

# Annual Report

Asia Region

2006



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*Former President Bill Clinton launching MFF in Phuket (UNDP)*

## FOREWORD

It has been an active and successful year for IUCN in Asia. Working in close collaboration with the global Union, the UN Office of the Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery—former President Clinton—and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), IUCN was able to leverage funds for the important Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiative that addresses coastal management needs..

This will provide an opportunity for longer term work on coastal resources in several countries of the Indian Ocean region that goes beyond the short term focus of the tsunami relief. It will also build a collaborative platform for joint actions by national and local governments, private sector and civil society to manage coastal ecosystems as part of the

essential “infrastructure” needed for sustainable development.

Asia was also able to forge links with important partners. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Asian Development Bank was activated with IUCN being requested to undertake important work in the region. Equally important are the partnerships with other non-traditional partners of IUCN, such as CARE and the collaborative work implemented with international environmental NGOs.

In summary, the highlights of the year 2006 are:

- Launching MFF initiative
- Implementation of work with the Asian Development Bank and the establishment of a Technical Advisory Panel hosted by IUCN for the GMS Core Environment Programme
- Signing the Memorandum of Understanding with CARE USA for programmatic partnerships throughout the region
- Securing regional framework funding for strategic programme development and constituency support
- Development of a regional Business and Biodiversity Programme
- Establishment of Country Group clusters in South Asia (Pakistan-Nepal) and Southeast Asia (Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia)
- Piloting a Performance Assessment System for IUCN in Asia

# The World Conservation Union in Asia

Asia is the largest regional programme of the World Conservation Union worldwide. The Secretariat of the Union operates ten Country or Liaison Offices, two regional Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups based in Colombo and Bangkok, and the Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand. In the region, IUCN is implementing more than 100 projects with some 400 staff. IUCN has 154 members, government and non-government agencies, in 19 of the 23 countries from South to East Asia and National Committees in Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Japan and South Korea.

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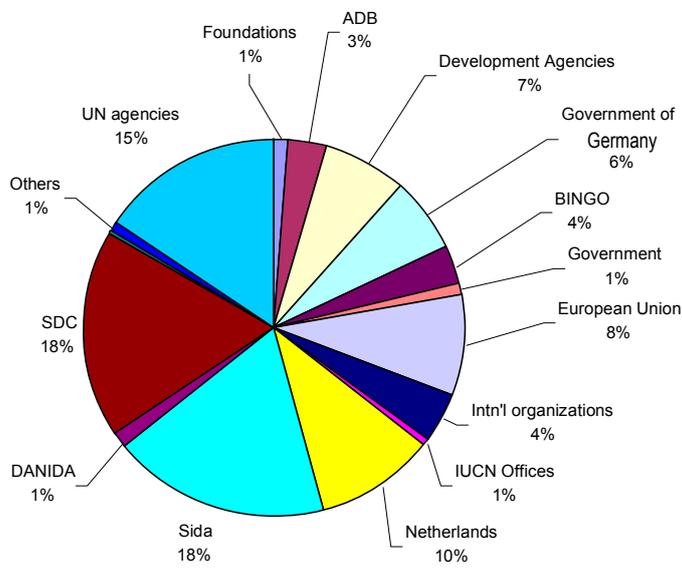
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**Fig. 1 – Donors and their contribution (%), 2006**



## OUR DONORS

During the year under review, the Asia Region continued to maintain a close relationship with its donors and partners. Of particular interest are the initiatives to seek framework funding for regional operations and region-wide initiatives. Some of the important partnerships are given below and in **Fig. 1** above.

The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) provided a significant contribution to launch the Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiative.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ) also provided funds for the inception of MFF. Discussions were held in regard to contributions from other major donors for this initiative.

Sida provided framework funding for Asia regional operations, which was a significant milestone, being the first of its kind in the history of the Asia Programme.

Sida also continued to provide framework funding to the Country Programmes in Viet Nam and Lao PDR and provided assistance for developing the India Programme.

Following the award of two projects in 2005 as a result of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with IUCN Asia, the Asian Development Bank engaged the Asia Regional Office in an important initiative to host a Technical Advisory Panel for the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Core Environment Programme.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) continued to support the Pakistan and Nepal Programmes, and supported livelihoods work in the Tangaor Haor in Bangladesh.

UN agencies remained major donors and provided valuable support in establishing the Mangroves for MFF.

The Royal Netherlands Government continued to support the Regional Water and Wetlands Programme (RWWP) and provided assistance to expand the work initiated in Southeast Asia to South Asia. It also pledged substantial assistance for an innovative global programme on landscapes and livelihoods, which will have several sites in Asia.

IUCN continued to work well with the new donors and partners with whom alliances were formed for post-tsunami work.

These include Wetlands International, the French Agency for Development (AFD) and the Spanish Autonomous Organization for National Parks (Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales, OAPN).

An MoU with CARE was signed and a review meeting was held to identify potential areas of cooperation..

## CONTEXT

In 2006, continuing post-tsunami work in Sri Lanka and Thailand has provided the World Conservation Union (IUCN) with a wealth of information on disaster preparedness, ecosystem management, coastal protection and rehabilitation.

Additionally, IUCN has been able to generate much needed information on livelihood restoration and on providing alternate means of livelihoods for coastal people affected by the disaster.

Work on coastal restoration in Thailand and Sri Lanka has provided IUCN with an opportunity for a longer term engagement to address the continuing challenges to coastal ecosystems. Mangroves for the Future (MFF), a regional initiative, was launched in the worst affected by the tsunami of 2004, namely India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Thailand and Sri Lanka. It is jointly managed by the World Conservation Union and the UN Development Programme together with governmental and non-governmental agencies in the region.

The programme was formally launched in December 2006 in Phuket, Thailand, by former President Clinton, during his final visit to the region in his capacity as the United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery.

