



# IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS SYDNEY 2014

## The Promise of Sydney Vision

Over 6,000 participants from 160 countries met at the IUCN World Parks Congress 2014 in Sydney, Australia. Acknowledging the traditional owners of the land where we met, we celebrated an enormous variety of inspiring ways of addressing the challenges facing the planet, through protected area approaches that respect and conserve nature, while benefitting human health and prosperity. We recognized that rebalancing the relationship between human society and nature is essential, and that ecosystems and their variety of life fully support our existence, cultural and spiritual identity, economies and well-being.

We celebrate the expansion and improved governance and management of protected and conserved areas around the world, and the leadership and initiatives of many regions, including the first ever Asia Parks Congress, since we met in Durban in 2003. In particular, we laud the establishment of new marine protected areas, as healthy oceans are critical to life on earth and must be protected at much greater scale. We acknowledge the increasing role of Indigenous Peoples', community, and privately-conserved areas and territories in reaching biodiversity conservation and societal goals, and the opportunities presented by new communication and other technologies to better understand and engage new constituencies, including young people in the world's rapidly expanding cities. We commend numerous improvements of corporate practice, and the many success stories and varied partnerships across sectors for nature conservation and sustainability.

Despite these advances, we recognize that threats to nature, its biological diversity and protected areas are now at the highest level in human history, due to a convergence at immense scale of the impacts of human consumption patterns, population growth, and industrial activity. Many protected and conserved areas are at risk or are poorly managed, and many rangers on the frontline have sacrificed everything for this cause. This reality must be faced directly, truthfully, and collaboratively. Bold vision and concerted action are required if we are to meet both conservation goals and human aspirations for current and future generations. There is no time to lose.

We, therefore:

**Promise to INVIGORATE** ... our efforts to ensure that protected areas do not regress but rather progress. We will scale up protection in landscapes, wetlands and seascapes to represent all sites essential for the conservation of nature, especially in the oceans. We will enhance diversity, quality and vitality in governance and management, including the appropriate recognition and support of areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and private entities. We will strive to promote sustainable land-uses and eliminate activities and policies that degrade, threaten or result in extinction or the loss of ecosystems and their biodiversity, including the rampant illegal wildlife trade and the impact of invasive alien species. We will recognize, respect, resource and support our frontline staff to do their often dangerous but always critical work.

**Promise to INSPIRE** ... all people, across generations, geography and cultures to experience the wonder of nature through protected areas, to engage their hearts and minds and engender a life-long association for physical, psychological, ecological, and spiritual well-being. We will motivate and engage a new generation of urban and

rural communities, as an essential investment in the future of sustainability on the planet, and in the quality of life of people everywhere. Further, by working in partnership with and recognizing the long traditions and knowledge, collective rights and responsibilities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to land, water, natural resource and culture, we will seek to redress and remedy past and continuing injustices in accord with international agreements.

**Promise to INVEST...** in nature's solutions, supported by public policy, incentives, tools and safeguards that help to halt biodiversity loss, mitigate and respond to climate change, reduce the risk and impact of disasters, improve food and water security, and promote human health and dignity. We will work to enable protected and conserved areas and their stewards to design and monitor effective, evidence-based and culturally appropriate responses to these challenges and to provide a compelling case for increased recognition, incentives, capacity and direct funding. We will encourage regional learning networks and initiatives that support these aims. We will collaborate with new partners to promote sustainable and equitable economies that respect planetary boundaries and social justice.