



Statement by the delegation of IUCN – The World Conservation Union at the High Level Segment of the Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

La Havana, Cuba

September 3, 2003

Thank you Mr Chairman for the opportunity provided to IUCN – The World Conservation Union to address the esteemed gathering here today.

IUCN is a global organization of nearly 1000 members that brings together governments, non-governmental organizations, and scientific bodies from around the globe in a partnership to achieve a just world that values and conserves nature.

Given the character of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a people-centred, multilateral environmental agreement, we encourage the UNCCD to consider the application of the ecosystem approach – a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources, that places human needs at its heart.

IUCN sees the work programme of the UNCCD as socially relevant and thus encourages the participation of diverse stakeholders. As a contribution to the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, IUCN in collaboration with partners, convened for the second time a Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) in conjunction with the UNCCD COP. This meeting organized between the 30 – 31 August 2003 provided a platform for discussing issues under the title of 'The Ecosystem Approach to Dryland Management: Integrating Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Security'. The outcomes of the Forum will be circulated during this meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

IUCN has a longstanding involvement in the process of drafting multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), as well as in contributing to their effective implementation at various levels.

Considering the need for complementarity in MEAs' implementation, IUCN is keen to assist countries in achieving focused and coordinated action. To this effect, we feel that

implementation of these international instruments should reflect development and social security aspects. The outcomes of the GBF held in conjunction with the UNCCD COP6 provide a framework for action on sustainable financing, including additional and innovative approaches. The recommendations of this GBF also encourage Parties to consider lifting of disincentives and removing barriers to support dryland management in a socially equitable manner, encompassing gender, traditional knowledge, legal and regulatory regimes.

Reflecting on the discussions of the COP so far, and apart from recommending the adoption of the ecosystem approach to operationalise the UNCCD work programme, IUCN suggests Parties to address implementation of NAPs along with other strategies and action plans such as the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, National Communications and National Adaptation Programmes of Actions. Besides, we should not lose sight of the relevance of ongoing development planning processes like PRSPs, MDGs and others in designing the implementation options.

IUCN has a track record of assisting countries in creating an enabling environment to address the aforementioned. Recent examples of this include the collaboration with the UNCCD Secretariat on extractive industries in arid and semi-arid zones, aimed at providing environmental planning and management guidance, the contribution to sustainable soils management through an analysis of legal and institutional frameworks, or its work on gender in dryland ecosystems.

In its endeavour to provide a platform to bring public and private sectors together, thus forging partnerships as identified and encouraged by the WSSD, IUCN would like to continue working as a strategic partner in the implementation of the UNCCD.

Mr Chairman, IUCN wishes the ongoing deliberations of the COP all success.

Thank you.