In a broader context, the World Conservation Union has been able to strengthen its linkages with the private sector in its post-tsunami response, this especially in Sri Lanka where several private firms worked with IUCN in integrating environmental dimensions into the rehabilitation work.



*Retreating glaciers in Northern Areas of Pakistan © IUCN/Gulrez Ghauri*

Mutual benefits have led to ten larger initiatives encompassing broader areas of work with private companies and organizations such as Dilmah Teas and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

As a result of these developments, IUCN Sri Lanka, together with the Global Business and Biodiversity Programme, took the lead in developing the Business and Biodiversity Programme for Asia and launched several emerging engagements, focusing on large footprint industries such as Holcim, the Tata Group in India The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and other regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry also feature prominently in these engagements. IUCN Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Pakistan have also begun to explore opportunities with the private sector, notably with British Petroleum (BP) for the latter.

## EMERGING AREAS

In June 2006, the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* was

published by HM Treasury in the United Kingdom (UK), highlighting that climate change will have serious impact on growth and development. All countries will be affected. The most vulnerable – the poorest countries and populations – will suffer earliest and most, even though they have contributed least to the causes of climate change. The costs of extreme weather, including floods, droughts and storms, are already rising, including for rich countries.

Internet: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Independent\\_Reviews/independent\\_reviews\\_index.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Independent_Reviews/independent_reviews_index.cfm)

The scope for launching climate change programmes in the region is considerable and the commitments by the world's leading politicians are now encouraging. A new post-Kyoto political will seems to be emerging.

MFF initiative provides ample opportunity for IUCN's engagement in the larger area of coastal zone management and coastal livelihood improvements.



Mangroves replanting on the Andaman coast of Thailand with funding from the Government of Spain, OAPN © IUCN

MFF also provides scope for work on governance issues in a multi-stakeholder environment. More importantly, IUCN engagement in Indonesia and Maldives will pave the way for larger programmes in these countries, where IUCN's current presence is limited.

## Restoring ecosystems services to improve resiliency and prevent disasters

There is growing awareness of the need to dovetail disaster prevention into development strategies. This will provide a window of opportunity for restoring ecosystem services for local livelihoods and improving resiliency.

Preliminary work has been undertaken jointly by the Sri Lanka and the Bangladesh Programmes and has shown that work on natural disasters and the environment also entails examining local laws and regulations

A further and welcome opportunity related to these aspects is IUCN's new partnership with the humanitarian NGO sector as exemplified by the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with CARE USA in Asia.

In Lao PDR, a series of strategic planning exercises involving partners and assisting in legal aspects of environmental security, and stakeholders has brought out a number of new core areas of work, such as governance, protected areas and livelihoods, agrobiodiversity, and water, wetlands and watersheds. These areas will form the main business of IUCN Lao PDR in the immediate future.

The current work on Rapid Trade and Environment Assessment with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) provides opportunities for further work focusing on trade liberalisation and the environment

### **Advice to the GMS Core Environment Programme**

The Asia Regional Office provides the secretariat for the Technical Advisory

Panel of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Core Environment Programme. This current engagement is likely to be expanded to cover more areas of work, where the expertise of individual members of TAP will be harnessed to provide advice and support to both the ADB Environment Operations Centre.

IUCN Asia has strengthened its ties with TRAFFIC, which continues its fight against the illegal trade in endangered species and is now hosting TRAFFIC secretariats both in the Regional Office in Bangkok and with the Ecosystem & Livelihood Group 2 in Colombo. These closer working relationships provide opportunities for working together more effectively in this vital area, particularly in the trans-boundary context.

The newly-opened IUCN Regional Office in Oceania has provided the Asia Programme with further opportunities to extend cooperation in the Pacific.

## FEATURE: WATER WORK IN ASIA

Two long-term projects have been completed on 31 December 2006. Some highlights of these programmes are presented in the following section:

### **Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme**

The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme (MWBP) was a two and a half year long regional initiative covering four countries of the Lower Mekong, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam, which started in July 2004.

Notwithstanding the lack of funds, which has prevented the continuation of the programme into a second phase, a significant start had been made in addressing the issues of wetlands conservation and sustainable use in each of these different countries, whilst building a regional appreciation of the importance of wetlands.

It aimed to build the capacity to manage wetlands wisely at local community levels, provincially, nationally and ultimately regionally.

With offices in four demonstration sites, one per country (at Stung Treng, on the Mekong mainstream in northeast Cambodia, in Attapeu province in southern Lao PDR, the Songkhram River Basin in northeast Thailand and in the Plain of Reeds in the Mekong Delta of Viet Nam), the programme worked with government host agencies to strengthen wetland planning.



*Tales of Water, Lao PDR © Taco Anema*

MWBP also worked with local communities, bringing in local knowledge and experience, through a process known as the Tai Baan community research, initially developed in Thailand and now adapted for other countries.

MWBP carried out biodiversity surveys and wetland inventory assessments, monitoring each site to determine its special biodiversity features, as the first step in wetland management planning. A great deal of emphasis was put upon the linkage between livelihoods and conservation as in the Mekong it is not possible to address conservation issues without at the same time addressing issues of poverty and the vulnerability of people dependent upon wetlands.

Working with communities to find out needs, in a relatively short space of time, the project began to suggest alternative livelihood options which included improved fish products, eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture in the rice paddies and river bank gardens.

The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme built a regional appreciation of the importance of wetlands

By working at the national level, the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme also addressed wetland policies and supported the Ramsar convention.

This was the case in **Cambodia** where a process of sectoral policy reviews and recommendations for strengthening the wetlands components of fisheries, agriculture, land-use and forestry policies was set in motion.

In **Lao PDR**, the emphasis has been upon supporting the country's accession to the Ramsar Convention.

In **Viet Nam**, the main policy linkage has been through demonstration of the importance of hydrological processes for wetland protected areas, for example in Tram Chim National Park, where for about a decade the water levels in the park had been kept artificially high to minimize the risk of fire. This reduced the grasslands reduced and with them the habitat for Sarus crane.

