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A strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to **reconcile development challenges** in the next decade

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A promising future

Protected areas and other nature-based solutions can help the world meet some of the most pressing development challenges by delivering significant environmental, social and economic benefits in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Consequently, if we make protected areas an integral part of our economies, development and well-being, we can achieve some of the world's most elusive development ambitions. Sustainable development is about improving human well-being without undermining environmental processes, natural ecosystems, or compromising our future. In reality, though, governments and societies are often faced with difficult choices and trade-offs while aiming to provide energy, food and water security, create and sustain jobs and livelihoods, promote economic development and conserve biodiversity. Truly sustainable development requires policies, institutional and regulatory frameworks, economic incentives, practical tools and safeguards to ensure that protected areas and healthy ecosystems sustain critical ecosystem services and promote resilience and human well-being. In the coming years, we can set the pathway to that future if we can strengthen the role of protected areas in defining and delivering on the world's Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring inclusive and effective governance and by embedding protected areas in the procedures that define society's development planning and underpin economic decision making. In complement, we must create and apply solutions to correct market, institutional and policy failures over the coming years by transforming how we measure and account for development and by providing clear incentives across sectors for responsible private and public investment in natural capital.

The current situation

Since the WPC in Durban, significant advances have been made with respect to protected area coverage. The 10% target for protected area coverage was one of the few indicators that showed a positive trend leading to the CBD COP10 in Nagoya in 2010, and this trend continues to show progress. While management effectiveness lags behind, terrestrial protected areas are on track to achieve the 17% target (currently 15.4%) and the designation of MPAs is increasing steadily though below the pace to achieve the 2020 target. Despite these gains, very few countries have managed to sufficiently incorporate the significant contributions of protected areas to job creation and livelihoods, economic development and maintenance of critical ecosystem services into national development planning processes or into the underlying economic decision-making frameworks that drive public and private investments. For example, the reform of harmful government subsidies and incentives has shown virtually no significant progress since 2010, and these subsidies continue to act as major drivers of biodiversity loss. At the same time, protected areas also face numerous pressures from accelerating and intensifying resource use that continues to drive habitat loss and fragmentation. The development and adoption of new approaches to maintain critical ecosystem services, protect landscape-level ecosystem processes, and strengthen adaptation and resilience to climate change are grossly insufficient. Additionally,

drivers linked to agriculture account for 70% of the projected loss of terrestrial biodiversity. Sustainable global food systems are therefore critical for the future of protected areas, ecosystems and global biodiversity. New approaches and investments in protected areas as a cornerstone strategy will not only help countries to achieve the CBD Aichi Targets, but also move them towards accomplishing truly sustainable national development.

Recommendations for change

Conservation, particularly with respect to protected areas, has largely remained within the domain of the conservation sector. Because of this, protected area advocates have been unable to effectively affect the social and economic drivers that influence development, economic-decision making and private investment. This must change. In order to ensure that the values and benefits of protected areas move from the periphery to the mainstream of economic and national development, **we must make protected areas the responsibility of the leaders and institutions who are tasked with society's economic and development planning and decision-making.** There is increasing evidence of the ever-stronger role that protected areas play in achieving nations' development goals, including food and water security, risk reduction, livelihoods, and poverty reduction. As these values become clearer, they will, and must, inevitably become an integral part of the overall economy, and be fully incorporated into economic decision-making frameworks. It is in these areas that a significant transformation is required in order for protected areas to meet the world's sustainable development aspirations.

1. Governments and parties to global negotiations must develop and incorporate clear protected area targets into the Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 development framework, so that the SDGs reflect the fundamental role of healthy protected areas in delivering on national sustainable development goals.
2. Development sector planning agencies must work more effectively across sectors and fully integrate protected areas values into such key national development plans as national economic development plans and poverty reduction strategies – especially sectoral plans affecting landscapes and seascape – and firmly anchor protected areas in inclusive environment, governance and land-use planning frameworks.
3. Integrate protected area values into the methodologies and procedures for economic accounting, such as in tourism, forest or water satellite accounts, SEAs and ultimately Standard National Accounts, which measure, account, monitor and report on development and human well-being.
4. Partner with the public and private sectors to create the tools and approaches governments need to provide sufficient economic evidence of protected area benefits and to better understand their protected area expenditures, financing needs and opportunities, to increase investments, fill financing gaps and move towards long-term sustainable financing.
5. Establish and employ sufficient social and environmental safeguards (e.g., voluntary and regulatory tools and standards and improved enforcement) to determine the full costs and benefits of economic and social investments, so societies can effectively deal with their inherent trade-offs and risks and the integrity of protected areas and the wellbeing of affected communities can be monitored and secured.
6. Provide the tools to governments to increasingly develop and apply regulatory-based [or statutory] spatial planning and other landscape-level approaches that sustain landscape- and seascape-level ecological processes, including critical ecosystem services and connectivity, so that protected areas can deliver on conservation goals and development challenges, including on climate resilience.
7. Ramp up work with such intensive land and sea-use industries and associations as agriculture and fisheries to deploy sustainable agricultural intensification and fisheries, conservation- and climate-smart agriculture,

and market-based mechanisms such as sustainability standards to maintain permeable landscapes that support protected area systems and sustain ecosystem services that are essential for food and water security.

8. Protected areas agencies need to update the design, management and governance of protected areas to consider a wide array of social and economic benefits such as jobs, livelihoods, community safety nets, and social and environmental resilience in order to build constituency and political will for protected areas.

Key partnerships needed

Economic institutions responsible for dealing with economic instruments and planning (e.g., Ministries of Finance, Departments of Budgeting, Bureaus of Statistics)

Key planning agencies from a variety of natural resource sectors (e.g., agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, freshwater)

Key planning agencies from a variety of economic development sectors (e.g., mining, energy, transportation, tourism, health, insurance)

Finance institutions responsible for private sector finance and insurance

Institutions responsible for landscape-level and seascape-level spatial planning

Institutions and agencies responsible for land, freshwater and marine management

Consumer organizations, and institutions working with sustainability and production standards

Local communities responsible for management of indigenous and community conserved areas

Protected area agencies responsible for protected area design and management