



**NAPLES DECLARATION
IUCN MEDITERRANEAN MEMBERS MEETING
June 2004**

The IUCN members of the Mediterranean Region, noting that:

the Mediterranean Region, because of its distinctive geo-morphology and history is one of the richest areas of biological and landscape diversity in the world, with unique ecosystems and endemism;

the Mediterranean basin, during thousands of years, has been the cradle for the flourishing of civilisations that still represent some of the most extraordinary examples of human culture of all time;

the Mediterranean region is a global biodiversity hotspot characterised by a profound influence of agriculture, fisheries and tourism on the history, economy and landscape and by relatively small protected areas with extensive interaction with local communities;

the cultural and historical linkages among the different countries of the basin have led to a shared culture, and a strong sense of Mediterranean regional identity and solidarity, built around a shared sea;

Recognising:

- that the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation has been instrumental in building cooperation and exchange programmes in the Mediterranean region, thanks to the core support of the Ministry of Environment of Spain and the Junta of Andalusia ;
- that several national and international activities have recently been implemented to favour a comprehensive vision of the conservation of natural resources of the Mediterranean;
- that protected areas of the Mediterranean region have been growing in number and that innovative solutions for their management have increasingly been developed;
- most Mediterranean countries share common conservation and socio-economic development themes despite the significant disparities that are still present between the shores of the Mediterranean sea in terms of per capita gross domestic product and protected area coverage;
- the importance of maintaining the agricultural landscape and traditional livestock practice and varieties
- that, despite the efforts deployed, Mediterranean ecosystems present a level of degradation that is still alarming, threatening the natural, biological and cultural resources therein;
- the important role of Mediterranean ecosystems and cultures in the achievement of the 2010 target and the Millennium Development Goals;



- The participants:

- Urge all Mediterranean countries and IUCN to coordinate their actions to promote specific strategic plans for the conservation of the major Mediterranean environmental systems such as mountain areas, large river basins, marine and coastal areas, islands and the high sea;
- Urge all Mediterranean countries and IUCN to improve the cooperation among States and organisations with the aim to establish an ecologically representative, and effectively managed, system of protected areas both on land and in the marine environment, taking into account, where appropriate, the Malibu Declaration on Mediterranean-type ecosystems;
- Recommend that managers of protected areas promote the economic valuation and sustainable use of their products and services
- Commit themselves to exchange information, experiences and expertise and work together in areas such as the management of protected areas, of ecosystems and of species, conflict resolution and stakeholder dialogue, technology transfer, access and benefit sharing, and to promote concrete initiatives on research and monitoring as well as activities aimed at building capacity at all levels;
- Support the indication provided by the Convention on Biological Diversity for the retention of traditional knowledge and for their integration in conservation policies and for the management of natural resources;
- Commit themselves to increase the collaboration among protected areas and the international organisations of the Mediterranean region such as IUCN, UNEP (especially the RAC/SPA) and including the various national and international networks such as EUROPARC, Federparchi etc. in order to ensure an important role of Mediterranean protected areas in international environmental policy and fora;
- Promote existing projects aimed at increasing the systemic potential of protected areas and at fostering the process of creating ecological networks in land and in the marine environment, *inter alia* by applying innovative systems such as the eco-regional approach;
- Encourage all managers of protected areas in the Mediterranean to strengthen their relations with local communities and to ensure that protected areas are perceived as opportunities for increased livelihood and for the promotion of mechanisms for sustainable local development, through information dissemination and public awareness

- Request a renewed and improved effort in the implementation of:
- The Convention on Biological Diversity by facilitating the implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected areas, the application of the ecosystem approach, of the guidelines for invasive alien species, of the enlarged programme of work on forest biological diversity, of the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines on sustainable use of biodiversity, of the voluntary guidelines on sustainable tourism, the Global Plant Conservation Strategy and of the Bonn guidelines on Access and Benefit Sharing;



- The Ramsar Convention, and notably the MedWet programme, by facilitating the integration of policies on sustainable agriculture, on freshwater reserves and on biological diversity;
- The Barcelona Convention, by encouraging States to ratify and implement the protocols especially those on navigational safety and on Specially Protected Areas and support implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Biodiversity (SAP-BIO);
- the Convention to Combat Desertification, through the identification of best practices for the management of arid and semi-arid lands and the role of traditional knowledge and of protected area systems in the management of freshwaters
- the Bonn Convention and its specific agreements;

- The participant members, furthermore:
- Urge protected areas managers to improve the governance processes with the aim of improving transparency, efficiency, participation and social equity in decisions and actions by facilitating the access to information and by promoting initiatives in support to local communities;
- Support the Intersessional Plan 2005 – 2008 of the IUCN Centre for the Mediterranean Cooperation and the IUCN Countdown 2010 initiative;
- Request IUCN to work with the members and relevant regional partners to ensure a wide distribution of the conclusions and outcomes of the meeting on protected areas in the Mediterranean countries, held in Murcia, and of the V World Parks Congress of Durban, further request to facilitate the process of development of plans for the conservation of species of regional interest, as well as the process for the identification of a strategy on invasive alien species for the Mediterranean region, taking into account the Pan European Strategy developed under the Bern Convention;
- Support the establishment of an association of protected areas of the Mediterranean, and where appropriate, also at national level;
- Welcome the initiative of the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Land Protection to share its strong national experience on protected areas management, *inter alia*, by hosting and presenting its experiences in this members meeting and by organising the first *Ad-Hoc Open Ended Meeting on Protected Areas* under the CBD, in Italy for April 2005;
- Recognise the importance to ensure a presence of high technical and political profile to the above mentioned open ended on protected areas and invite IUCN to organise a preparatory meeting of the Mediterranean protected areas stakeholders.

The participants recognise that this declaration can only be implemented in the context of cooperation, solidarity and peace in our region.