The development of the joint Fire and Water Management Strategy for Tram Chim showed policy makers the importance of the correct water balance in such areas.

In **Thailand**, one of the biggest successes of the project has been in the development of one of the Species Conservation Action Plans for the Giant Mekong Catfish.

Through a process of community consultations and political support, the catfish fishers agreed to a moratorium of the catfish fishing in exchange for a buy-back of their nets with a small fund facilitated by the programme.

Although the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme came to an end in December 2006, much wetland work continues in each of the countries and all governments involved have expressed an interest in continuing.

In **Cambodia**, the Ministry of Environment is establishing a new Department of Wetlands and Coastal Resources. In Viet Nam and Thailand budgetary resources are being allocated to wetland management and to sourcing additional donor funds.

The initiative has been underpinned by a belief in the need for societies to find ways to highlight the importance of integrated water resources management which balance the needs of both ecosystems and livelihoods.

The first phase of WANI has come to an end; some of its results have been:

- **Environmental Flows:** The initiative considered environmental flows (*e-flows*) as a stepping stone to good water management in the Mekong Region and provided



*Tales of Water, Cambodia © Taco Anema*

### **The Water and Nature Initiative (WANI)**

The Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) was established by IUCN and partners in 2001 as a follow up to the ***Vision for Water and Nature In Asia***.

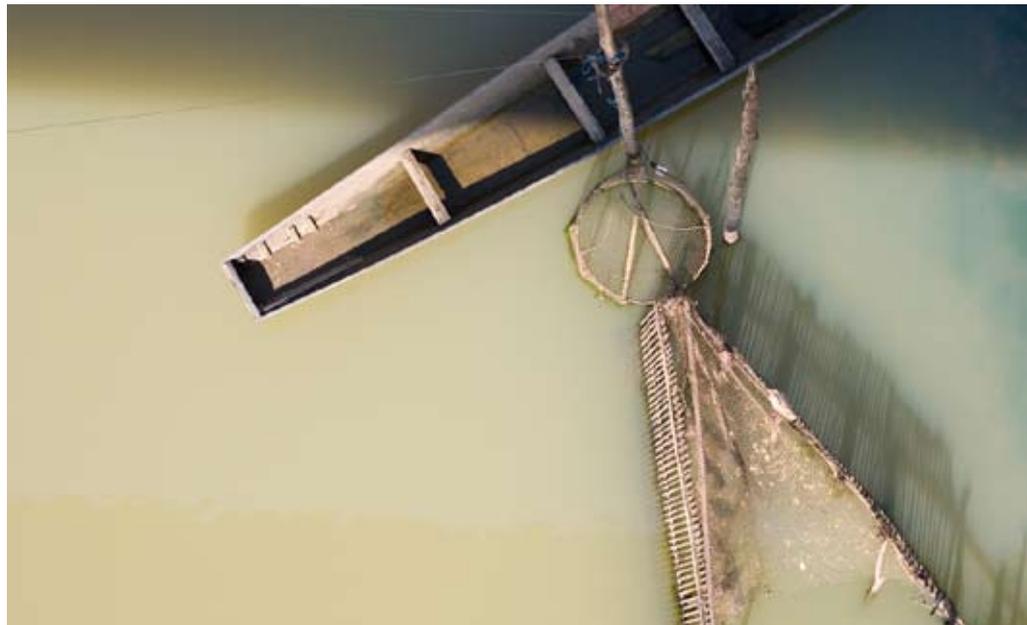
The initiative has focused on the Huong River Basin in Viet Nam, the Mekong Region and the Himalayan Region. The emphasis has been on local action, trans-boundary learning, sharing and demonstration within and between basins and regions.

demonstrations in the Huong Basin of Vietnam and the Songkhram Basin of Thailand.

A key outcome of these efforts in Viet Nam was raising the awareness and capacity of many different stakeholders, which includes local, provincial, and national authorities as well as and local NGOs such as Viet Nam Water Partnership. As a result, *e-flow* principles have been incorporated in the agenda of the Thua

Thien Hue Provincial People's Committee and its provincial line departments in planning and managing the Huong River Basin and the Tam Giang Cau Hai Lagoon. At the national level the Department of Water Resources Management of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) included the concept of *e-flows* in the National Water Resources Strategy.

- Decision-making on Water Resources:** In the Mekong Region, the Water and Nature Initiative and the Regional Environmental Law Programme examined how decisions were being reached on water resources development. This effort led to the publication of a multi-language book entitled *Mekong Region Water Resources Decision-making: National Policy and Legal Frameworks vis-à-vis World Commission on Dams Strategic Priorities*. The book includes insights on the approaches being taken in Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam.
- Health and Environment:** In Lao PDR, the Water and Nature Initiative has been instrumental in articulating the linkages between aquatic resources, food security and nutrition. This work has proved to be highly influential, allowing IUCN to participate in food security working groups in Lao PDR and to engage with a broad range of partners from the health and food security sectors.



*Tales of Water, Thailand © Taco Anema*

- Water for Development—The Tai Baan Approach:** At the local level, IUCN supported Thai NGOs in carrying out Tai Baan in Chiang Khong, in the northeast, just across the Mekong from Lao PDR. The Tai Baan research enabled villagers to document their own knowledge on key areas such as fisheries, fishing gear, religious and cultural aspects and river-bank gardening.

This research enabled the communities to contribute much more effectively in various stakeholder meetings and in making their views known.

The broadest application of the sustainable livelihoods approach was illustrated by work in Songkhram River Basin in Thailand. Here, consultation and participatory assessment helped to develop a strategy that supported Sub-district

Administration Organizations, working in partnership with provincial and district line agencies, local NGOs and village groups, to develop an approach to river basin management that took local livelihood needs as its starting point.

