

2016 IUCN Congress Participant Survey Report

A report based on the participant survey for the IUCN World Conservation Congress
in Hawai'i, USA, 2016

18 January 2017

For questions or additional information, please contact the IUCN Planning, Monitoring and
Evaluation Unit (evaluation@iucn.org)

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Incorporating lessons learned from the past Congresses generated significant changes and improvements to logistics, greening, communications and the structure of the Members' Assembly. IUCN also successfully increased youth engagement and interactivity of the workshops. The success of the event was also due, in no small part, to the venue and Hawaiian Aloha Spirit.

Criticisms and areas for improvement highlighted the absence of clear and tangible results, including a lack of clarity about the purpose of Hawai'i commitments. Unfortunately, this is not new, and still an essential strategic consideration for IUCN to address in the future. The post event surveys and analysis of successes and challenges identified lessons for adjustment and several major areas that could improve the focus of the event, in particular the need to simplify and focus the Forum and the need to improve the design and running of contact groups (discussion groups for Motions) at the Members Assembly.

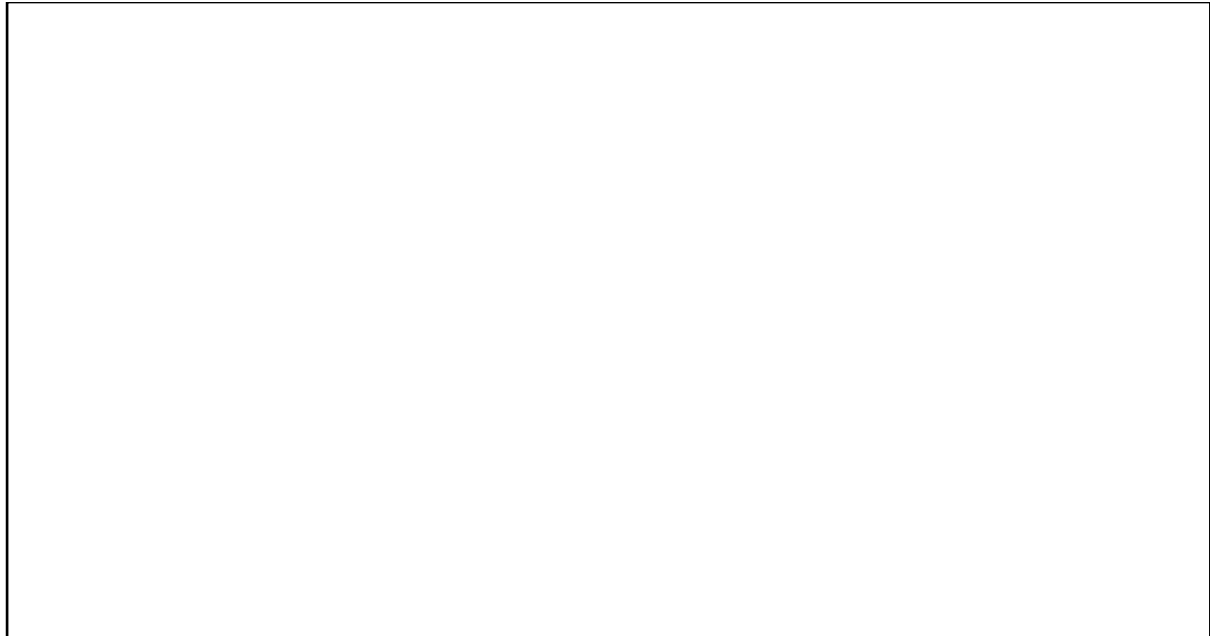
1.1 A note about the data

This report is based on several data sources: a post event satisfaction survey sent by email to 6672 participants, out of a total registration of 8633¹, a feedback form sent to all IUCN Secretariat staff that attended (356 staff), and debriefing sessions held by the staff in the Congress Unit. Session surveys were a new feedback mechanism introduced via the app, but due to the low response rate the data is primarily being used to inform the design of a better way to assess specific sessions and participant learning in future. The participant survey was filled in by 1373 respondents, of which approximately half attended both the Forum and Members Assembly. The resulting findings are presented here in aggregate as the responses were fairly homogenous across different demographic categories (age, gender, professional affiliation, etc.).

¹ The survey was sent to all registered media, IUCN staff and participants. It was not sent to volunteers, support staff, security, entourage, booth personnel, or participants for whom no individual email was received (e.g. participants registered through group registrations).

