

M e d i t e r r a n e a n c o n f e r e n c e :

Towards a Mediterranean Initiative for the Rational Use of Natural Areas

Murcia, Spain 26-30 March 2003

General conclusions and orientations

130 Mediterranean participants from 22 countries gathered to discuss the current situation with protected areas designation and management in the Mediterranean region and to lay out a road map that would ensure that the specificities and experience of the Mediterranean region would be adequately introduced to the World Parks Congress in Durban in Sept 2003.

Noting that the Mediterranean region is a global biodiversity hotspot characterised by the following:

- a rich multifunctional landscape mosaic that has been moulded and maintained by thousands of years of human activity;
- relatively small protected areas that have extensive interaction with local communities;
- cultural and historical linkages between the different countries of the basin that have led to a shared culture, and a strong sense of Mediterranean regional identity and solidarity, built around a shared sea;
- significant disparities between the shores of the Mediterranean in terms of per capita gross domestic product and the number of Protected Areas;
- increasing human pressures particularly in the sensitive coastal zones and around major cities.

The participants :

- Strongly support the approach to ensure that the Mediterranean reality is adequately reflected in the World Parks Congress and anticipate that the Mediterranean experience will contribute innovative thinking to the global effort for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
- Noted the need to substantially reinforce north-south, east-west support for effective PA management at the regional level through dialogues and partnerships if the significant biodiversity of the region is to be adequately protected for future generations;
- Encouraged all PA managers and administrations to strengthen relations with local communities and, where appropriate, to ensure that PAs are seen as an opportunity for maintaining livelihoods and promoting sustainable local development, not as a barrier, using increased awareness and information dissemination;
- Request IUCN to ensure that the conclusions and orientations from the workshop streams discussed (Governance, Connectivity, Capacity Building, Sustainable Financing and Gaps in the PA system) are promoted in Durban through the Congress secretariat and the workshop stream leaders; and
- Request IUCN to work with appropriate regional partners to ensure that the conclusions from the World Parks Congress are assessed for their relevance to the Mediterranean, are widely circulated and are effectively implemented in the region.