The work has proved to be catalytic in changing the way these issues are approached. The initiative allowed 240 villagers in Songkhram to undertake their own research on ecosystems and livelihood aspects, and Tai Baan network members are now very influential players in the river basin committees established by the state.

In terms of tangible results, the Tai Baan research has identified 28 sub-ecosystems, representing a more sophisticated classification system than had been previously applied in national



Tales of Water, Cambodia © IUCN

wetland classification. One hundred and twenty eight fish species were also identified, while their breeding, spawning and feeding habitats and migration pathways were documented along with the cultural beliefs associated with them. In addition the research tackled the issue of auctioning concession rights to important fishing grounds, which has been identified as an important factor in the overall decline of the Songkhram fisheries.

In Cambodia, Tai Baan research is referred to as Sala Phoum. Here it involved over 90 village researchers who recorded detailed statistical information, with photographs, of 130 fish species. The most significant outcome of the Tai Baan and Sala Phoum research has been its effect on the confidence of

the researchers themselves, and the subsequent impact they have been able to have on local government agencies.

Some people who were not able to read and write have since stood up at formal meetings to present the findings of the research to audiences of government staff, academics, NGO workers and journalists, and have afterwards confidently responded to questions from the floor. This empowerment in itself has led to important changes in local management and policy.

- **Water Dialogues:** Dialogues provide opportunities for state and non-state stakeholders in the Mekong Region to assess and contribute to national water resources development strategies and to

enable different perspectives in decision-making. In 2006, IUCN, together with the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the Mekong Programme on Water Environment and Resilience Governance Network (M-Power) convened the *Mekong Region Water Dialogues*.

These dialogues gave IUCN and its partners from the civil society equal voice as stakeholders in regional water governance dialogues and consultations. They also addressed some important barriers to participation and enabled civil society to look critically at the water and regional development strategies of powerful stakeholders.

- **The Impacts of Rapid Change in the Upper Mekong, Lao PDR:** The upper Mekong area of Lao PDR, from the Chinese border to Luang Prabang, is undergoing rapid

Dialogues provide opportunities for state and non-state stakeholders in the Mekong region to assess and contribute to national water resources development strategies



Asian mega-cities have a high demand of water and energy © Bangkok by Rune Kippervik

ecological, economic and social changes that are driven by many disparate forces such as the opening of river navigation to commercial vessels, the development of roads and the construction of hydropower dams in southwest China for example. Many communities have reported evidence of unusual water fluctuation patterns, raising concern over acceleration and intensification of river bank erosion.

The full impact of these various changes remain uncertain but can be expected to alter the hydrological flow and sediment load of the river, which could in turn affect the river's overall biological productivity, particularly fisheries and aquatic resources, which will have a profound impact on local economies.

IUCN, the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme and the Environment Research In-

stitute, Science Technology Environment Agency produced a report entitled *An Uncertain Future: Biodiversity and Livelihood along the Mekong River in Northern Lao PDR*. This is the first report that captures anecdotal information from local communities and governments on the potential impacts and change occurring in northern Lao PDR.

- **Himalayan Water and Nature Initiative:** This sub-programme commenced in 2006 following the development of situation analyses for India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The programme has a strong focus on environmental flows, integrated watershed management and payment for watershed services. Through dialogue and negotiation it will endeavour to replicate the successes in Southeast and South Asia.

Internet: [www.iucn.org/water/](http://www.iucn.org/water/)

## HIGHLIGHTS

### IUCN, a Facilitator and an Advocate

Since the last World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, IUCN convening role in issues of regional importance has been brought to focus. The demands on IUCN have grown, especially after the tsunami, where IUCN's role in convening dialogues and providing technical expertise in bringing environmental perspectives to development has been stretched.

Additionally, IUCN has facilitated meetings, dialogues, and fora to discuss and debate matters of topical interest, to provide advice and to seek opinions by:

1. Convening a stakeholder meeting on **Genetically Modified Organisms** (GMOs) in Bangladesh, which was a neutral platform for both government and other stakeholders.
2. Facilitating a **Dams and Development** dialogue in Nepal and advocating environmen-

tal rights issues in the Constitution; highlighting issues on mountain ecosystems in Pakistan.

3. Bringing together stakeholders in the Mekong Region on a **Water Resources Development** dialogue in Lao PDR.
4. Facilitating the nomination of **Lao PDR's first World Heritage Site**, the Hin Nam No – Phong Nha Ke Bang trans-boundary Natural World Heritage Site, whilst creating a platform for regular dialogue between officials of Lao PDR and Viet Nam in establishing a transboundary protected area.

areas. The work is central to reflecting changed approaches to protected area establishment, planning and management.

China has been active in protecting more than 15 percent of its land area since the 1950s and Viet Nam has established nearly five percent of its land area as protected areas.

The new laws commit these governments to building protected area systems which encompass the full range of important ecosystems. Equally, the legal reforms include provisions more flexible and sympathetic to the needs of local communities and the rural poor, who depend upon the natural resources within protected areas.

The Asia Regional Environmental Law Programme (RELPA) provided a regulatory framework, with an integrated and participatory approach to managing coastal and marine resources in the 24 coastal provinces in Thailand, This is the Kingdom's first draft law on coastal zone management.

In cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), RELPA provided technical support to develop and finalise biosafety regulations for **Maldives** and **Bhutan**.

RELPA also provided assistance to the Government of Viet Nam in drafting the chapter on biosafety for their new Biodiversity Law as well as assisting the Governments of Viet Nam and Nepal in drafting other legislations.



