



## International Union for Conservation of Nature

### First Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on 14-15 March 2013

#### Statement Delivered by Mr. Narinder Kakar, Permanent Observer of IUCN to the UN on 15 March 2013

##### Co-Chairs-

Let me first of all, extend my own felicitations to you on your election as Co-chairs of the Opening Working Group. We are confident that under your leadership, the process for the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals will be brought to fruition.

As has been said by many speakers, the process of formulating the SDGs will be complex. The basis for establishing the SDGs has been defined in the Outcome Document **The Future We Want**. Para 75 clearly states that the SDGs will need to be formulated in a manner that integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development viz. social, economic and environmental. The SDGs will also have to be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate; limited in number; aspirational; global in nature; and applicable universally to all countries.

It is recognized that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives and essential requirements for sustainable development. Development efforts have to be centered around the issues of poverty, inequality, concern for our ecological boundaries, social inclusion and equity, including gender empowerment. The aspirations of the people for economic growth in developing countries must be met. And the social dimension must also retain its importance with eradication of poverty as the overarching goal.

As President of the General Assembly said in his statement, addressing the issue of environmental sustainability should become a core national interest of every Member State. The issue of environmental sustainability therefore needs to be integrated more comprehensively. The process for the Sustainable Development Goals should be a vehicle to further the integration of the three pillars of Sustainable Development by looking at nature and the services it provides for human well being as a critical asset for social and economic development. In this regard, the vision that IUCN would like to share with the global community is one of "a just world that values and conserves nature for a sustainable future". To achieve this vision, there are some critical considerations that need to be taken into account in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals:

a) First, we need to ensure that the imperative to conserve and sustainably use nature is put at the center of our concerns. Nature must be perceived as real capital, an asset and a pre-requisite for socio-economic development, rather than an impediment to it. Well-managed, healthy and diverse ecosystems and the biological resources they encompass are indispensable for sustainable development. Nature can contribute solutions to global challenges in food, water and energy security, climate change, and poverty eradication. The Sustainable Development Goals framework should therefore incorporate a nature-based solutions approach anchored on existing scientific data which proves that nature, when properly invested in and well managed, increases social and economic resilience and generates benefits. The Sustainable Development Goals should be an opportunity to

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IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network. IUCN is a democratic union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and some 10,000 volunteer scientists in more than 150 countries. IUCN's work is supported by 1,100 professional staff in 62 countries and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

replicate and scale up such successful actions. All stakeholders who engage in the SDGs process should ensure that environmental sustainability does not become a stand-alone goal confined in itself, but rather a key element which cuts across all the goals.

b) Secondly, when shaping the SDGs, we need to build on existing commitments already made. One such commitment is the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted in Nagoya in 2010 by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Aichi Targets address core areas of Sustainable Development, with Target 2 explicitly requiring governments, to integrate by 2020 biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes. The majority of the countries of the world committed to fulfill the Aichi Targets and the biodiversity-related conventions have joined the CBD and embraced the Strategic Plan as an overarching framework for common action. This Plan should therefore be integrated to the set of sustainable development goals to be agreed to and implemented in the next decades.

c) Thirdly, it will be essential that the SDGs are based on scientific and rigorous interdisciplinary assessment of the latest evolution in economic, social and environmental areas and how these areas relate to each other for the sustainability and resilience of our societies and our economies. It will be important to engage the scientific community in the process of defining the SDGs and monitoring their implementation. Existing experts' panels and platforms, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the newly established Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) should be drawn upon, as well as inputs from all relevant knowledge systems, including those of indigenous and local communities.

Co-chairs: IUCN has taken the lead in integrating environmental and development concerns in its activities around the world. Sustainable development itself is at the core of these activities. It was IUCN that first presented the concept of Sustainable Development in 1980 in a report termed **The World Conservation Strategy** prepared jointly by IUCN, WWF and UNEP. We therefore stay committed to supporting the work on sustainable development and offer our services to the United Nations for the development of SDGs, in the same spirit and with the same vigour as we did for the Rio+20 preparatory process. Here, we are encouraged to see that the Open Working Group has been established as an inclusive and transparent process that is open to all Member States and to various stakeholders and civil society, and the inter-governmental organizations like IUCN having received a standing invitation to participate in the work of the General Assembly.

I thank you, Co-chairs