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.

The titles and descriptors of the strategic discussions of the Members’ Assembly have been strengthened by adding a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on conservation and IUCN and the needed transformational change.

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 Hawaii 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) Financial subsidies in a post COVID-19 world

The financial choices that nations make to stimulate their economies as they emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic may have far-reaching consequences on the natural world and how people relate to it. In the attempt to recover from the pandemic and create jobs, governmental subsidies might emphasise getting back to ‘business as usual’ by expanding grey infrastructure (e.g., roads, mining and hydropower), or stimulating the production of food, fiber and energy.

Alternatively, countries may opt to support transformative changes by developing nature-based initiatives (e.g., green projects or protecting nature). They might promote long-term sustainability, and develop subsidies that promote decarbonisation of our economies, promote social equity and the conservation of nature. The choices that countries make, will thus positively or negatively affect biodiversity and ecological services. They might be guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or by more short-term considerations. How can IUCN influence these decisions? What role should IUCN play and how?

b) Building a culture of conservation – Values and Choices

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes diverse challenges in how our societies engage with nature. In response to the emergence of this coronavirus and under ensuing lockdown, animals have reclaimed space denied to them and the skies have cleared. Our vulnerability to poor environmental management has been exposed. We can no longer allow adverse changes in the earth system and the associated loss of biodiversity, accelerated climate change, human insecurity and conflict define who we are as a civilisation. To achieve the scale of change needed, as evident in this historical moment, and demanded by growing movements, including of young people and indigenous people, we must integrate and promote a ‘culture of conservation’ in which the wellbeing of our world takes centre stage. This demands a shift from preoccupations like wealth acquisition, conspicuous consumption and economic growth to ones such as greater sustainability, social equity and human well-being. IUCN Commission initiatives such as “#NatureForAll” or the “New Social Compact” are efforts to build a different culture of conservation. This session will explore the synergies, conflicts, contradictions among different ways in which decisions are made, and behaviour is being shaped, with attention to intrinsic values, biocultural values, human rights, sustaining livelihoods, wellbeing, and economic development. Highlighting values and culture as key factors in decision-making and behaviour. Including these can make IUCN more effective as it seeks to influence governments and other decision makers, citizens,
corporates, thinkers, and social movements, at local, national, regional levels and globally to
bringing about needed change.

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. The risk of floods can be reduced, air pollutants
filtered, and supply of clean drinking water made more reliable. Ecosystem services can
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 patients’ treatment for chronic illnesses.

The growing recognition of the importance of biodiversity’s contribution to human health
offers great potential for maximizing synergies between public health, climate change
adaptation and nature conservation. Partnerships between conservationists, planners and
health authorities are critical to maximize these synergies. The SDGs provide an important
global framework for such partnerships from global to local level. They offer an
unprecedented opportunity to value and conserve nature, to 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.

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.
The IUCN Council, in consultation with the Host Country, has set the new dates for the IUCN Congress 2020 as **3 to 10 September 2021** in Marseille, France. The IUCN Council also decided to submit selected items included in the draft agenda of the 2020 Congress to an electronic vote of the IUCN Members, opening on January 27 2021. More details on the items submitted to the electronic vote can be found [here](#).

- The Council added new topics to the agenda, such as **developing a comprehensive gender approach at IUCN** (refer to Council decision **C100/2** and IUCN response to Covid-19 (refer to Council decision **C102/8**)
- Council will revise this agenda and timetable after the end of the electronic vote.

### Preliminary Meetings

**2021**

All day  Commission Steering Committee meetings

14:00-17:30  Meeting of the IUCN Council

**Day 1 –2021**

08:30-16:00 **Meeting** of IUCN National and Regional Committee representatives and Country Focal Points (open meeting)

  Commission Steering Committee meeting (continued)

17:00-19:00 **Opening Ceremony of the IUCN World Conservation Congress**

19:00-21:00 **Opening Reception of the IUCN World Conservation Congress**

---

1 A global meeting of the National and Regional Committees will be held as requested by Resolution WCC-2012-Res-005. A report on the outcomes of the meeting of the National and Regional Committees will be presented during the Members’ Assembly during the 5th Sitting following the presentation of the reports of the IUCN Commissions. According to Article 20 of the IUCN Statutes, the Congress shall receive and consider, among others, the reports of recognized Regional Committees and Fora. As was the case for the 2016 Congress, this reporting obligation will be fulfilled by offering all National and Regional Committees space on the IUCN Congress website to publish their reports.
Forum and Exhibition

All forum events can be viewed on the Congress website

Day 2 – 2021

Day 3 – 2021

Day 4 – 2021

Day 5 – 2021

18:30-21:00 Regional Members meetings\(^2\) (incl. presentation of election candidates, only if invited by the meeting organisers)

Contact groups\(^4\)/Social events

\(^2\) Exhibition will run in parallel with the Forum and partly with the Members’ Assembly.

\(^3\) Regional Members meetings will take place on the eve of the 1\(^{st}\) sitting of the Members’ Assembly.

