Sydney," emphasizing that with regard to people and the planet, "there is no Plan B."

## AFTERNOON SESSION PART ONE

Inger Andersen, IUCN Director-General Designate, moderated a panel that reflected on achievements since Durban, and the challenges and opportunities of the next 10 years.

Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence and WPC Patron, noted that oceans were not sufficiently addressed at Durban, and the world is far from reaching the target of protecting 10% of marine areas. Stressing that "the next 10 years will be the most important of the next 10,000 years," she underscored the need to restore and protect natural systems not only within EEZs, but also on the high seas.

Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary, CBD, explained that though not on track, the environmental agenda is making progress. He highlighted interlinkages between biodiversity, development, and poverty alleviation agendas, and said achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the sustainable development agenda are interdependent processes. As a major challenge, he stressed the need to scale up actions,



Baba Brinkman, Canadian rap artist



CBD Executive Secretary Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias

moving from a “silos approach” to promoting partnerships with sectors, and urged new governance systems that include the participation of indigenous and local communities.

Responding to the moderator’s question on whether the Durban WPC was a turning point for the relationship between PAs and indigenous peoples and local communities, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, confirmed that Durban had been an important milestone in this sense, and said commitments relating to respecting the rights and roles of indigenous peoples have been achieved to a certain extent. She noted that exploitation of mineral resources found in indigenous territories is an important challenge and a source of conflict, stressing the importance of allowing communities to monitor changes in their landscapes to ensure realistic recommendations regarding their protection.

Márcio Favilla Lucca de Paula, Executive Director, Operational Programmes and Institutional Relations, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), noted the current and potential impacts of tourism on conservation areas, with over one billion people having traveled internationally since 2012. He highlighted both detrimental and positive impacts, and said if managed well, tourism can be a valuable instrument for sustainable development through economic investment in local communities.

Jane Goodall, the Jane Goodall Institute, underscored the importance of PAs as tools of endangered species conservation and reported on village forest reserves in Tanzania where local communities are equipped with mobile devices to report conservation trends.

Sally Barnes, Director, Parks Australia, and Trevor Sandwith, IUCN Director, Global Protected Areas Programme, jointly presented the process of delivering the Promise of Sydney. They highlighted elements of the Promise and invited participants to make contributions by: commenting on the draft vision online; submitting innovative solutions through a web platform; and registering commitments by filling the electronic form “our commitment to the Promise of Sydney.”

Richard Branson, Founder, Virgin Group, highlighted some of his experiences in exploring nature, saying the WPC is not just about PAs but is about caring for nature. He underscored the important role of the private sector, referring to the “B Team” initiative’s use of entrepreneurial skills to help solve critical environmental issues.

Paul Rose, Vice-President, Royal Geographical Society, chaired a panel discussion, titled “The adventure begins!” and introduced the invited speakers.



Sylvia Earle, Explorer-in-Residence, National Geographic and WPC Patron

Jessica Watson, Australian sailor, said that years of weekend camping and sailing with her family had provided the basis for her solo voyage. She noted that cooperation activities, such as writing letters and talking to sponsors, were an important part of the adventure.

David Stratton, TrailRider and advocate for PA access for people with disabilities, told his story of regaining access to wilderness after succumbing to multiple sclerosis. Stratton presented a video about his use of the TrailRider, a vehicle developed in Canada, which he described as “a one-wheel cross between a bike and a sedan chair,” and its subsequent adoption by Parks Victoria in Australia.

Sibusiso Vilane, Chief Scout, South Africa, and first black African to reach the summit of Everest, described his motivation as “an ordinary game ranger” in Swaziland to undertake two Everest climbs and treks to the North and South Poles. He stressed that “young people are the future of what conservation is about,” and that PAs provide vast opportunities.

Wrapping up the session, Canadian rap artist Baba Brinkman performed songs from his new album, “The Rap Guide to Wilderness.”

## WORLD LEADERS’ DIALOGUES

On Thursday evening, the first World Leaders’ Dialogue, on “The Future Is Not What It Used To Be - How Parks Can Help Build a More Resilient Future,” was moderated by Jeff Horowitz, Founder of Avoided Deforestation Partners. Providing his definition of resilience as “an opportunity to create a better world,” Horowitz explained that the need



Paula Caballero, Senior Director, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice, The World Bank Group



Zhang Xinsheng, President, IUCN



Margareta Wahlström, Secretary-General, UNISDR

for resilient supply chains led major global companies to join a pledge at the 2014 UN Climate Summit to end global deforestation by 2030.

IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng, defined resilience as preparing for uncertainty in a world that is becoming smaller, flatter, hotter and more crowded. Paula Caballero, Senior Director, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice, the World Bank Group, stressed the need to keep in mind the symbiotic relationship between climate change and human beings. She also emphasized the role of mayors and municipal leaders in helping to establish this connection.

Responding to a request to relate personal experiences in discovering the connection between environmental protection and climate change, Tommy Remengesau Jr., President of Palau, explained how coral bleaching in his country, and the realization that nature can be resilient if allowed to rejuvenate, led to the designation of Palau's coral reefs as PAs.

In discussing how environmental change has forced societal change, Remengesau said his country's way of life is under threat, and noted that, due to sea-level rise, some islands are purchasing land from New Zealand to relocate their people. Margareta Wahlström, Secretary-General, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), expressed concern over the impact of increasing rates of urbanization globally for PAs,

"if nature remains an exotic product." Caballero suggested a "silver lining" exists in stories of resilience as a result of interconnectedness between nature and humans, and called for the "Promise of Sydney" to include messages on how nature has helped safeguard human beings.

On the role of youth in building resilience, Sally Jewell, US Secretary of Interior, shared examples of young urban youth rebuilding landscapes in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, and young "citizen horticulturalists" restoring natural habitats by reintroducing sagebrush plants after wildfires in Idaho, US.

Reflecting on their views on the recent US-China announcement to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, Jewell and Zhang expressed pride in both countries' spirit of collaboration and affirmed the targets would be achievable. Jewell described the agreement as a "huge step forward," and Zhang said it would pave the way for upcoming UN climate change conferences in Lima and Paris.

Responding to a question received via Twitter on empowering women to enhance resilience, Wahlström explained that many women's groups she had encountered had expressed the desire to be seen as community actors, and she called for "making it our job to make the work done by women visible."



Panel (L-R): Sally Jewell, Secretary of Interior, US; Zhang Xinsheng, President, IUCN; Paula Caballero, Senior Director, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice, The World Bank Group; Margareta Wahlström, Secretary-General, UNISDR; Tommy Remengesau Junior, President of Palau; and Jeff Horowitz, Founder, Avoided Deforestation Partners

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