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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF CEESP

Dear CEESP members and partners,

I am particularly proud to introduce to you this timely and controversial issue of our Journal on "Climate change, energy change and conservation", for which I would like to commend all the members and partners who have produced the engrossing papers collected here and in particular the main Editor of the issue— Nigel Dudley— and his collaborators. As our affectionate readers know, our Journal is a forum where we explore and debate a variety of subjects of relevance to conservation. At times— like when we dedicated an issue to "History, culture and conservation" these subjects are important but subtle. At other times, like in the case of this issue, they are budding— if not exploding in our face— every way we look.

Climate change is occurring: we see the impacts on species, ecosystems, glaciers, low-lying countries, the new Northwest Passage, and other climate related disasters.... Climate change is the strongest force we have ever fought in our pursuit of conservation. It is wiping out entire habitats, debilitating species, and disrupting the lives of people and their capacity to be effective managers of their lands. The poor and those without a strong enough voice (including wild species) lose out disproportionately. They are the ones who cannot buffer themselves against drought years, who have to settle in flood plains, live in cheap buildings that collapse, fall prey to new diseases.... Clearly, we need to respond, but we should be afraid of two types of responses: 1) meek, insufficient, politically timid responses, and 2) panic-motivated and hastily thought-out responses that do not touch the heart of the problem.

The industrial revolution ushered a time of enormous sacrifice and enormous prosperity.... But most such sacrifice— including today's most imminent threats from global warming— is made by the people who don't receive the benefits... and much of the benefits are received by people who make no sacrifice. It is as if our planet is being "disturbed" by this gross injustice, as if it was reacting to it....



Charcoal making is a toiling activity, in Cambodia as in many other countries. (Courtesy Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend)

What is the heart of the problem? Well, all around it, like the layers of skin of an onion, there are the many layers of complexities that the articles collected in this issue have talked about.... It is indeed most important to understand and evaluate such complexities and thus avoid hastily thought-through solutions. But if we go a lot deeper, at the very core we find a flagrant lack of justice and retribution. The industrial revolution ushered a time of enormous sacrifice and enormous prosperity.... But most such sacrifice—including today's most imminent threats from global warming— is made by the people who don't receive the benefits... and much of the benefits are received by people who make no sacrifice. It is as if our planet is being "disturbed" by this gross injustice, as if it was reacting and letting us know.

This issue of *Policy Matters* points to complex solutions. Many of the solutions call for working with indigenous peoples and local communities and draw from both the best of new technology and the wisest of traditional knowledge. These solutions are crucial, but are not enough. We need also concerted action by governments, including focused solutions backed by major funding— as many Green New Deals as we can!

Policy Matters 16 is prepared for the Fourth World Conservation Congress in Barcelona (Spain) October 2008, where I will be passing on to a new Chair the tasks, preoccupations and sheer satisfaction of being the Chair of this great IUCN Commission. It offers me a chance to leave on paper some of my parting messages and I will do it with gusto, and with an eye to brevity as it is a letter and not a paper. I will leave you, dear members, and my beloved IUCN, with three recommendations:

- ▷ Remember that we can understand everything about a habitat, a species or a protected area and still be unable to do anything about saving it— conservation must go **beyond understanding into active care for the diversity of life and the governance of change.**
- ▷ **Seek the company of indigenous peoples and local communities more than the company of corporate lawyers and CEOs**—the latter may be economically powerful, but the former are the salt of the Earth and the hands and heart of conservation.
- ▷ Remember that we are about a "just" world that values and conserves nature— **striving for justice is the heart of all real solutions,** for problems that rise among people as well as for problems, such as global warming, that rise between people and nature.



