

## **IUCN Statement for the 14<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting, 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Your Excellencies, Co-chairs, esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to be in Bhutan for this, the 14<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting. This is my first visit to Bhutan, but I can already see why so many speak of the country's beauty and the warmth of its people.

On behalf of IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Royal Government of Bhutan for your invitation, hospitality, and for organizing this important meeting. I also extend congratulations to the Royal Government of Bhutan on the successful adoption of the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

IUCN is a membership Union, uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place in harmony.

Created in 1948, IUCN has evolved into the world's largest and most diverse environmental network. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its 1,300 Member organisations and the input of some 13,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. Our experts are organised into six commissions dedicated to species survival, environmental law, protected areas, social and economic policy, ecosystem management, and education and communication.

The ability to convene diverse stakeholders and provide the latest science, objective recommendations and on-the-ground expertise drives IUCN's mission of informing and empowering conservation efforts worldwide. We provide a neutral forum in which governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples groups, faith-based organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges.

By facilitating these solutions, IUCN provides governments and institutions at all levels with the impetus to achieve universal goals, including on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development, which IUCN was instrumental in defining.

Through their affiliation with IUCN, Member organisations are part of a democratic process, voting Resolutions which drive the global conservation agenda. They meet every four years

at the IUCN World Conservation Congress to set priorities and agree on the Union's work programme. The next congress will be held in June in 2020, hosted by the Government of France.

The partnership between the Royal Government of Bhutan and IUCN has been developing over the last 10 years. IUCN welcomes opportunities to utilize the strengths of our Union to further develop our partnership and contribute to the achievement of the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

This includes;

- opportunities to scale up Ecosystem-based adaptation approaches to climate change in mountainous regions which would contribute to National Key Result Area 6 as well as other NKRA's;
- furthering engagement in the Asia Protected Area Partnership (APAP), in which Bhutan has joined other countries from across Asia in sharing knowledge to strengthen regional collaboration and promote effective protected area management;
- supporting water management through IUCN's flagship transboundary BRIDGE programme, and implementation of the Ramsar Convention, thus supporting NKRA 17 on Sustainable Water
- contributing to the best practice in protected area management and the Green List of Protected Areas and;

We also welcome;

- further developing opportunities for Red List species assessments, building on the successful Red List of the Endemic Plant Species of Bhutan, and thus strengthening research on biodiversity information in line with NKRA 5
- and, working together to address the complex issue of Human Wildlife Conflict, drawing on the experience of IUCN's HWC Taskforce, and facilitating opportunities to share Bhutan's wealth of knowledge on this issues which was apparent at the Third APAP Technical Workshop on HWC successfully hosted by the Department of Forest and Park Service here in Thimpu in 2017.

In closing, and on behalf of IUCN, I thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this important meeting, and affirm how much INCN values its partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan. As Bhutan continues to show leadership in creating harmony between environment and sustainable development agendas, IUCN stands ready to contribute to the country's aspirations for Gross National Happiness.

Thank you and Tashi Delek.