

Investing in Nature as a Solution for Disaster Risk Reduction

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Statement to the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 17-18 November 2014

Mr/Madam Co-chair, distinguished delegates

- IUCN welcomes the zero draft of the Post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and in particular the elements on sustainable environmental management and reducing environmental degradation to enhance resilience.
- As the zero draft states, over 700,000 people lost their lives, over 1.4 million were injured, and around 23 million were made homeless as a result of disasters in the last 10 years. These facts must compel us to move from reaction to prevention.
- As we learn to move towards prevention, it is important not to overlook or even undermine the critical role that nature plays in saving us from such death and destruction. Governments are already moving towards investing in ecosystem based DRR. Just last year, the Government of the Philippines pledged millions of dollars towards mangrove restoration as survivors of Typhoon Haiyan became witnesses to the role that mangroves played in safeguarding their lives and properties. Similarly, the Government of Japan declared the expansion of its protected areas along the coastline which was affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011. The new framework can facilitate strengthening and scaling up of such national efforts in all parts of the world.
- Therefore, it is important to include ecosystem management and ecosystem based approaches as a risk reduction solution in the Post 2015 framework. Nature is still addressed as an underlying risk factor in the zero draft and should also be included as a solution that needs to be invested in, proactively. Nature can effectively complement structural measures to provide multiple benefits, including enhanced resilience in the face of climate change.
- Doing so will mirror similar efforts currently being undertaken by member states and other organizations to acknowledge the critical role of ecosystems and help to further strengthen partnerships between the disaster management and conservation communities. Last week the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. Margareta Wahlström reiterated the need for this at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, which convened over 6,000 people working on protected areas management. Urging conservation

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actors to work closely with the DRR community is a key outcome of the *Promise of Sydney* document emerging from this Congress.

- Additionally, a decision on working together to implement ecosystem based DRR was unanimously adopted by member states at the Twelfth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Korea last month.
- We urge the member states present here today to ensure further policy coherence at the international level by highlighting the need to invest in nature as a solution in the new Post-2015 Framework for disaster risk reduction.

Thank You