Passing on the care of the land from a generation to the next: agroforestry in the Bijagos archipelago of Guinea Bissau. (Courtesy Mariana Oliveira)

CEESP has stood the test of time, and has shown great resilience. Let us remember that a previous Council killed our Commission by failing to send a mandate to Congress for its approval.... yet she was revived from its ashes—phoenix-like— by the passionate support of IUCN’s Members in the Congress of 2000, at the very time when I was asked to become the Chair. CEESP has survived detractors, lack of financial support and attempts at diminishing our standing within the Union. I am leaving to the next Chair a vibrant organisation, strengthened by the conscience and commitment of hundreds of active members, many of whom represent the weakened of this world who have, through the Commission, managed to have a very audible voice within the Union.

We called attention to a power that is infinitely stronger and an infinitely better ally to conservation than the new imperialism and the greed of profit blinded corporations. We called attention to the silent and capillary conservation power of cultures and communities, a power that comes from the history of our species as part of nature.

Most importantly, CEESP managed to take a few small but clear strides for the cause of equity, the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and the recognition and support to their contribution to conserving and valuing nature. We called attention to a power that is infinitely stronger, and an infinitely better ally to conservation, than the new imperialism and the greed of profit blinded corporations. We called attention to the silent and capillary conservation power of cultures and communities, a power that comes from the history of our species as part of nature. May that power thrive!

Dear members, thank you very much for the great journey together, and let us keep going!



M. Taghi Farvar,
Chair, IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)

PS: For members who have not seen it before, this is the letter exchange we had with the IUCN DG regarding the partnership with Shell.

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/letter_exchange_shell_agreement_iucn_dg_and_ceesp_chair.doc



Climate change, energy change and conservation— preparing for the long haul

Nigel Dudley

with Clive Wicks and Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend

The point of departure for this issue of *Policy Matters* is that the evidence for serious climate change is very strong, although the extent or timing of many of the impacts are still not yet precisely known. But the threats are not so overwhelming as to be hopeless. If we really thought the situation was without hope we would be concentrating on enjoying ourselves as the ship sailed on towards the edge of the world, rather than wasting time trying to solve the problems... Furthermore, while CEESP has argued strongly that IUCN should address climate change as a central part of its mission, we are also aware that a sudden rush of concern about climate should not blind us to other pressing problems; when nations start to panic the solutions they propose are seldom either very effective or very equitable. We can see a classical example unfolding in front of us at the moment in the rush to develop bio fuels without considering the impact on biodiversity or food production. Now is an important time to hold our collective nerve as well as pushing hard for some solutions.

Addressing climate change means embracing energy change: the two issues are intricately and profoundly related. Since the industrial revolution, the world has been increasingly addicted to fossil fuels; an addiction that is still accelerating today. The huge political and economic stake in these finite and polluting sources of energy has a colossal influence on events throughout

the world, building or collapsing economies, fomenting wars and revolution and making or breaking leaders and politicians. Despite their huge profits and their acknowledged role in stimulating potentially catastrophic climate change, fossil fuel companies all too often enjoy subsidies, tax-breaks and political support on a scale that less damaging energy sources can only dream about. Moving away from fossil fuels, something that we have had

Despite their huge profits and their acknowledged role in stimulating potentially catastrophic climate change, fossil fuel companies all too often enjoy subsidies, tax-breaks and political support on a scale that less damaging energy sources can only dream about.

the technical capability to do for decades in respect to many of their uses, is proving enormously difficult. Managing this transition in a way that does not create social collapse is perhaps the greatest geopolitical challenge humanity is facing at the moment.

But responding to climate change is not just about political or personal energy choices. Climate change is already with us, and whatever we do to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases over the next few years, we are faced with the need to respond positively and effectively to the problems that are already with us and will remain for a long time. The

papers collected here provide a stimulating array of responses from many countries to mitigate the consequences of climate change and some of CEESP's long-standing areas of interest, including community approaches to conservation and the importance of traditional agricultural and lifestyle patterns, have much to teach us.

