



**Declaration from the 3<sup>rd</sup> SSC Leaders Meeting  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
15-18 September 2015**

We, the participants in this 3<sup>rd</sup> Leaders Meeting of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, express our deep gratitude to the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi for its generosity in supporting and hosting this meeting in the inspiring and beautiful setting of Abu Dhabi Emirate.

We deeply appreciate the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and the special courtesy and warm hospitality extended to the participants by our friends from Abu Dhabi.

Safeguarding the Earth's biodiversity, its genes, species and ecosystems, is a moral responsibility. We believe that all species have a right to exist, and as a practical matter their conservation and sustainable use is essential to the future of humanity and to sustainable development. Our efforts to support species conservation are threatened by rapid and inequitable economic growth without regard for ecological limits, poor governance, ongoing increases in human populations, expansion of infrastructure, and unsustainable natural resource exploitation, production and consumption patterns. These pressures are undermining human well being and the biological wealth of our planet.

Our research indicates that the conservation of biodiversity needs to become a major public priority aimed at securing long-lasting livelihood benefits to humanity and providing the enabling conditions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be met by 2030. It is thus essential to increase efforts to assess and monitor the status and trends of species, enhance conservation planning and policy development, build capacity in resource management, strengthen public awareness, and implement effective actions to achieve conservation and sustainable use on the ground and in the water.

Effective implementation of existing decisions taken through international agreements and processes including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the World Heritage Convention, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD - including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, with its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation), can help reverse the alarming decline of life on Earth.

We call on the all nations and biodiversity-related agreements to step up efforts to prevent extinctions and improve the status of wild species, thereby implementing Aichi Target 12, including by considering the development of a CBD programme of work on species conservation. We note that conserving important places for biodiversity is a key part of any strategy to reduce the rate of extinctions and restore species' populations, and so should feature in any such species conservation efforts.

Over 10,000 SSC members comprise the worldwide network of experts that generate the knowledge for the IUCN Red List, and develop conservation plans for conserving priority species. Using objective quantitative criteria, we have now assessed over 77,000 species for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and our goal is to assess the conservation status of 160,000 species by 2020, thereby making the IUCN Red List more representative of the diversity of life on earth. SSC members are also working on a wide variety of of important issues, including on innovative responses to illegal wildlife trade, and addressing the threats to biodiversity from fisheries bycatch, oil palm expansion, wildlife disease, invasive species, and many others.

In Abu Dhabi we have had the opportunity to work together on solutions to the challenges affecting the world's species. As a result of this meeting we renew our commitment to safeguarding the diversity of life on earth in all its diversity, wonder, and beauty.