



# Values of protected areas

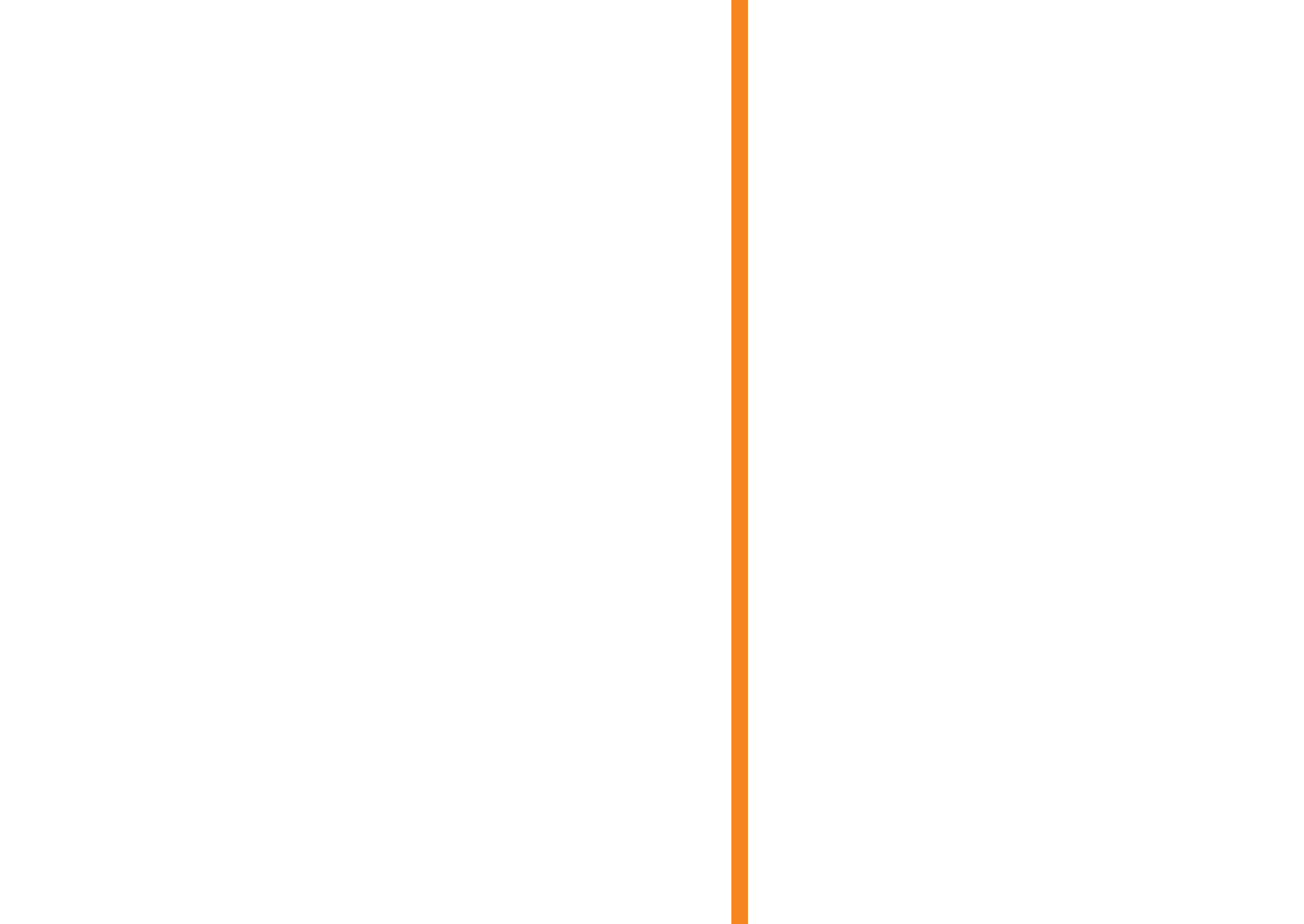
Protected areas are a critical tool for conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services. They act as refuges for species and ecological processes that cannot survive in intensely managed landscapes and seascapes. Well-connected protected area networks allow space for natural evolution and maintain functioning ecosystems that can serve as guideposts for ecological restoration.

We have an ethical obligation to prevent species loss due to our own actions, but we also derive many important benefits from protected areas. People – nearby and far away – benefit from the genetic potential of wild species for crop breeding, pharmaceuticals and other materials; the environmental services of natural ecosystems provide clean water, maintain fish stocks, stabilize soil

and help mitigate natural disasters; and national parks and wilderness areas offer recreational opportunities and sustain the economies and knowledge systems of many indigenous peoples and traditional societies. The world's protected area system provides an extensive and globally distributed resource for mitigating climate change through carbon storage, and resilient ecosystems can help us adapt to the impacts of rapid environmental change. Many of the world's most important sacred sites are inside protected areas, which also play a major cultural, historical and aesthetic role within societies.

