CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM

8-11 July 2019, Bissau, Guinea Bissau

INFORMATION NOTE

Theme: *Conserving nature for peace, security and sustainable economic development in Central and West Africa.*

I. Background and rationale

IUCN organizes the World Conservation Congress every 4 years. Prior to this important gathering, each IUCN regional programme around the world organizes a regional conservation forum that brings together the IUCN Member Organizations and Commission experts, but also government and civil society partners. Such fora constitute platforms for exchanging views at a larger scale, on current environmental issues. The meetings also provide opportunities for building synergy in actions in view of influencing and assisting government and civil society players in bringing the most appropriate responses to the regional and even global issues at stake.

The regional conservation fora also make it possible for IUCN Members to get informed about how the World Conservation Congress is organized and how it is rolled out; be prepared for effective participation; and formulate proposals for motions in order to take to the global level, the main concerns of their region in terms of environmental conservation and sustainable development for the well-being of their communities and peoples.

The regional conservation fora also represent an occasion for the IUCN Secretariat to collect the views and recommendations of the Members on the proposed Four-Year Programme for incorporation in the final version.

Initially designed for the IUCN Members and experts from Commissions, the forum is gradually opening to other partners. It has now become a dialogue framework for nature conservation and sustainable development players with the purpose of mobilizing expertise, generating knowledge, disseminating lessons and best practices, exchanging information, setting programme priorities at medium and long term and promoting dialogue with the scientific world.

Hence the 3rd edition of the IUCN Central and West Africa Regional Conservation Forum scheduled to take place in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau from 9th to 11th July, 2019. It will bring together about one hundred delegates/participants from Central and West Africa, including government representatives, development actors, researchers, representatives of conservation communities and policy-makers.
The theme of this 3rd edition is: **Conserving nature for peace, security and sustainable economic development in Central and West Africa**

This theme is all the more topical in the context of Central and West Africa that it is of paramount importance given that it should lead to exploring the programme challenges and prospects that take account of the complexity, interrelations and interdependencies of the eco-environmental, sociocultural, economic, policy and security dimensions in strategic planning and implementation.

This edition of the forum is being organized prior to and in preparation for three major world conservation events planned for 2020: the World Conservation Congress that will take place in June 2020 in Marseille (France); the 25th Conference of Parties (CoP 25) of the UNCCC to be held in November 2019 in Santiago (Chili); as well as the CoP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity that will take place in November 2020 in Kunming (China).

**II. Objectives of the Forum**

**A. Objective:**

The main objective of the regional conservation forum is to provide a framework for reflection and exchanges for the Members, Experts from thematic Commissions (Ecosystem Management; Species Survival; Protected Areas; Environmental Law; Education and Communication; Environmental, Economic and Social Policies) and IUCN partners (States, NGOs, civil society). This aims at giving them the opportunity to actively contribute to influencing the international agenda on conservation and sustainable development.

**B. Specific Objectives:**

The specific objectives are the following:
- To identify and popularize the main challenges to conservation and natural resource use in the region, so as to enable a common vision in this respect;
- Share success stories in terms of responses to environmental challenges;
- Strengthen the participation of African delegations in international events, notably the CoP21 on climate change and the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

In more concrete terms, the aim will be to (i) discuss and collect the feedback of IUCN Members in Central and West Africa about the upcoming IUCN Four-Year Programme (2021-2024), which will be submitted for approval during the 2020 Congress; (ii) discuss and agree on the most effective mechanisms for the implementation of the « Single Programme »; (iii) share and adopt a concerted position with respect to the post 2020 conservation agenda at the global scale; (iv) highlight the linkages between the IUCN Four-Year programme and the post 2020 conservation agenda; (v) identify relevant issues in relation to the four-year programme and post 2020 agenda to be debated during the upcoming Congress and (vi) Examine current and potential joint initiatives with the IUCN Secretariat, in relation to the Red List of Species and Ecosystems, Green List of Protected Areas and Key Zones for Biodiversity in Central and West Africa.
III. Proceedings of the Forum

The Forum is structured around five main sessions:

**SESSION I: Opening Ceremony of the regional conservation forum**

At this stage, the major missions, visions and prospects underlying UICN’s conservation action will be outlined, and an overview will be given of the challenges to be addressed by the Union in priority in the next programme cycle.

**SESSION II: General overview of IUCN – A union for nature and life**

This session is meant to provide an overview of how IUCN as a Union of Members and network of actors, is structured and how it operates in order to achieve its mission which is to « influence, encourage and assist societies in conserving the integrity and diversity of nature and ensuring that natural resources are used in an equitable and sustainable manner ».

**SESSION III: Current state of nature and biodiversity conservation worldwide and in Central and West Africa**

This session will provide the opportunity to review the current state of biodiversity and actions carried out towards nature conservation in view of scoping the debates and decision-making during the forum. The major stakes and challenges facing mankind and calling for effective conservation actions will be highlighted in the course of the session.

**SESSION IV: Proposed solutions for better addressing nature conservation stakes and challenges**

This session is a forum for presenting, discussing and valuing different kinds of solutions (strategies, financing and support mechanisms, institutional and policy mechanisms, etc.) proposed by the IUCN Secretariat, Members and Commissions as well as financial partners in view of meeting the natural conservation and sustainable development challenge within the framework of the post-2020 agenda.

**SESSION V: Preparation for the 2020 World Conservation Congress**

This session is designed to inform and mobilize the Members, experts from Commissions and partners around the upcoming World Conservation Congress scheduled to take place in Marseille in June 2020; debate and identify draft resolutions and motions in view of the World Congress; etc.