*Bringing environmental perspectives into development © courtesy of MWBP*

### **Assistance in Drafting and Amending Protected Area and Environmental Laws**

IUCN, working with its members and partners in **China** and **Viet Nam**, has helped the respective governments with major revisions to national laws and regulations governing protected

## Species Conservation and Diplomacy—the Case of Leo, the Snow Leopard from Naltar Valley

The elusive snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*), which inhabits remote areas throughout the vast Central Asian deserts, plateaux and long narrow mountain chains up to 5,000 m above sea level, has been listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as an Endangered Species and on the Pakistan Red List as Critically Endangered. Current global estimates of the population of the snow leopard range between 3,500 and 10,000 animals, with Pakistan being home to some 300 animals.

A shepherd in the Naltar Valley, Northern Areas of Pakistan, found a seven week old orphaned snow leopard cub that was subsequently named Leo. The cub was then nurtured for ten months under the care of Northern Areas Forest and Wildlife Department with the help of WWF Pakistan and IUCN .

The government agencies involved with the animal provided the highest level of support and attention necessary to ensure not only the survival of this cub, but also the development of a long-term rehabilitation programme for snow leopards and other founding animals needing assistance in the future.

Given that Leo had been completely dependent on humans virtually since birth, it was not practical to release him back into the wild. This necessitated looking at other possibilities to ensure his long-term survival but his transfer to a zoo in Pakistan and possible use in a captive breeding programme was not possible. Moreover,



*Leo, the cub found in Naltar Valley (below) and transferred to the Bronx Zoo © courtesy of WCS and Karl Schuler*



the media, Leo was formally handed over to them and was flown to New York.

since the snow leopard is listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as an endangered animal, Leo's case was no longer a just national issue.

IUCN Pakistan, noting the existence of state-of-the-art snow leopard facilities in the Bronx Zoo in the United States, worked relentlessly on a proposal to transfer Leo there and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Bronx Zoo, enthusiastically took on the venture. At a ceremony in August, attended by a large gathering of environmentalists, wildlife specialists, diplomats, academics and

## People's Access Rights to Natural Resources

The access and benefit sharing aspects of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are not well known and this lack of understanding has been a significant disadvantage to rural communities who depend on natural resources.

In **Viet Nam** IUCN conducted four awareness workshops involving 120 policy makers, scientists and local government officials to enhance their knowledge and understanding. Several public awareness programmes through television and radio were also conducted. A dedicated website has also been launched, and a special awareness programme has been launched for communities around the protected areas in Tuyen Quang and Thua Thien Hue provinces.

Similarly in Bangladesh, IUCN has been charged with the responsibility of reviewing the relevant legislation having a bearing on access and benefit sharing and will use the communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to collect data and identify issues on common property resource use.

## NEW PARTNERS

IUCN was delighted to welcome **South Korea** as a state member in September 2006. The Union, along with a number of its Commissions, notably the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), has had an ongoing involvement in environmental issues in East Asia including the Korean Peninsula.



*Dr Muhammad Musa, Regional Director of CARE for Asia © courtesy of UNDP/Daniel Tshin*

A month later IUCN moved to further strengthen cooperation with the Government of South Korea and other South Korean members across a range of common environmental concerns.

In October a major international workshop on protected areas, co-hosted by the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and South Korea on Jeju Island unanimously adopted the *Jeju Consensus* embodying a shared vision for the region's protected areas and a collective call for action on improved management.

The Government of South Korea has committed itself to work with IUCN to provide secretariat support to oversee a comprehensive programme of action for protected areas under the CBD. IUCN Asia Regional Office in Asia will then work with the South Korean Ministry of Environment on a range of initiatives.

Recent engagements led to IUCN signing a Memorandum of Understanding with **CARE USA**, a major international NGO working throughout Asia in disaster relief and community well-being.

The MoU forges a mutually beneficial partnership with CARE bringing its wealth of information and expertise on disaster relief and rehabilitation, with IUCN contributing environmental perspectives to rehabilitation work and its experience in policy influence and advocacy.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Recent regional natural disasters brought into focus the need for disaster preparedness, and the need to be able to provide environmental perspectives to post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery. This had not been a major area of IUCN's work previously; yet the circumstances have led

to IUCN programme strengthening its competencies, developing knowledge and disseminating information, while also forging partnerships with non-conventional partners.

In **Sri Lanka**, IUCN used the expertise of IUCN Bangladesh to disseminate disaster preparedness information amongst top-level administrators in Sri Lanka, particularly on community-based strategies.

In **Pakistan**, IUCN organised two training workshops to build capacity on Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for key organizations involved in assessments, planning and guiding relief operations and disaster mitigation. This initiative has provided an opportunity for all relevant stakeholders in the country to understand and mainstream environmental concerns in post-disaster relief and rehabilitation process.

Furthermore, IUCN is pursuing the development of a community of practice and a pool of local Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment experts to ensure that local assistance is available in the event of a natural disaster.

In **Thailand**, IUCN has been working with the Raks Thai Foundation and a number of other organizations on convening a Thai National Conference on disaster risk management.

## LINKING BIODIVERSITY WITH LIVELIHOODS

In **Bangladesh**, over-exploitation of natural resources and poverty remain major issues and there is a constant need to re-direct poor people into other avenues of income generation.



*In Sri Lanka, the Green Coast project of Wetlands International supported communities with green rehabilitation activities © IUCN Sri Lanka*

IUCN Bangladesh in partnership with CARE, completed a programme to educate rural poor in the Cox's Bazaar area on the virtues of conservation and sustainable use, and has facilitated an agreement between the communities and the forest authorities in regulated harvesting of forest resources.

### Splendour of the Wilpattu National Park in Sri Lanka

The Wilpattu National Park is the oldest and the largest National Park in **Sri Lanka**. This park, located in the fringes of the Northern Province which is beset by separatist violence, has been inaccessible for nearly three decades. However, during a ceasefire, an opportunity arose to examine its long-neglected flora, fauna and

archaeological resources in order to develop an integrated management plan for conservation and management of the park. IUCN Sri Lanka undertook this sometimes risky survey, and has developed a rare and comprehensive resource inventory and documented 68 archeologically important sites with the rediscovery of a rare Buddhist temple.

