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Presentation of the commission

IUCN Commission on Education and Communication

Commission Chair: Keith Wheeler

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About us

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (IUCN CEC) is a global network of more than 1,000 volunteers from 119 countries. CEC members contribute expertise on strategic communication, education, capacity development and knowledge management in support of the IUCN Programme and IUCN vision of a just world that values and conserves nature.



BACKGROUND

ORIGINS OF THE COMMISSION ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Since 1948, volunteer Commission members have sought to enhance IUCN conservation efforts by engaging people within and beyond the conservation community in the issues of the time. Education has been a fundamental part of IUCN from its inception, when a formal advisory body was set up to advise the IUCN Council on conservation awareness.

The Commission on Education and Communication has developed in distinct phases over its 64-year history, just as conservation efforts have evolved:

- In the 1950s and 1960s, CEC focused on wildlife and conservation in school and youth education, working with a small membership.
- In the 1970s and 1980s, CEC focused on developing and elaborating conceptual frameworks for the emerging field of environmental education.
- In the 1990s, CEC adopted more strategic approaches in communication and education to advance IUCN conservation strategies, Agenda 21, the Convention on Wetlands and Convention on Biological Diversity. CEC brought new thinking and methods to IUCN about how to manage events at the IUCN World Conservation Congress as learning and networking opportunities.
- By 2000, CEC was poised for greater impact. This decade has seen the Commission gain recognition as the major Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) knowledge network for the Secretariats of the international environmental conventions and national governments. CEC has also demonstrated leadership in the area of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and developed initiatives to increase access to knowledge and online learning for capacity building of conservation professionals.

Currently, CEC is preparing for the next IUCN quadrennial period, 2013-2016. The Commission will continue to support IUCN efforts to improve the way the organization and the experts who advance its vision communicate about nature. CEC also plans to increasingly reach

out to new groups beyond the immediate conservation community that are important for ensuring a future with resilient communities and vibrant natural environments.

VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

- **Vision:** A global community that loves and values nature.
- **Mission:** We enable the global community to communicate effectively and use knowledge to create positive conservation change.
- **Objectives:** CEC will contribute practical communication, education, capacity development and knowledge management expertise to the IUCN Programme 2013-2016. This will focus on three areas: valuing and conserving nature; effective and equitable governance of nature's use; and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges. The Commission will focus on achieving a number of specific objectives:
 - Lead IUCN's work on Aichi Target 1¹ of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, adopted at the tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 10);
 - Operationalise IUCN's capacity development to deliver the IUCN Programme;
 - Promote nature-based solutions to global challenges within and beyond the conservation community;
 - Develop a globally-active CEC network to support programme implementation.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

BIODIVERSITY COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

CEC has built up strong working relationships related to implementation of the international environmental conventions, particularly with the Secretariat of the CBD Secretariat and Parties to the Convention. CEC is recognized as the major CEPA knowledge network provider, able to draw on its membership with diverse experience and geographic scope. The Commission has worked in partnership on numerous CEPA for biodiversity activities:

- 1 CEC worked with the CBD Secretariat to develop the CEPA toolkit for National Focal Points and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) Coordinators, which was very well-received. Produced in English, French and Spanish, it has helped to guide national-level efforts among Parties to the Convention.
- 2 CEC supported the development of a guide on CEPA for the Ramsar Secretariat.
- 3 Since 2002, CEC members serving on a CBD advisory board have contributed to the Convention's CEPA Work Plan and shared advice and good practices.
- 4 CEC provided capacity building in stakeholder engagement and strategic communication for NBSAP

Coordinators through 12 regional workshops around the world in 2011.

- 5 As part of the lead up to the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, CEC supported the CBD Secretariat and Futerra, a sustainability communications company, to design the logo for the year, offering feedback on the design and ensuring that it was culturally sensitive and appropriate for communicating the concept of biodiversity to a global audience.
- 6 In October 2010, CEC launched a film titled 'Love. Not Loss.' at the CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan, that was developed in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, Futerra and Wildscreen. This short film drew inspiration from the Futerra publication 'Branding Biodiversity' and challenged the conservation community to find ways of talking about biodiversity and nature that people can relate to, cuts down the technical language that can hinder clear communication and, ultimately, focuses on a positive future and links these messages to action people can take. The film was produced in English, French, Spanish and Arabic and has been viewed more than 18,000 times through the IUCN YouTube channel since its launch.
- 7 Following COP 10 in Nagoya, CEC took on the role of 'champion' for Aichi Target 1, the first of 20 biodiversity targets adopted at the event. Aichi Target 1 states: "By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably". CEC has offered advice on how to approach implementation of this target, proposed indicators, and helped to coordinate IUCN's contribution to meeting this target.
- 8 CEC collaborated with a variety of key partners around strategies for raising awareness related to the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020.
- 9 CEC members reviewed the Global Biodiversity Outlook with the CBD Secretariat, and offered strategic advice and guidance on this and other publications.
- 10 In 2011, as part of the International Year of Forests, CEC prepared a special edition of the IUCN Forests Programme *arbor vitae* magazine on 'Communicating Forest Values'. This also formed the basis of a session on communicating about forests during the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York, USA.
- 11 CEC worked with UNESCO in support of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, participating in debates and contributing to resource materials.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

CEC members are keen to help build the capacity of people to be 'multipliers' and enablers of the conservation change sought in the IUCN Programme. IUCN has a 'One Programme' approach that encourages cooperation between the IUCN Members, Commissions and Secretariat. CEC is making an

¹ For a description of Aichi Target 1, see point 7 in the next section.



effort to better understand the skills sets and experience of individual CEC members in order to contribute more effectively to the end results of the collective union of IUCN. Such expertise includes strategic communication, knowledge management, change management, curriculum development, e-learning training development, facilitation, multi-stakeholder forum coordination and creative outreach approaches.