High technology and low technology

Unfortunately, proposals for "solutions" to climate change are sometimes as divisive as the opinions about its essence. At the risk of simplification, they might be placed into two broad camps: low technology and high technology

At the low technology end, proponents argue that we need to transform our lifestyles at a fundamental and radical level; for instance virtually abandoning air travel and private motorised transport, pulling food production back to nearby sources, everyone lending a hand with food growing, recycling and small-scale energy production systems. A "transformation" movement is spreading through cities, towns and villages throughout Europe. The low technologists look to carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation from natural systems, to a worldwide switch to organic food production and a dramatic decrease in meat consumption: more generally to a switch from globalisation to localisation.

The high technologists on the other hand are more bullish about maintaining current lifestyles and look to nuclear power including nuclear fusion as an alternative electricity source, carbon capture technologies such as ocean fertilisation and genetically

engineered trees, tapping of geothermal energy on a large scale, major solar electricity generation and other ways of engineering our way out of problems.

To be realistic, we will probably need a mixture of low and high tech solutions, and it would be presumptuous to ignore any options for reasons of lifestyle choice or ideology. However, there is already

today much we can do to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions through a mixture of energy savings, low technology and high technology. And we need to rediscover the concept of "appropriate technology": choosing the best solution for the task while looking at the consequences that that solution has upon society as a whole and not just on the problem at hand. In a world of vested interests and resistance to change, this is a tough political task indeed.

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Picture 1. Alternative energy production has a proven record of success (Courtesy Sue Stolton, Equilibrium Research)

No free lunch

Unfortunately, many of the “solutions” to climate change carry some major costs of their own and create ethical problems for those trying to reduce their carbon footprint. Articles in the

Following a decade where the concept of leadership by government has fallen out of fashion in some parts of the world, there is a need for strong and conscious recognition of the role of governments in combating climate change.

current issues of *Policy Matters* look amongst other such issues at questions of fair trade and air miles, of protected areas and human rights and at the worrying fact that virtually all viable energy sources currently have environmental groups campaigning against them, effectively neutralising each other’s

environmental voice. There are many such paradoxes. Should conservationists still fly around the world to do our work? Does carbon sequestration work or is it simply a way of “buying indulgences”, offsetting nothing more than our own consciences? We still don’t have the answer to many of these questions, but posing these questions as clearly as we can is a step in the right direction.

Who should be involved?

The majority of the problems have been created by a minority of the world’s population: wealthy people in rich countries. The main burden of addressing the problems should fall on these people and particularly on a genuine application of the “polluter pays” principle. Most of us will only take the responsibility if we are pushed. For example, while it is undoubtedly true that some sections of industry have made a positive

contribution to addressing climate change (and other environmental issues), relying solely on the market to solve climate change and energy issues through its own innate magic is too big a gamble; many of the changes that are becoming increasingly necessary demand pretty much the opposite of the usual corporate marketing plans. Non-governmental organisations are also constrained. They can help, agitate, lead by example and provide inspiration but can not and should not hold together national and international strategies on their own. Many hard decisions will therefore need to be made by responsible, elected governments, steered by the representative institutions of the international community, such as United Nations Agencies, international agreements and other global bodies with a democratic structure. Following a decade where the concept of leadership by government has fallen out of fashion in some parts of the world, there is a need for strong and conscious recognition of the role of governments in combating climate change.

Selling bad news

Whatever mixture appeals, the solutions to climate change all share some common problems for people interested in the intersection of environment and society. First, many of them (and almost all the low technology approaches) are not particularly appealing: indeed they represent an advertising executive’s nightmare. Try as we can to make the idea of a lower consumption lifestyle sound attractive, promoting the idea of making do with less is hard to sell: less food variety, less foreign travel, less new clothes, less consumer goods are all ideas that many professional environmentalists find hard to follow through

in practice, let alone less concerned and more sceptical people. Many people around the world still aspire to join the consumption lifestyle lived by the minority (including of course most of the people reading this journal). And even more still need to take care of the basic necessities of life. For them, there is simply no chance of diminishing consumption, as they are already on the brink of survival.

The challenge of selling bad news will be made more acute when the current flurry of interest in climate change dies away. Which it probably will; the rush of books, articles and television shows on the environment is uncomfortably similar to those in the mid 1970s during the last oil shock and in the early 1990s during the Earth Summit. Next year, unless something dramatic happens, climate change may be way down many people's agendas again for a while...