### Greening Rehabilitation with the Communities

In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, whilst realising the urgent need to restore the livelihoods of the affected coastal communities, IUCN Sri Lanka also understood the importance of ensuring sustainability of the reconstruction by integrating environmental aspects in the community rehabilitation programmes.

Through a small grants programme from the **Green Coast** project of **Wetlands International**, IUCN facilitated the engagement of local communities in implementing an array of restoration activities and enhancing their livelihoods by the provision of equipment and introduction of small businesses in food processing, handicraft manufacture and plant nurseries.



*A revolving fund for a women's group to cultivate NTFP and medicinal plants in Nepal*  
© IUCN Nepal/Deependra Joshi

### **Doti-NTFPs in Nepal— Conservation with a Women's Group**

IUCN **Nepal** has been assisting communities of women in conservation and sustainable use of medicinal and non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

Seeking alternate sources of livelihood for the poorest who depend the most on natural resources

In the village of Budur, the Chhativan Village Development Committee planted 130 hectares with over 1,500 medicinal and NTFP species.

With IUCN's assistance, the community has established a revolving fund, which is invested in skills development in household processing of fruits and vegetables.

Using these initiatives, they have been able, with additional support from another donor, to purchase a processing unit for the community. From pickle-making alone, each person now gets an average of the equivalent of forty two US dollars per month.

### **Community Incentives for Conservation Initiatives in Ilam Siwalik, Nepal**

In the Ilam Siwaliks, IUCN Nepal has been active in introducing community participation in natural resources management. The poor people in the area are so dependent on the resources that there have been many instances of over-exploitation, leading to degradation of the land.

The communities, realising the need for ecosystem conservation, sought advice of IUCN Nepal for alternative livelihoods, in particular assistance with rice and maize cultivation, which was hindered by lack of water. The community constructed a dam in Jamdare Khola, and with the help of IUCN Nepal put in place plantations and landslide control measures to conserve the forest areas. Additionally, they were trained on community forestry aspects, and were introduced to improved cooking stoves.

They then mobilised 50 households to construct a small tank to retain water and use it for irrigation of downstream fallow land and the community now cultivates 45 hectares of land with three crops of rice and maize.

The income generated has enabled the community to leverage additional funds from the Village Development Committee to further the conservation work.

### **Working with Religious Leaders**

In **Pakistan**, changing attitudes towards conservation has always been a difficult task, especially in areas where cultural and religious beliefs are dominant and the main driving force is in the hands of

religious leaders. These leaders have a strong hold over the community and rarely allow external interference. The Balochistan province of Pakistan is a classic case.

In Balochistan, IUCN worked very closely with religious leaders to inform them of the Union's environmental and conservation agenda. These efforts have been successful in that these leaders have started to disseminate the information, by incorporating conservation and environmental messages with Islamic teaching, and by preaching at various Islamic fora.

IUCN's efforts have also resulted in a well-researched book of collected speeches and articles on various environmental and conservation issues, which has been made part of the larger curriculum of religious schools, and will form a regular text book used in Islamic education systems.

### **CITES Becomes Local Reality on the Lao-Viet Nam Border**

As part of its work to support substantive collaboration between the Governments of Lao PDR and Viet Nam, IUCN Lao PDR has fostered understanding of CITES, the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species, and built the capacity of local authorities to monitor border trade. Through the Trans-boundary Conservation of the Annamites project, IUCN Lao PDR has assisted local authorities, many of whom were unaware of CITES, to add special consideration of trade in flora into its monitoring activities. The technical ability and political will to monitor illegal trade are indispensable elements of



*Floating gardens in the Haor region, Bangladesh © IUCN Bangladesh*

the increasingly open borders of the region.

### **Raising Awareness on the Environment**

IUCN continued to disseminate tools to equip decision-makers and communities for a better management of their environment. In **Lao PDR**, IUCN applied the Sustainable Livelihood Approach developed by the UK Department For International Development (DFID), which, according to the District Governor of Sanam Say District "... has been valuable in terms of equipping us with the necessary tools to assess the underlying cause to people's vulnerability. It shows that unless we understand the cause behind people's vulnerability it will be difficult to find ways of improving people's livelihoods."

### **Valuing Ecosystems—Policy Influence**

IUCN Bangladesh undertook a joint study together with the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group 2, which aimed to calculate the economic value of Hakaluki Haor, a major wetland and ecologically critical area of Bangladesh.

The study found that conservation and sustainable use of the wetland

yields significant economic benefits, especially for the poor mostly from fisheries and paddy cultivation. The indirect values of the haor ecosystems include watershed and flood control benefits, biodiversity benefits (birds, migratory birds, aquatic flora and fauna, non-aquatic flora and fauna) and aesthetic benefits.

These results have been welcomed by the Government of Bangladesh and the Haor management authorities, and are to be used to justifying wetland conservation measures and implementing sustainable management systems in the Haor.

In this context, IUCN Bangladesh, in collaboration with CARE Bangladesh, introduced *baira*, a traditional practice of hydroponics of the southern areas of Bangladesh, to the Haor region in the north of the country.

Water hyacinth, a prolific invasive aquatic weed, is used to construct thick floating platforms, called *baira*, on which vegetables and other crops can be cultivated, and seedlings raised in the rainy season. In a pilot study, a small number of men and women were trained in *baira* cultivation, and were assisted in establishing a number of *baira* units.

These pilot studies have shown the potential of each *baira* unit as an income producer and these marginalized people, who do not own cultivable land, can now enjoy producing crops on what is common property, during the wet season. In addition, at the end of the growing season, the *baira* can be used as an excellent organic fertilizer for homestead gardening during the winter months.

