Draft Agenda
of the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress

**Action Requested:** The IUCN World Conservation Congress is invited to CONSIDER and APPROVE the Draft Agenda of the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress proposed by the IUCN Council in conformity with Rule 45. (Annex 1 hereafter).

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

A Provisional Agenda of the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress was distributed to all IUCN Members on 10 September 2019 as required by Article 23 of the IUCN Statutes.

The Acting Director General’s communication invited IUCN Members to post their comments and suggestions for the Congress Draft Agenda in the Union Portal.

On the recommendation of the Congress Preparatory Committee, the IUCN Council approved the Draft Agenda of the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress during its 98th meeting in February 2020 taking into account comments received.

The purpose of the present Explanatory Memorandum is to explain how some of the key agenda items will be dealt with during the Members’ Assembly as different from previous sessions of the Congress.

1. **Discussion of issues of strategic importance for the Union**

During the 2012 Congress and through the external evaluation of the 2012 Congress, the membership voiced a clear concern that the next Members' Assembly should reserve ample time for in-depth discussion of issues of strategic importance for the Union. This was implemented for the first time in Hawai‘i in 2016, after a reform of the motions process with the purpose of bringing only a limited number of motions for discussion and vote during the Congress. The topics proposed by Council in 2016 were: conserving nature in the face of industrial agriculture; preserving the health of the world’s oceans, and building constituencies for nature.

While confirming the importance of the strategic discussions, the 2016 Congress participants felt they should have been more interactive and linked to the IUCN Programme.

Taking this into account, the IUCN Council proposes to allocate, again, more than 5 hours during the 2020 Members’ Assembly for the discussion of three topics (1 hour and 45 minutes per topic). The proposed topics will contribute to achieving the goals of IUCN’s Programme by enabling all constituent parts to better understand current conditions and dynamics, clarify IUCN’s role, strengthen their capacity, and mobilise and engage support from internal and external audiences.

A variety of methodologies will be applied across all three strategic discussions, ensuring interaction with the Members’ Assembly participants, using electronic communication tools.
where appropriate. In addition, each discussion is expected to result in a small number of concrete action points that will be incorporated in the outcomes of the Marseille Congress, with a follow-up mechanism allowing to monitor progress by 2024.

a) Transforming subsidies for nature
The economic choices that human societies make have far-reaching consequences on humankind’s capacity to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but there are often inconsistencies and conflicts among the different goals. For instance, subsidies to increase agricultural production, improve energy efficiency, or expand global infrastructure (e.g., roads, mining, and hydropower), can undercut the goals of SDG 14 and 15. Indeed, financial subsidies for food, fibre, energy and water, can have negative and perverse impacts on biodiversity and ecological services. Can we turn this around and develop subsidies that promote decarbonisation of our economies, promote social equity and the conservation of nature. What is needed to do this? What role should IUCN play and how?

b) Building a culture of conservation – Values and choices
Fundamental changes in the earth system and the associated loss of biodiversity, accelerated climate change, human insecurity and conflict define our present reality. To achieve the scale of change needed (and demanded by growing movements, including of young people and indigenous people) we must integrate and promote a ‘culture of conservation’ in which the well-being of our world takes centre stage. This demands a shift from preoccupations such as wealth acquisition, conspicuous consumption and economic growth to greater sustainability and social equity. IUCN Commission initiatives such as “#NatureForAll” or the “New Social Compact” are efforts to build a culture of conservation. This session will explore the synergies, conflicts and contradictions among different ways in which decisions are made, and behaviour is being shaped, with attention to intrinsic values, bio-cultural values, human rights, sustaining livelihoods, well-being and economic development. Understanding highlighting values and culture as key factors in decision-making and behaviour, can make IUCN more effective in the ways it can influence governments and other decision makers, citizens, corporates, thinkers and social movements, at local, national and regional levels and globally.

c) Biodiversity and health in the face of climate change
Climate change presents significant challenges to human health and biodiversity. Increases in extreme climate events, such as heat waves, droughts or flooding, threaten human health and well-being. In addition, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases is rising, causing ill health and accelerating costs to the health sector.

Biodiversity and healthy natural ecosystems, including protected areas in and around cities, can provide ecosystem benefits and services that support human health and help communities to cope with climate change, by reducing flood risk, filtering air pollutants, and providing a reliable supply of clean drinking water. They can also help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases and respiratory disorders. Furthermore, access to nature offers many other direct health benefits, including opportunities for physical activity, reduction of developmental disorders and improved mental health. These benefits become increasingly important in a world facing increasing climate change and urbanisation. Economic valuations of green spaces have found that nature provides billions of dollars in cost savings for health services. Indeed, in some countries medical professionals are now prescribing time in nature as part of a patient’s treatment for chronic illnesses.

The growing recognition of the importance of biodiversity’s contribution to human health offers great potential for maximising synergies between public health, climate change
adaptation and nature conservation. Partnerships between conservationists, planners and health authorities are critical to maximise these synergies.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide an important global framework for such partnerships from global to local level. They offer an unprecedented opportunity to value, conserve nature, and work across sectors to achieve environmental objectives in the face of climate change, and contribute to furthering goals that are essential to economic and social development.

2. The presentation of election candidates

Through the 2016 participants’ survey report, Members requested a more engaging way to present the election candidates. While continuing to ensure that all candidates are given an equal opportunity to be exposed to the global IUCN membership, candidate presentations followed by elections will be spread out in three different Sittings as outlined in the draft agenda. Instead of long series of individual presentations from the speakers’ rostrum, a different format will be applied in an attempt to make it more interesting for Members’ Assembly participants.

However, as in the past, all election results will be announced together after all elections will have been held, towards the end of the 6th Sitting on 18 June 2020.

Candidates for President: A session of 45 minutes for candidate presentation and panel debate based on questions on key issues for the Union shared with the candidates in advance.

Candidate for Treasurer: 5 minutes presentation for the candidate.

Candidates for Commission Chair: A session of 1 hour for candidate presentations based on questions about what they aim to achieve in their respective Commissions and about shared responsibilities as Commission Chairs and members of the IUCN Council.

Candidates for Regional Councillor: Two sessions spread in two Sittings.

• 4th Sitting: Agenda item 4.1 – First part of the presentation of Regional Councillor candidates from four of the eight statutory regions, followed by electronic election of Regional Councillors from these four regions.

• 5th Sitting: Agenda item 5.1 – Second part of the presentation of Regional Councillor candidates, followed by electronic election for the remaining four regions.

3. Marseille Outcomes / Commitments

The outcome statements from the Hawai’i (2016) and Jeju (2012) Congresses were developed in “real time”, with statements consisting of general, aspirational declarations rather than being purposely focused on tangible commitments and building on major trends that gain traction over a period of time. Learning from the past, a small working group has been set up to prepare the Marseille outcome statement ahead of time to ensure positive, concrete actions and commitments for the future that are time-bound, with a mechanism allowing IUCN Members to monitor progress of implementation by 2024.