



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SECOND  
IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS  
THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2000**

Congress participants met in parallel thematic sessions throughout the day addressing: ecosystem management in mountains, watersheds and river basins; environmental health of island, coastal and marine ecosystems; environment and security - a new strategic role for IUCN; forest ecosystems, biodiversity and environmental security; ecospace and a global culture for sustainability; and strategies for averting the world water crisis. In the evening, delegates convened in an informal members' session to review the programme for 2001-2004 and the budget for 1996-2000.

**LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE: ECOSYSTEM  
MANAGEMENT IN MOUNTAINS, WATERSHEDS AND RIVER  
BASINS**

David Sheppard, Head of IUCN Programme on Protected Areas, opened the session, reviewing the day's objectives regarding ecosystem management and bioregional planning: exchanging experience, tools and guidelines; and building new alliances. The keynote address focused on defining ecosystem management with particular attention to issues of scale and cross-sectoral cooperation. The bioregional approach, showcased during the sessions, encompasses core areas, buffer zones and corridors as fundamental components.

**Mountain ecosystems – opportunities and challenges:** Panelists presented cases from the Andes, Himalayas and the Alps. Speakers highlighted the need to link upland mountain conservation with lowland water supply, noting that it is not practical to isolate highland conservation from lowland needs.

**River basins - flow of life or shared problems?:** Panelists presented cases from the Okavango Delta, the Baltic countries and the Amazon region. Corridor networks emerged as a key conservation management approach.

**Transboundary resource management and conservation — a tool for regional cooperation, confidence building and peace keeping efforts:** The session consisted of presentations from meso-America, Southern Africa, Australia and the Arctic. Despite the geographical diversity, key elements identified for transboundary, or trans-frontier, projects included: international cooperation; a regional landscape focus, linking smaller projects; long-term commitment; institutional complexity and stability; diverse approaches; and partnerships. These elements also emerged as critical to the general approach of ecosystem, or landscape level, management.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF ISLAND, COASTAL AND  
MARINE ECOSYSTEMS**

**The IUCN Strategic Plan:** This session was facilitated by Lloyd Gardner, World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Jamaica. A speaker presented the key themes of the Plan, including habitat conservation, protection from land-based activities, sustainable fisheries and effective governance. Another speaker highlighted IUCN's focus on coral reefs and noted over 50 "dead zones" throughout the world, due to land-based pollution sources.

**The UNEP Global Programme of Action:** A speaker suggested greater cooperation with IUCN to, *inter alia*, promote an ecosystem approach and develop indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of action. Another suggested ways to mobilize private sector funding and highlighted the link between marine conservation, poverty alleviation and food security and human health. In a discussion, participants addressed implementation, including sewage, waste management and actions to curb persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in Russia.

**Networking for the 21<sup>st</sup> century:** Panelists presented an Internet "vertical portal" project for IUCN that would allow users to search sorted and edited information on specific areas of marine conservation.

**The Red Sea Marine Peace Park:** Participants heard a presentation on this park created on the Aqaba coast to protect the local marine environment, provide scientific baseline data and develop a monitoring regime. They further discussed, *inter alia*, threats faced by the Gulf of Aqaba, integrated management systems, the need for education and public awareness and the socioeconomic effects of marine degradation.

**Protecting essential habitats:** A panelist overviewed a Latin American-Caribbean habitat protection initiative, which delineates bio-geographic units and prioritizes action based on levels of threat.

Another addressed, *inter alia*: threats faced by marine habitats; emerging issues for marine protected areas (MPAs); building systems for MPAs to curtail the challenges faced by isolated or fragmented areas such as islands; integrated coastal management; community involvement in MPAs; effectively managing MPAs; and fisheries management.

**Promoting sustainable fisheries:** Participants heard a presentation on an ecosystem approach to managing the Australian prawn fishery. Panelists identified initiatives to curb the negative effects of poor management, overfishing, and extensive by-catch.

**ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY: A NEW STRATEGIC ROLE  
FOR IUCN**

**Can the human and economic costs of war and disaster be reduced through greater investment in environmental conservation and resource management?:** This session, chaired by Mark Halle, Coordinator of the IUCN Task Force on Environment and Security, examined the linkages between conservation, conflict and vulnerability to disaster. Panelists presented: an overview of the academic debate; impacts of Indonesian deforestation; sources and impacts of conflict in Rwanda; roots of insecurity in Northwestern Pakistan; Hurricane Mitch and disaster risk mitigation in Central America; NGOs' roles; and legal tools for conservation in times of conflict.

**How is environmental security relevant to IUCN's work programme?:** Jeff McNeely, Senior Scientist for IUCN, stressed the need for conservation programme design to incorporate planning for contingencies. Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, Chair of the IUCN Task Force on Environment and Security, emphasized the importance of international mechanisms for holding decision makers accountable for human rights violations and environmental destruction during war. A participant called on IUCN to establish an environment and security project fund.