### Protected Areas Responding in a World of Global Change

Protected areas face both enormous threats and exciting opportunities as they deal with a world of rapid change. Managers need access to the right information at the right time if they are to cope with increasingly complex problems and a myriad of often competing and conflicting expectations. Moreover they need to learn from the successes and mistakes of others around the world who have faced similar issues.

IUCN's Ecosystems, People and Protected Areas Project has been working to provide the answers to better equip protected areas' managers and others to share experience in the search for answers to common concerns. The project has identified a range of global change factors that impact most on protected areas, synthesising learning on how these may be tackled in a practical sense.

Nine field learning sites in different parts of the world are sharing their innovative approaches to protected areas management and a series of case studies has been developed to examine some of the more innovative responses to

global change. The Protected Areas Learning Network (PALNET) is also now web based.

Internet: [www.palnet.org](http://www.palnet.org)

### Advocacy for Tiger Conservation

The Government of **India** launched in 1973 a programme to conserve and maintain its tiger population for scientific, economic, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values and to preserve for all time, areas of biological importance as a natural heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people.

This is achieved through better wildlife management and by introduction of protection measures and site specific eco-development to reduce the dependency of local communities on tiger reserve resources.

As a result, this programme holds the most important tiger gene pool in India, together with biodiversity-rich ecosystems and habitats for wildlife. Yet, in spite of these efforts, there have been reports of damage to tiger reserves, and the Government of India is keen to introduce further measures for tiger conservation.

IUCN Asia carried out a review of twenty eight tiger reserve assessment reports, prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. The review report was submitted to the

Government of India and has been tabled in the Parliament. Based on the recommendations of the review and decisions of the Parliament, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has taken action to carry out periodic assessments of all (more than 500) protected areas in the country in order to ensure that tiger populations are well maintained and their habitats effectively managed.

### Empowering Sustainable Development Initiatives

In the last several years, IUCN Country Programmes in Asia have taken the lead in preparing national strategies and action plans for biodiversity conservation and in sustainable development. IUCN's expertise was sought to translate national action plans to regional and provincial level strategies and action plans, which are essential for local level initiatives for sustainable development and good governance.

In **Pakistan**, IUCN has prepared the Sustainable Development Plan for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. This particular initiative aimed at bringing the least developed tribal areas up to a par with the rest of the country, and to provide the basis for a medium term development framework in these areas.

In **Nepal**, IUCN has begun to prepare a programme strategy for the fragile ecosystems in the Churia hills to provide a sound basis for ecosystem management, including stakeholder management of the Churia River and improving livelihoods and ecosys-



tems by establishing green belts and agriculture.

In **Sri Lanka**, IUCN is taking the leadership in preparing district-level development strategies and action plans for integrating environmental concerns into post-tsunami reconstruction.

## PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND DONOR SURVEY

Following several reviews and studies in the recent past, the Director General, in his change management paper *Getting Ready for 2005*, set out the mandate for the development of a Performance Assessment System for IUCN.

Its aim was primarily to strengthen the strategic management of the Union and to meet the needs of governance for the Union as a whole, by more effectively monitoring the performance of the Union and the risks it faces.

The Office of Performance Assessment in IUCN Headquarters undertook this task for the Asia Region, in consultation with the Asia Regional Directorate (ARD), starting in the second quarter of 2006.

The exercise was designed to measure the management and programme performance, as well as the organisational performance, and to provide timely, strategic and aggregate information, clear institutional development targets for growth, learning, partner relations, influence and impact, related management response systems, and high level human resource information.

**Table 1 - Coverage by Stakeholder Group**

Stakeholder Group	Total	Responded	Response Rate
Bilateral Donors	17	13	76%
Multilateral Donors	7	6	86%
Corporations	5	4	80%
Foundations/NGOs	9	7	78%

The main elements of the assessment undertaken in Asia were:

- Programme performance indicators
- Financial indicators, including portfolio analysis work, risk indicators
- Performance feedback from constituents, Asia donors and members
- Human capital performance data, follow-up of Global Staff Survey
- Measuring the influence and quality of IUCN flagships products
- Legal and audit score cards
- Corporate social responsibility
- Analysis of membership data

Following an *IUCN Global Donor and Partner Survey* conducted in April 2006, a further survey of donors and partners of IUCN Asia was conducted during September and October 2006 by the Office of the Special Adviser, Performance Assessment, with the assistance of Vital Research, an expert survey firm. It sought feedback on the performance of IUCN Asia from donor and partner organizations (bilateral, multilateral, NGO and corporations) that provide specific project funding to an IUCN Country

or Regional programme in Asia in the following areas:

- Relevance and positioning
- Governance
- Programme management and implementation
- Accountability and reporting
- Innovation and quality
- Donor and partner relations
- Communication and outreach
- Reputation, risks and overall value-added

Representatives of all IUCN Asia donors and partners that fund an IUCN project in Asia (under implementation for at least six months) were invited for the survey. Of the 74 projects (the total project portfolio for IUCN Asia), 51 responses had been received covering 60 of these projects). In terms of coverage by donor and partner agencies or organizations (i.e. how many agencies or organizations in each group responded), the response rates are in **Table 1** above.

### Key Messages from the Survey

Overall the majority of donors and partners view IUCN Asia's performance as positive in most areas covered by the survey. They consider IUCN Asia a relevant and valuable

partner that is able to respond well to emerging trends and issues.

They value IUCN Asia's strengths and added value of expert knowledge base, scientific excellence and ability to play a brokering and convening role. Most report good value for the funds provided and compare IUCN Asia's performance favorably with other organizations.

However, the survey does bring out some important messages for improvements that are needed in order for IUCN Asia to continue to maintain the confidence and engagement of donors and partners. The following areas emerge as particularly important:

- 1. Relevance and positioning:** IUCN's niche in Asia as a whole needs to be clarified, and strategic positioning strengthened particularly at the country level to better respond to environment and development challenges.
- 2. Programme management and implementation:** Most aspects of programme management and implementation scored lower than would be desired. In particular, reporting needs to be improved in terms of timeliness, quality and results orientation. Improvements are also needed in monitoring and evaluation and in clarifying and simplifying the lines of authority in the IUCN Asia management structure.
- 3. Policy influence:** Efforts aimed at influencing policy at regional and national levels in

Asia need to be strengthened significantly.