In order to maximize the opportunities for CEC members to develop as individuals and to apply their experience and skills sets to strengthen the work of IUCN, the Commission has embarked on a process of more tailored engagement of CEC members with specific programmatic initiatives, with some examples offered below.

Professional development: Several CEC members worked closely with the IUCN Climate Change Network Coordinator to produce a short course on climate change for IUCN staff around the world. The course objective is to build common understanding about the science and policy implications of climate change and how this relates to the work of IUCN. CEC members also provided feedback on a disaster risk reduction course being prepared by the IUCN Ecosystem Management Programme. CEC will continue to work with other programmatic topics to build common knowledge competencies throughout IUCN.

Information technology: CEC members have offered strategic reviews of new IUCN web platforms, offering advice on aspects such as the visual appeal and usability of these websites. CEC has played a lead role in introducing new technologies to IUCN and demonstrated the use of social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, wikis and blogs, which provide a way to connect CEC members and influence wider communities of people. The CEC newsletter, which is circulated every two months, presents a great diversity of examples of activities that CEC members are working on. It offers inspiration and enhances understanding about new approaches being used in every region for communication, education and capacity building in support of the IUCN vision.

Youth engagement: CEC has taken a proactive approach to reaching out to young professionals and organisations with an interest in children and youth. Over the years, many CEC members have been engaged in the development of environmental education curriculum. A young CEC member, Grace Mwaura, was appointed as an IUCN Councilor for 2009-2012 to bring a youth voice more directly into the decision-making platforms of IUCN. The Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (a group of CEC members) has been active in setting up a mentoring programme, linking a young professional with an experienced professional in the conservation field. The group has identified opportunities for young people to be engaged in IUCN initiatives and other youth-related events linked to the major events in the global environmental calendar.

In 2011, CEC coordinated the delivery of 1,000 hours of non-formal environmental education to Scouts from 28 countries on the topics of 'celebrating biodiversity' and 'environmental rights of the child' at the 22nd World Scout Jamboree, held in Sweden. IUCN is exploring ways of working with the World Organization of the Scout Movement and other organisations that directly involve youth in environmental initiatives.

Learning: CEC is providing advice and guidance on the development of the Conservation Campus, part of the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2012. The event features some 50 half-day and full-day capacity building sessions related to the IUCN Programme, and CEC members are contributing their expertise to ensure that the sessions are interactive learning experiences and, after the event, will help generate e-learning packages based on the sessions.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity calls for greater collaboration and involvement of the various parties who have an influence on biodiversity, with each of the Aichi Targets tackling diverse and important pieces of the biodiversity puzzle. CEC will be taking on a lead role for IUCN's work in support of this target, and this will require close collaboration with the CBD Secretariat and continuous promotion and sharing of good practices in biodiversity communication. In particular, CEC is well positioned to support IUCN capacity development efforts, working in close collaboration with the various IUCN constituencies of Members, Commissions and Secretariat.

The CEC network will also play an active role in identifying, capturing and communicating nature-based solutions to global challenges, an important aim of IUCN. CEC will build on past initiatives that move beyond the conservation community and into other sectors, such as environmental security institutions and those in the agricultural and food sectors. Keith Wheeler co-authored a United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) report: 'Food and Agriculture: The future of sustainability' which seeks consensus on sustainable paths for food and agriculture and will be a useful resource for IUCN as it branches out into matters of food security. CEC will also expand on existing relationships with groups providing wide public outreach, such as zoos and aquariums, protected areas entities and interpretive centres.

More specifically, the Commission will be directly involved in nearly 100 events at the upcoming World Conservation Congress. This will be an important opportunity not only for CEC but IUCN as a whole to share knowledge, experience and agree on the future direction of IUCN. CEC will be launching new biodiversity communication resources in follow up to the 'Love. Not Loss.' film.

For more than 60 years, communication and education has remained fundamentally important to achieving the mission

and vision of IUCN. An ongoing challenge is to ensure that we are able to communicate about biodiversity in a meaningful way and that this is integrated within all conservation initiatives and within the day-to-day lives of people in all parts of the world.

The membership base and the approaches employed by the Commission have grown and evolved over time. With the onset of many environmental challenges, new media and a growing population, the Commission must continue to grow and evolve to be as effective and relevant as possible. CEC's strength lies in its membership, and providing members with opportunities to engage meaningfully with IUCN and to share their experiences within a wider network will be an ongoing priority.

FACTS AND FIGURES

IUCN CEC membership welcomes more than 1,000 volunteer experts from 119 countries.

IUCN CEC receives its mandate from the IUCN World Conservation Congress. CEC members will elect a new Chair of the Commission at Congress in 2012, when Keith Wheeler completes his term. Also, CEC will put forward a new Steering Committee to the IUCN Council for approval, nominated by the Chair.

IUCN CEC is governed by a Steering Committee and supported by the IUCN Science and Knowledge Management Unit. Regional Vice-Chairs intensify focus and identify National Activators to stimulate action in support of IUCN at the country level.

IUCN CEC offers 12 Specialty Groups: Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Environmental Information, Environmental Security, Greening Campuses, Knowledge Management, Learning and Leadership, Organizational Development and Change Management, Sustainability Centres, Agro-security and Biofuels, Youth and Intergenerational Partnerships, and World Conservation Learning Network.