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A strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to enhance implementation of **marine conservation in the next decade**

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A promising future

The marine realm – from the shorelines to the high seas -- remains among the world's most poorly protected ecosystems. With human activities increasingly impacting our ocean, this situation must be reversed rapidly to maintain its essential functions and resources. At the VIth IUCN World Parks Congress, participants in the Marine Theme shared inspiring examples of how effectively managed marine protected areas (MPAs) are a key part of the solution and offer the promise of a better future. The overwhelming support for MPAs expressed at the Congress, as well as the innovative tools and partnerships highlighted, provide a path to fulfilling this promise. Protected areas are essential for maintaining and restoring the natural capital on which human livelihoods, coastal and island security and planetary climate stability depend. Urgent designation and effective management of MPAs are needed. These areas must reflect indigenous, local community and other stakeholder needs, aspirations and knowledge. They must be complemented by regulatory measures, partnerships, governance, technologies, community empowerment and capacity building to ensure sustainable use of ocean resources outside protected areas, including a new international agreement for the effective governance and management of the high seas. To achieve success we must embrace the ambitious goal of engendering a new global respect and support for the ocean, reinforced through an inclusive and participatory approach and cutting-edge technology that will provide opportunities for connecting to the wonder and vitality of the world's oceans.

The current situation

The ocean makes up 71% of our 'blue planet,' yet less than 1% is fully protected. The threats to the ocean underlined at the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2003 have increased in 2014. The world's population continues to increase, and the majority of humans live in close proximity to coasts, placing increasing demands on the ocean for economic prosperity and well-being. Amongst the biggest threats to the ocean are climate change and ocean acidification; overfishing; coastal development leading to habitat loss; land-based pollution; and marine debris. New threats such as deep-sea mining are looming. The effects of these threats are cumulative and may be synergistic. We are just now realising the extent and severity of pressures, the scale of change affecting the ocean and its ramifications for our health and well-being. These pressures particularly impact small-scale fishing communities, indigenous peoples, and local coastal communities, all of whom rely on coastal ecosystems for food security and disaster risk reduction among other ecosystem services. Moreover, many existing marine protected areas lack sufficient resources and legal authority for effective protection.

Our attitudes and practices need to change, and fast. A new paradigm is needed to protect marine ecosystems for present and future generations while addressing the economic, social and environmental drivers of change. This must be based on a fresh global understanding and respect for the ocean's role in sustaining human life,

engaging and inspiring the next generation, and incorporating MPAs and ocean management into sustainable development programs. This new paradigm should foster concrete actions aimed at restoring ocean health and resilience and equitable, sustainable use of marine resources. Visionary political leadership, strong public support and partnerships to ensure all levels of government, non-government organisations, industry and community groups work together, are essential. Since the Vth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, marine issues have become a central theme within the global protected areas agenda. The area of MPAs has increased from less than 1% to over 3% of our ocean, and has accelerated rapidly in recent years. This should be the foundation of a global network of marine protected areas which will ultimately connect ecosystems from shorelines to high seas, allowing marine life to recover and thrive.

Recommendations for change

Participants in the Marine Cross-cutting Theme at the 6th IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia (Nov 12-19), make the following recommendations.

1. Urgently increase the ocean area that is effectively and equitably managed in ecologically representative and well-connected systems of MPAs or other effective conservation measures. This network should target protection of both biodiversity and ecosystem services and should include at least 30% of each marine habitat. The ultimate aim is to create a fully sustainable ocean, at least 30% of which has no-extractive activities.
2. Renew and expand our commitment to management effectiveness of all MPAs, based on best available scientific and other information and partnerships with stakeholders, including communities and resource users, to fulfil the potential of these areas.
3. Integrate marine protected areas into the broader seascape and landscape through large-scale marine management initiatives which strengthen networks of marine protected areas, tackle threats that emerge from outside these areas, and combine protected areas with other management tools to pursue a long-term vision for the area.
4. Include MPAs in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Post Hyogo framework, recognising them as cost-effective solutions for climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction.
5. Take steps to protect and manage biodiversity in the high seas, including the seabed, by developing, adopting and bringing into force an international instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and through regional efforts in Antarctica, the Arctic, the Sargasso Sea and elsewhere.
6. Within the post-2015 UN development agenda, include smart ocean targets under the proposed Sustainable Development Goals such as food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable consumption and production and climate change as well as a standalone Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for the global ocean.
7. Collaborate to detect and prevent illegal fishing and other illegal activities at sea, with a focus on MPAs as the front line in this effort, which will apply existing and new technology and surveillance information and support collaborative learning among fisheries and MPA managers.
8. Design and manage MPAs for human as well as ecological benefits, through committed partnerships and engagement with indigenous and local coastal communities, resource users and other stakeholders, as well as new partnerships with humanitarian, development and human rights organizations.
9. Strengthen support for marine conservation actions by (a) scaling up the many effective and inspiring

solutions being undertaken by coastal communities and resource user groups around the world; and (b) using new technology, social media and learning networks to reach new audiences.

- 10.** Develop innovative partnerships to (a) accelerate and secure new long-term funding for sustainable ocean management through creative financing and other tools; (b) apply and improve environmental standards and transparency in supply chains that influence the oceans; (c) harness the unique skill set of the business and private sector to help tackle marine conservation challenges (e.g. technology, facilities, business skills, engineering, marketing, , and communications)" and (d) facilitate the sharing of data.