- 4. Innovation and quality:** Cutting edge products need to be improved and peer review of publications needs to be strengthened to ensure consistent quality.
- 5. Communication:** IUCN Asia managers need to communicate more often and more effectively to donors and partners about IUCN Programme, the governance and structure of offices in Asia. Communication of key conservation and development messages also needs to be improved.

The Asia Regional Directorate has addressed the issues highlighted in the Performance Assessment and a strategy is being developed to ensure that IUCN Asia is to remain strategically relevant.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Asia Regional Communications continued to support the programmes in their information exchange and generation of knowledge through websites, newsletters, outreach materials and publications that were reviewed, promoted and disseminated through the Regional Office in Bangkok.

Strengthening IUCN's image and identity across these many programmes has been a major task in 2006 within both Internet and print management.

Training and communication toolkits for managing IUCN corporate identity were provided to country and project communication officers, as well as *ad hoc* methodology support to develop com-



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munications strategies in IUCN offices in Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The IUCN Asia website was updated alongside the creation of new Internet tools such as a Coastal Information database, which offers documents on post-tsunami recovery in Indian Ocean countries.

The Viet Nam Office was also supported regularly in the administration of their website and in creating an electronic monthly newsletter.

Publication management (editing, design, print management and dissemination) of print and electronic



## IUCN PRESIDENT IN PAKISTAN

Mr. Valli Moosa, President of IUCN, visited Pakistan in January 2006, where he met with the Acting President of Pakistan amongst other senior Government officials.

He also visited some of the earthquake devastated areas and met the local authorities to assess the impact of the earthquake on the environment. In his deliberations with the government, Mr Moosa underlined the need to consider environmental aspects in relief and rehabilitation work and offered IUCN's expertise through joint initiatives with the Government. The IUCN President also met with the Pakistan National Committee of IUCN members.

## CONSTITUENCY

During the year under review, the Government of South Korea joined IUCN as a state member. In addition, seven non-governmental organizations were also admitted to the Union. The National Parks Department of South Korea has communicated its decision to join IUCN as a government agency member.

Throughout Asia, the membership of eleven organisations, including one government agency, were rescinded.

The **National Committees** in Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India and Japan continued to function well. The Constituency Development Unit worked closely with IUCN Headquarters in regard to the meeting of the National Committee Chairs



*Valli Moosa, IUCN President, visiting Pakistan in January 2006 © IUCN/Karl Schuler*

in Den Haag in the Netherlands, held in February 2006.

The drive to recruit new members continued. A number of NGOs in Asian countries, including one from Indonesia, where IUCN has no NGO member, have made the necessary preparations for applying for IUCN membership.

At the end of the year, the total number of members was 154, comprised of 12 state, 18 government agencies, 122 NGO and two affiliated members.

Preliminary arrangements were made for holding the Regional Conservation Forum in September 2007 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

## ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS AND HUMAN RESOURCES

During the last five years, the Asia portfolio has doubled, which is a rapid expansion requiring a new structure to support efficient programme delivery. Country Cluster Groups (CG) were formed in early 2006. CG 1 comprising of Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia was formed in February with its secretariat co-located in the Viet Nam Country Office in Hanoi and CG 2, made up of Pakistan and Nepal commenced its operations in July with its secretariat co-located in the Pakistan Country Office. These Country Groups are led by Country Group Heads .

### **Staff Survey**

A global staff survey had been undertaken by IUCN Headquarters to help improve the strategic management

of staff, by strengthening staff feedback processes, monitoring trends in staff satisfaction and improving performance management response mechanisms.

Other significant contributions of the Human Resources Unit for Asia were:

- The local conditions of service to be prepared and submitted for approval.
- Facilitating the internship programme both through institutions as well as individuals. Fifteen interns were placed in the Asia Region during the year.
- A pilot post classification exercise, led by the Global Human Resources, was undertaken in March 2006.

## FINANCIAL RESULTS

### Income

The main source of income for the IUCN Secretariat in Asia was from projects and country framework agreements (85%), with the balance coming from Framework Allocation and Programme Restricted funding from IUCN Headquarters. The focus on increasing income from projects yielded positive results with an income for the year of US\$ 5,611,419, some 104 percent of the approved budget and US \$118,000 more than 2005 income.

### Expenditure

Expenditure for the year was US\$ 5,698,654, and marginally less than the total expenditure of US\$ 5,771,574 in 2005.

The focus on strict cost control measures resulted in staff costs being



*Mountains, forests and fields in northern Pakistan © IUCN/Gulrez Gauri*

maintained at 76 percent of total expenditure whilst other costs were steady at 24 percent. Given the additional staff costs associated with the introduction of the Country Group structure, overall staff costs were reduced.

### Project Portfolio

The project portfolio in 2006 was similar to 2005 at US\$ 74.11 million, with projects under implementation amounting US\$ 56.41 million.

There has been a strong focus on portfolio development in 2006. The approval of the Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiative and the funding of other complementary projects provide a solid foundation for 2007.

Continued development of the project portfolio is essential to ensure growth and financial security in 2007.

### Financial Management

The Regional Finance Unit contributed to the Asia Performance Assessment. Six key financial

indicators were developed and Country and Thematic Programmes were assessed accordingly. The results were presented at the Asia Regional Directorate (ARD) meetings in June and November.

Protocols were established for improving monthly financial reporting in terms of quality, timing and analysis. These further focus on reducing reporting times and improving the quality and timeliness of reporting on projects for managers and donors, which will be implemented in 2007.







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