\(^4\) Contact Groups will be established as required and scheduled with a possibility that they will be convened during the Forum (evenings from 20:00-21:30) or during the Members’ Assembly (mornings from 07:15-08:20, lunchtime from 12:30-14:00 or evenings in two sequences: 19:00-20:15 and 20:30-21:45).
Members’ Assembly

All documents of the Members’ Assembly listed per agenda item can be viewed on the Congress website

(Green highlight indicates items submitted to an electronic vote)

Day 6 – 2021

8:30-12:30  1st Sitting of the Members’ Assembly
  1.1 Appointment and first report of the Congress Credentials Committee
  1.2 Adoption of the Agenda
  1.3 Adoption of amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the IUCN World Conservation Congress⁶
  1.4 Appointment of the Resolutions, Finance and Audit, Governance, and Programme Committees of the Congress
  1.5 Report of the Director General
  1.6 Report of the President and the Council
  1.7 First Report of the Resolutions Committee [and Recording en bloc the adoption of motions through the electronic ballot prior to Congress] including information about the discussion of contact groups of all motions including those of issues related to IUCN Governance.
  1.8 Elections: Information by the Election Officer about the election procedures

14:00-18:45  2nd Sitting of the Members’ Assembly
  2.1 Presentation of the Draft IUCN Programme and Financial Plan 2021–2024⁶
  2.2 Information about the purpose and process of the "Marseille Outcomes"
  2.3 Discussion of issues of strategic importance for the Union⁷:
    2.3.1 Financial subsidies in a post COVID-19 world
    2.3.2 Building a culture of conservation – Values and Choices
  2.4 Presentation of the laureate(s) of the John C. Phillips Memorial Medal and the Harold Jefferson Coolidge Memorial Medal, and approval of the laureate(s) for Honorary Membership of IUCN

If any are submitted other than the ones presented by Council as part of the Councils motions to amend the Statutes which will be discussed in the 7th Sitting (See Agenda Item 7.2).

The Draft IUCN Programme and Financial Plan will be presented in order to provide the Membership with an overview before the discussions on issues of strategic importance. The Programme Committee of the Congress will present its report with recommendations on the Draft IUCN Programme during the 4th Sitting enabling the Members’ Assembly to take into account issues that might have been raised during the discussion on the topics of strategic importance that may affect the IUCN Programme. The Finance and Audit Committee of the Congress will do likewise during the 7th Sitting with regard to the Draft Financial Plan.

Titles may change over time as the sessions are being organised.
Day 7 –2021
8:30-12:30 3rd Sitting of the Members’ Assembly

3.1 Discussion of issues of strategic importance for the Union (continued):
   3.1.1 Biodiversity and health in the face of climate change

3.2 Reports of three IUCN Commissions including Awards established by these three Commissions\(^8\)

3.3 Adoption of the mandates of the three IUCN Commissions 2021–2024 referred to in item 3.2

14:00-18:30 4th Sitting of the Members’ Assembly

4.1 Presentation of candidates from four regions for Regional Councillor positions, followed by electronic election of the candidates from only these four regions\(^9\)

4.2 Second part – Reports of the remaining three IUCN Commissions including Awards established by the Commissions, followed by the Adoption of the Mandates of the remaining three IUCN Commissions 2021–2024

4.3 Brief report on the general Forum Outcomes including the indigenous peoples organisations (IPOs)

4.4 Discussion of the Draft IUCN Programme 2021–2024 including Report of the Congress Programme Committee, followed by the adoption of the IUCN Programme 2021–2024

4.5 Report on the meeting of all recognized National and Regional Committees

4.6 Progress Report of the Resolutions Committee, followed by discussion and vote on motions

 Contact groups\(^10\)/Social events

Day 8 –2021
08:30-12:30 5th Sitting of the Members’ Assembly

5.1 Second part of the presentation of candidates for Regional Councillor positions, followed by electronic election of the candidates from the remaining four regions

5.2 Progress Report of the Resolutions Committee, followed by discussion and vote on motions (continued)

14:00-18:30 6th Sitting of the Members’ Assembly

6.1 Presentation of candidates for positions of six Commission Chairs and

\(^8\) Reports and Award presentation for the remaining three IUCN Commissions will be continued during the 4th sitting (see Agenda Item 4.2).

\(^9\) Candidates from the remaining four regions will be presented during the 5th Sitting. All election results will be announced together with the results of the elections for President, Treasurer and Commission Chairs, before the end of the 6th Sitting (See Agenda Item 6.8).

\(^10\) Contact Groups will be established as required and scheduled with a possibility that they will be convened during the Forum (evenings from 20:00-21:30) or during the Members’ Assembly (mornings from 07:15-08:20, lunchtime from 12:30-14:00 or evenings in two sequences: 19:00-20:15 and 20:30-21:45).
Treasurer

6.2 Presentation and debate among candidates for IUCN President

6.3 Electronic election of the IUCN President, Treasurer and six Commission Chairs

6.4 Report by the Director General and the Treasurer on the finances of IUCN in the intersessional period 2017–2020

6.5 Report of the Congress Finance and Audit Committee on and Congress approval of the Audited Financial Statements for the years 2016–2019

6.6 Appointment of the external auditors

6.7 Progress Report of the Resolutions Committee, followed by discussion and vote on motions (continued)

6.8 Report from the Election Officer on the results of all elections

Contact groups/Social events

Day 9 –2021

8:30-12:30 7th Sitting of the Members’ Assembly

7.1 Report of the Congress Finance and Audit Committee and adoption of the IUCN Financial Plan 2021–2024

7.2 Report of the Congress Governance Committee and vote on motions on IUCN governance including amendments to the Statutes

7.3 Report of the Credentials Committee and approval of the membership dues 2021–2024 and the list of Members in arrears with payments of dues and whose rights are rescinded

7.4 Progress Report of the Resolutions Committee, followed by discussion and vote on motions (continued)

7.5 Youth Voice – the youth representatives give brief outcomes of the Youth Summit

7.6 Presentation of the Marseille Outcomes / Commitments
14:00-15:00  **8th Sitting of the Members’ Assembly**
   8.1 Recognition of outgoing members of the IUCN Council 2016–2020
   8.2 Message from the President Elect
   8.3 Closure of the IUCN World Conservation Congress by the outgoing President (including a closing speech from a representative of the Host Country)

15:00-15:45  **Closing reception**
16:00-18:00  **Meeting of the newly elected IUCN Council**

---

**11** To be adapted and confirmed following the timetable of the Members’ Assembly.