2 Overall satisfaction

Participants regard the IUCN Congress very highly in terms of its contribution not only to setting the global agenda but also to strengthening the unique association of Member organisations, Commissions and Secretariat staff that make up the Union, and that strive to work in a “One Programme Approach”.

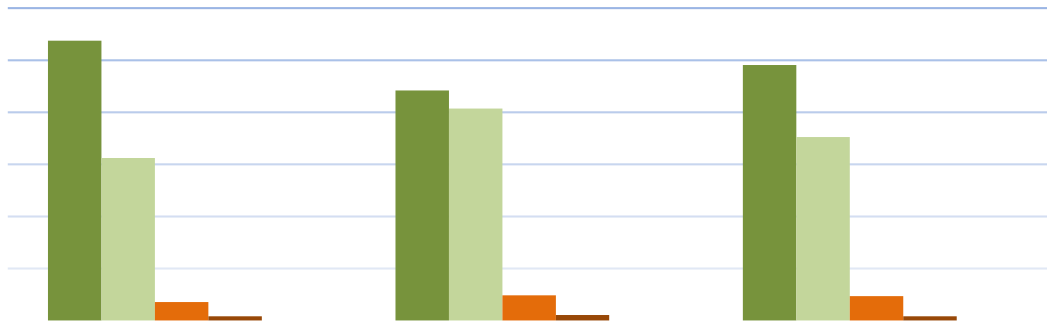


The specific survey question was: “The 2016 IUCN Congress:

*provided opportunities to build consensus on conservation issues.

**provided opportunities to develop or strengthen programme initiatives that involve different parts of IUCN (e.g.: Members, Commissions, Secretariat).”

Participants also highly value the Congress for what it helps them achieve personally and professionally: in particular they report that they gain relevant knowledge, with 77% of the participants (n=387) who rated sessions in the app saying that they were likely or very likely to use the information from the session in the next two months. Based on the participant survey, 87% of participants (n=1134, chart not shown) agreed that they would be able to use or share the new information they gained from the Forum within two months.



*The question text was "The 2016 IUCN Congress:
 allowed you to gain knowledge relevant to your work
 allowed you to reach other personal/organisational objectives
 allowed you to establish new partnerships or to strengthen existing partnerships"

2.1 Value for money

The Congress is clearly seen as good value for money by the individuals who attend: 80% believe it was a worthwhile investment of their personal time, and 77% believe it was a worthwhile use of their organisation's time and resources. Suggestions for improvement received in the open ended questions of the survey were used to inform the lessons learned and recommendations for improving future Congresses.

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Pavilions may be more desirable to forum attendees. In light of the mixed reviews (including lack of opinion indicating a possible lack of awareness), IUCN will consider simplifying the Forum by reducing the types of different events. The final and clear message is the relatively higher disagreement with the value of e posters. This is an area that

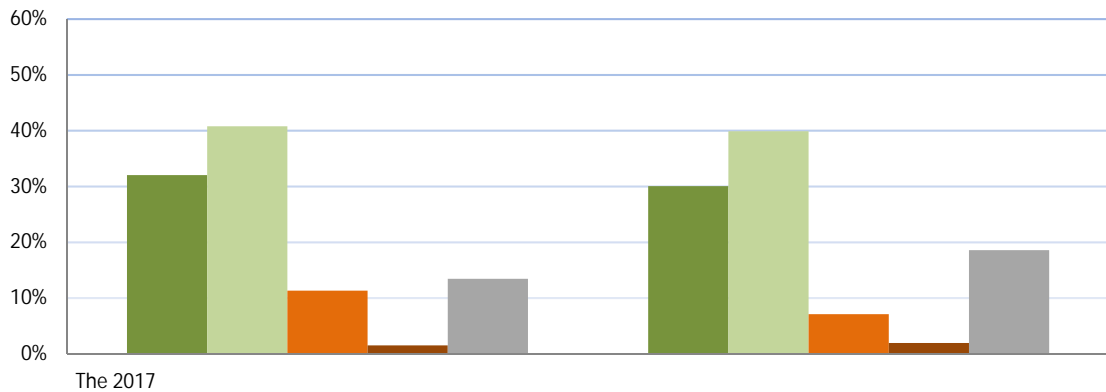
4 The Members' Assembly

The Members' Assembly ran immediately after the Forum,

Groups for motions should be revised for the next Congress. Participants also requested a more engaging way to present the candidates for election.

