

1.4 Species Survival Commission

RECOGNIZING that the many and diverse achievements of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and its ongoing effectiveness have established IUCN as the recognized world leader on species conservation issues;

EMPHASIZING that IUCN needs to maintain and enhance this leadership position as a matter of very high priority in order to conserve biological diversity globally even as detrimental pressures on the environment increase, and to ensure that biological perspectives are properly represented in ongoing debates about the course of sustainable development;

RECALLING Resolution 19.3 of the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly, on the Species Survival Commission, which requested the SSC Chair to guide the process of developing an SSC strategic plan, and that after consultation with key interested parties this strategic plan was adopted by the SSC Steering Committee in November 1994, covering the period 1994–2000;

NOTING that the strategic plan of the SSC is designed to enhance IUCN's position as the global leader in biodiversity conservation, through continued improvement in the excellence and delivery of needed products, through strengthening and extending the global network of SSC volunteer experts, and by building an even more effective programme on species conservation;

REAFFIRMING the important programmatic links between SSC and other IUCN programmes, in particular the biodiversity programme and those of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM);

WELCOMING SSC's lead in the establishment of cross-sectoral programmes such as the IUCN Sustainable Use Initiative (SUI);

APPRECIATING the positive review that SSC received during the recent external review of the IUCN Programme;

AWARE of the need for SSC to continue to participate in the decentralization process within IUCN;

ALSO WELCOMING the moves taken by the SSC to restructure the governance and management of the Commission;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

1. ENDORSES the SSC mission, strategic objectives and goals;
2. ENDORSES the initiatives of the SSC leadership to address the management and support needs of this very large network of volunteers by restructuring the governance of the Commission;
3. CALLS UPON IUCN members to look for opportunities to form collaborative links with the SSC including staff secondments, core support and project grants, with a view to increasing the human and other resources available to implement the SSC strategic plan;
4. EMPHASIZES the need to increase the basic support provided to the SSC Secretariat in order to serve the SSC network more adequately, and thereby strengthen the capacity of the SSC membership to gather and disseminate information, set conservation priorities, communicate priority recommendations, stimulate action appropriate to the priorities, develop policies and provide advice for the conservation of biodiversity;
5. REQUESTS the SSC, within available resources, urgently to complete its review of the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, in an open and transparent manner, in consultation with relevant experts, to ensure the Criteria are effective indicators of risk of extinction across the broadest possible range of taxonomic categories, especially in relation to:
 - a) marine species, particularly fish, taking into account the dynamic nature of marine ecosystems;
 - b) species under active management programmes;

- c) the time periods over which declines are measured;
6. URGES the SSC to make users of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals more aware that the listings for some species of marine fish are based on criteria that may not be appropriate for assessing the risk of extinction for these species, and to indicate that the criteria are under review;
 7. ENDORSES the new programmatic initiatives being carried out by the SSC in fulfilment of the strategic plan, in particular:
 - a) the development of a species conservation information system in collaboration with other IUCN programmes;
 - b) the development of new ways of networking at regional and national levels, in collaboration with WCPA, Regional and Country Offices of IUCN, and others, with the objective of:
 - i) strengthening the capacities of regional members of SSC and thus strengthening biodiversity conservation initiatives at national and regional levels;
 - ii) enhancing national efforts to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and the Bern Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats in Europe;
 - c) the application of the new IUCN Red List Categories in the IUCN Red Lists and promotion of their appropriate use in other documents and their utilization at the regional, national and sub-national levels, taking into account the review of Red List Categories and Criteria;
 - d) the development of a transparent process governing the addition and removal of species from the IUCN Red Lists on an ongoing basis, in particular when the species in question is not covered by a Specialist Group;
 - e) the development of a stronger specialist network on marine species and on the development of a more integrated approach to conservation of marine biodiversity in collaboration with WCPA, the IUCN mari