



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: 2016 World Conservation Congress of the International Union for
Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Hawaii, United States, 1-10 September
2016)
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Presidency on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 17 October 2016.

**2016 World Conservation Congress
of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
(Hawaii, United States, 1-10 September 2016)**

- Information from the Presidency -

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress 2016 was hosted by the US Government in Honolulu, Hawaii, from 1 to 10 September. The theme of the Congress, 'Planet at the Crossroads' was the challenge of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - an ambitious agenda to improve human living conditions for all without depleting the planet's natural assets beyond its capacity to recover during the next 15 years - and complying with the Paris Agreement 2015.

The World Conservation Congress meets every four years and defines the general policy of IUCN; makes recommendations to governments and to national and international organisations on matters related to IUCN's objectives; considers and approves the IUCN programme and provides a forum for debate on how best to conserve nature and ensure that natural resources are used equitably and sustainably.

This year, more than 10 000 participants from almost 200 countries, including Presidents, Ministers, scientists, business representatives and thousands of representatives from government and non-governmental organisations attended the Congress. The Forum lasted for four days and included High-level dialogue, workshops and knowledge cafés, posters and video presentations aimed at sharing information and discussing biodiversity conservation. Major topics included: nature-based solutions and climate change; species conservation; protected areas; oceans; climate change; economics; future generations and various other cross-cutting issues. The second part of the Congress, the Members' Assembly, started on 6 September and lasted for five days. It addressed the governance, policy and programmatic issues of the IUCN. IUCN members approved 106 resolutions and recommendations aimed at improving the governance, programmes and policies of the IUCN, and presented the Hawaii Commitments: globally transformative and innovative conservation initiatives to meet the critical challenges and opportunities of our time, including the imperative to scale up action on biodiversity and SDGs.

The Commitments highlight three critical issues for conservation: the relationship between biological and cultural diversity, and how their conservation and sustainability requires a combination of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge; the significance of the world's ocean for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods; and the threats to biodiversity from habitat loss, climate change, invasive alien species, unsustainable exploitation and pollution. The Commitments highlight two opportunities to achieve the necessary transformation: cultivating a culture of conservation by linking spirituality, religion, culture and conservation and by engaging and empowering youth; and by addressing the challenges of the Planet at the Crossroads (engaging with the world's faith and spiritual communities; enabling young people to access nature; strengthening governance systems that manage food production systems, maintaining local systems of production and crop genetic diversity; preserving and expanding marine protected areas, linking diverse methods and tools to solve the challenges we face in relation to the oceans, reducing plastic waste and addressing ocean acidification and warming; addressing the needs of local people while improving protection of wildlife through laws and improved enforcement, behavioural change with a view to reducing demand for illegal wildlife products and enhancing cooperation at all levels; strengthening nature-based solutions to climate change and providing solutions that reduce emissions; engaging with governments, civil society, and the private sector through partnership-based approaches).

The Congress was concluded by reading the Commitments in the four languages of the Congress. The Commitments capture the spirit of the formal and informal deliberations of the Congress from the high-level dialogues during the Forum and issues of strategic importance arising from the Members' Assembly. They convey collective commitments to conservation action with the sense of urgency expressed by the Congress theme 'Planet at the Crossroads'.