Well-designed and managed protected areas can create wealth and thus help to address issues of poverty and social inequality. Transboundary protected areas promote coordinated conservation practice, international harmony and even peace. Protected areas are not an optional extra; they are essential components of a stable, sustainable future. Apart from benefitting millions of people, protected areas offer ways in which governments, the private sector, local communities and indigenous peoples can work together to secure human well-being.





# IUCN's commitments after 2010

IUCN is committed to supporting, reviewing and improving the Programme. At the CBD's request, IUCN held a major workshop on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, in 2009\* to plan next steps and feed into the preparations for the 2010 SBSTTA14 meeting. The SBSTTA14's recommendations made requests of IUCN, which we have moved to address:

- **Regional Action Plans** : working with CBD focal points and other stakeholders to develop regional action plans based on National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans for protected areas. **IUCN's commitment:** continue to participate with partners in plans such as the West African Marine and Coastal Conservation Challenge, the Pan-Amazonian Vision, Global Island Partnership in the Coral Triangle, Micronesia and Caribbean Challenges, and the Caribbean Initiative.

- **Regional Capacity Building** : collaboration with the CBD Secretariat on capacity building workshops, particularly on PoWPA Element 2; on-line material; and an accreditation system for protected area courses. **IUCN's commitment:** develop a full protected area training syllabus and associated accreditation system by the Rio +20 meeting in 2012.

- **Cost-benefit** : working with IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy on methodologies for fair assessment of costs and benefits of protected areas and applying these to assist

PoWPA. **IUCN's commitment:** develop an agreed cost-benefit methodology by 2013.

- **Traditional Conservation Areas** : working with partners such as UNEP-WCMC and the Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas Consortium helping governments, the private sector and communities to recognise the value of and incorporate sacred natural sites and co-managed, private and community-managed protected areas into national protected area systems. **IUCN's commitment:** produce guidelines on application of protected area categories in: (1) Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas; and (2) private sector reserves by end of 2012.

- **Restoration** : working with Parks Canada and the Society for Ecological Restoration to provide technical guidance on restoration within protected areas. **IUCN's commitment:** publish restoration guidelines in 2012.

- **Management** : working with IUCN's Species Survival Commission and partners in a major study on the role of



protected areas in biodiversity conservation. **IUCN's commitment:** report on the role of category V protected areas in biodiversity conservation by 2011 and complete a full study of biodiversity and protected areas, with lessons learned and advice, by 2013.

- **Connectivity** : working with UNEP-WCMC on mechanisms to delineate connectivity conservation areas on datasets and maps; undertaking capacity building; facilitating a voluntary international network of large

connectivity conservation areas; and working on projects like the Altai-Sayan Connectivity Conservation Corridor, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and the Mesoamerican Reef System. **IUCN's commitment:** establish critical new connectivity conservation areas by 2014 and put in place systems for management and data recording.

- **Management** : continued capacity building and technical guidance on data analysis, along with technical input into

system level assessments in e.g. Thailand, East and West Africa, and Colombia. **IUCN's commitment:** develop, test and refine social indicators and indicators relating to climate change impacts and responses in protected area management; and develop and implement assessments in marine protected areas (MPAs).

- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation** : working with UNDP, the German government and other partners to produce case studies on using protected areas to

mitigate and adapt to climate change; developing tools to identify climate change benefits from protected areas; and guidance for protected area managers in addressing climate change, and for governments in incorporating protected areas into national climate change strategies and action plans. **IUCN's commitment:** publish management guidelines and case studies by end of 2012.

\* With support from the CBD, the Korea National Parks Service, governments of Finland, the Netherlands and Canada, the UNEP – Spain Partnerships for Protected Areas and Conservation International

IUCN's commitment to protected areas

# Re-launching the IUCN Global Protected Area Programme



Trevor Sandwith has been appointed the head of IUCN's Global Protected Areas Programme, and will be based in Switzerland from November

2010. Trevor is currently deputy chair of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, comes from The Nature Conservancy and formerly worked with the South African National Biodiversity Institute and the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service. Trevor brings a wealth of experience to IUCN and will raise the profile of protected areas in the Union. His immediate priority is to increase IUCN's capacity and resources through its global secretariat, commissions and membership (both governmental and non-governmental) to co-ordinate, communicate and catalyze further action on:

- adopting and achieving a clear and measurable vision for addressing biodiversity loss through protected areas;
- building scientific and technical capacity to help national governments implement the Programme of Work;
- promoting the use of protected areas to increase resilience and decrease vulnerability to global climate change and related impacts;
- mobilizing social partners and development agencies to ensure that the benefits of protected area e.g. for livelihoods, health, water, tourism are achieved; and
- promoting strategic financing for protected area systems.

A key aspect of the next five years will be to prepare for the 6<sup>th</sup> IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014, which will initiate a new phase of action for protected areas to meet the CBD's 2050 Vision.

# Aspirations

It's not all good news. Targets for biodiversity conservation are falling, as are most social commitments of the Millennium Development Goals. Protected areas are under pressure: often squeezed by industry and governments; under-resourced; and facing a climate change crisis. The Programme of Work, with its

Putting these plans to work will only be possible with support and partnership of IUCN member governments and NGOs and we urgently invite potential partners to join us in this exciting and rewarding effort.