4.2 Debating and adopting the IUCN Programme

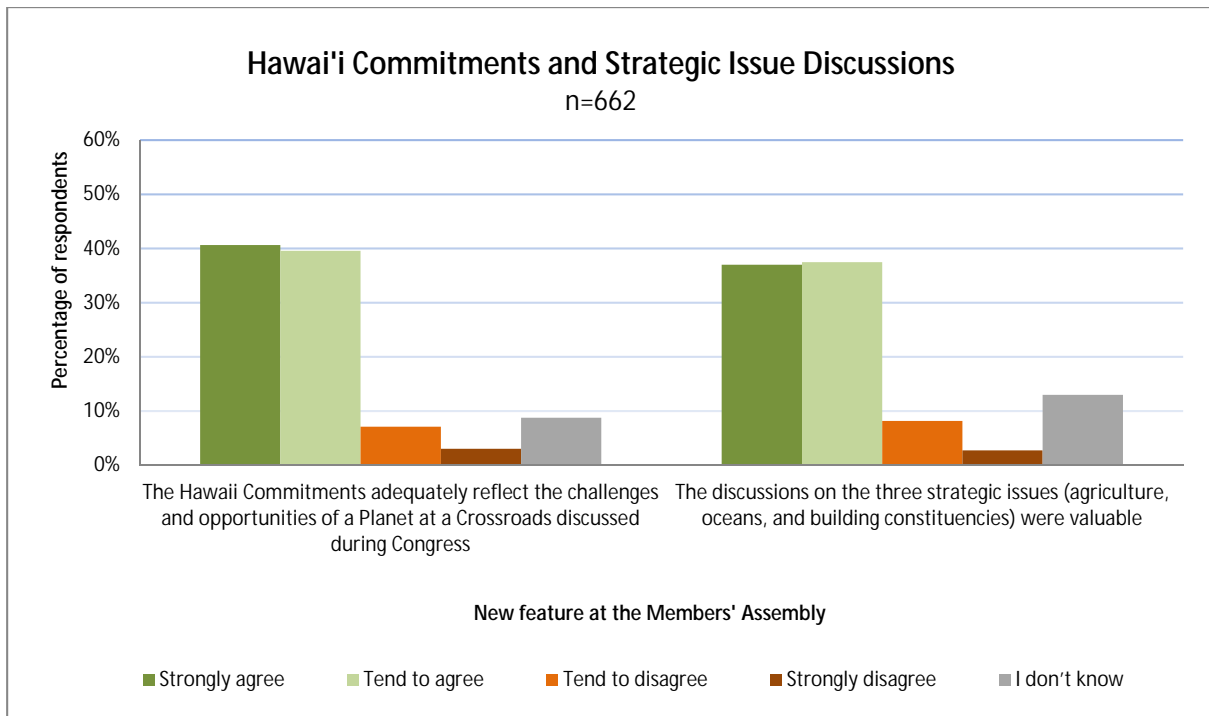
Although 73% of participants believe the 2017-2020 Intersessional Programme was adequately debated before being adopted by the Membership, a number of areas for improvement of the process were raised. To avoid last minute amendments to the Programme and ensure all Members have the exact final text they will vote on, a pre-Congress amendments deadline should be set. This would enable deeper on-site discussion about how to implement it, and open the possibility to focus on Members' commitment to the Programme through the pledge process. The process of making pledges to demonstrate commitment to specific



4.3 New features: Hawai'i Commitments and Strategic Topic Discussions

The Hawai'i Commitments were supposed to reflect the challenges and opportunities discussed during Congress and of the participants who attended the Assembly (mostly Members), 81% felt that they achieved this, but 19% disagreed or did not know. Whilst not a bad result, coming from the Membership who can be expected to be among the most informed participants, we expect that participants of only the Forum would be even less likely to be aware or supportive of the Hawai'i Commitments. This signals room for improvement on the design and communication of both the process and outcome for any similar endeavour at the next Congress.

The introduction of discussions around strategic issues in the Members' Assembly agenda received mixed feedback, with the main recommendation being the need to make them more participatory and more clearly linked to the programme.



5 Conclusions

The 2016 IUCN Congress in Hawai'i was one of the largest, most complex, best attended and most favourably reviewed. IUCN should be proud of this achievement and encouraged by the quality of input and outputs. However, there is always room for improvement, especially in areas of the programme where innovative ideas were tested. The suggestions made throughout this report, along with many more detailed lessons learned and reviewed by IUCN's leadership will be carefully considered for the preparation of the 2020 World Conservation Congress.