Report on the Riyadh Conservation Forum

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The opening speech of H. R. H. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Managing Director of National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD) was read by Dr. Abdulaziz H. Abuzinada. H. R. H. emphasized the cohesion of the region through religion, history, and similar cultural, ethical, and philosophical values. He mentioned that the people of the region have a religious responsibility to care for the earth.

David McDowell, Director General of IUCN, stressed the importance of regionalization and decentralization. He expressed the hope that the members from the region will use the opportunity provided by this meeting to decide the submissions they would like to table at the World Conservation Congress.

In his keynote address, Dr. Abuzinada, Secretary General of NCWCD, said that improving regional cooperation is a pressing need. He posed the question, why do we need to improve regional cooperation? From religious, scientific, pragmatic, and practical points of view, he then illustrated the need for cooperation. He identified the following objectives for the Riyadh Conservation Forum:

- To find ways in which to enhance existing programs in the region, and if necessary develop new programs;
- To ensure that relevant recommendations are formulated which are practical and can be carried out by the members in the region themselves.

IUCN Commissions

The Chairmen of three Commissions each delivered a paper:

- Professor Adrian Phillips, Chairman of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA), addressed the issue of planning and how to integrate planning for protected areas on a regional basis. The paper first examined the principles of planning, which were then discussed in light of practical experiences of integrating planning of protected areas.
- The paper by Dr. George Rabb, Chairman of the Species Survival Commission (SSC), stressed the importance of cooperation and the need to have an agenda on how to approach the numerous problems associated with biodiversity conservation. The way to identify priorities is through strategic planning.
- Dr. Hans Lundberg, Chairman of the new Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), told the meeting that the mission of this Commission is, “To contribute to the implementation of the IUCN mission by providing guidance on the management of natural and modified ecological systems.” The ecosystem approach provides a wider basis for management, in accordance with the nature of the problem at hand and to the scales at which the ecosystem processes are operating.

Proceedings

During the four days of deliberations (October 1-4, 1995), 55 papers were delivered. Full documentation of the Forum can be obtained from the IUCN Secretariat in Gland. Concern was expressed that the decisions taken during the meeting would not receive attention if the tasks were not allocated to institutions or specific people. A work plan for “keeping the momentum going” was drafted and accepted from recommendations flowing at the forum.

Keeping the Momentum

The Riyadh Conservation Forum made a critical step in developing the contribution of the World Conservation Congress in North Africa, West and Central Asia to maintain this momentum and to achieve substantive conservation achievements. Participants in the Forum agreed that the work of the Commission and the work leading up to the next Forum in the region can be seen as two phases. This will include the following: work to be pursued during the next triennial program, Development and Approval of the Program

1. Integration of the recommendations and conclusions of the Forum for the next triennial program, which will be approved by the IUCN Program Committee in November 1995.
   - Secretariat; Time Frame: October 1995.

2. Review (by post) of the draft triennial program approved by the Council, by all members and parties to the Forum. Responsibility: Members of the Forum; Time Frame: December 1996.

3. Incorporation of comments on the revised draft and review at the next Forum by RAC. Responsibility: Members and parties to the Forum; Time Frame: December 1996.


Keeping the Momentum Going

The Riyadh Conservation Forum has marked a critical step in developing the presence and contribution of the World Conservation Union in North Africa, West and Central Asia. To maintain this momentum and generate substantive conservation achievements, participants in the Forum agreed that a clear agenda of work needs to be pursued over the period leading up to the next Forum in 1997 or 1998. This will include the following principal steps to be pursued during the next 12 months:

Development and Approval of the Program

1. Integration of the recommendations and conclusions of the Forum into the draft triennial program, which will be discussed by the IUCN Program Committee and Council in November, 1995. Responsibility: Secretariat; Time Frame: October 15, 1995.

2. Review (by post) of the draft triennial program approved by the Council in November, by all members and participants in the Forum. Responsibility: Members and participants; Time Frame: December 1995 to February 1996.

3. Incorporation of comments received into revised draft and review and provision of this draft by RAC. Responsibility: Secretariat and RAC; Time Frame: March, 1996.

4. Preparation and approval of final draft of the triennial program. Responsibility: RAC with support of Secretariat (preparation), IUCN Council (approved); Time Frame: April, 1996.

5. Review (by post) of final draft of the triennial program. Responsibility: Members; Time Frame: May to September, 1996.


Integration of the Work of the Commissions

7. Establishment of regional steering committees or working groups for CNPPA, SSC, and CEM and management of these bodies to pursue the priorities agreed for their action by the Forum. Regional Vice Chairs of the commissions in the region will serve on RAC. Responsibility: Commission Chair and Vice Chair with Commission Members; Time Frame: 1996.


CNPPA: Development of the regional action plan and specific activities within it. This will be done in consultation with the other two Commissions. Responsibilities: CNPPA; Time Frame: Comments on draft II by the end of February, 1996.

CEM: Establishment of two task forces on integrated arid land management and coastal zone management, which will assess the status of existing knowledge and activities and define the precise contribution that IUCN networks in this field may provide to the region. Responsibilities: CEM; Time Frame: 1996.


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