What should IUCN be doing?

This leads us to the question of strategy. IUCN is about to start a new quadrennial programme that puts a high emphasis on climate change. But the organisation has little institutional history on this issue. What should be the priorities? For the sake of stimulating debate, we identify five key themes.

The first is to galvanise and ramp up the heartlands of the union: conservation and particularly species conservation and the role of protected areas as critical tools for conservation. Deforestation and uncontrolled forest fires still need to be stopped and forest conservation measures vastly increased. In the enthusiasm to build new partnerships and explore new territories there is sometimes a

tendency to ignore what the world already knows us for and instinctively looks to us for advice. Developing and implementing effective species survival strategies and strengthening and providing advice on the rapid expansion of global protected area networks should be our first and most concrete contributions.

Deforestation and uncontrolled forest fires still need to be stopped and forest conservation measures vastly increased...

Second, amongst the plethora of proposals for addressing climate change, those involving indigenous peoples and local communities are appearing with increasing frequency; several are written about here. Many of these people are those already suffering from the impacts of climate change and environmental destruction. IUCN has built a solid body of experience in addressing issues of localising governance in various ways, notably relating to protected areas but with ideas applicable much further afield as well. It is time to both celebrate and further build on these successes. Appropriate recognition and support to indigenous peoples managing their own territories in customary ways and communities conserving natural resources for a variety of purposes should become central to IUCN's responses to climate change as well.

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Picture 2. Commuters in Hanoi, Vietnam—many developing countries are seeing their energy use rise rapidly. (Courtesy Nigel Dudley, Equilibrium Research)

Third, we must strengthen IUCN's unparalleled cooperation with governments. IUCN is almost unique in the environmental field in having both governmental and non-governmental members, providing a rare "demilitarised zone" in which governments can meet each other and their own and other NGO members on neutral ground and hopefully with mutual respect. It is important that these meetings are not confined to occasional massive conferences such as the World Conservation Congress but that IUCN continues to facilitate hard and necessary debate about responses to climate change, while upholding the values of conservation with equity, and the respect of human rights.

Fourth if, as is intended, IUCN engages more fully in climate and energy policy over the next few years, it should do so in the context of promoting a

genuine and radical change to energy supply: a veritable Energy Revolution, replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources and, as a precursor to that, replacing the current vast subsidies for fossil fuels with similar levels of support to help build genuine energy alternatives. The article by SEAPRISE in this issue of the journal lays out a clear and compelling strategic direction.

Next and perhaps most difficult, IUCN has also been building increasing links with industry and sees partnerships with both individual companies and corporate bodies as critical to its mission. We agree on the necessity of working with the industry sector and of IUCN's important role here, but recommend that IUCN should consider a careful review of both its existing relationships and any others that are in the planning stage. There are genuine worries amongst many IUCN members, including some government members, about the institutional framework for partnerships with industry (the very word "partner" is problematic as it assumes an equal relationship). Has IUCN been successful

Working with industry is indeed essential (and IUCN is in a very strong position to do it) but the union should argue from a position of strength and not be afraid to disengage if this seems justified.

in promoting genuine change or is the Union simply overseeing some "green-washing"?

Overall, is our relationship with any given business playing a positive, neutral or negative role vis-à-vis climate change? If the role of an industry partner is inherently negative in terms of, for instance, producing greenhouses gases, are there real, on-the-ground changes and substantial policy changes that we can point at to justify the relationship with our Union? Are the partners supporting or undermining relevant IUCN Resolutions, such as the Amman 2000 Resolution asking that oil and gas exploration should not take place in category I-IV protected areas? Any kind of partnership is difficult; it implies some give and take, and some trade-offs as with every relationship; but we hear increasing concern about whether or not the current balance is right. Failing concrete signs of progress over time, it will be very difficult to justify our "partnerships" and "alliances" with business. In other words, working with industry is indeed essential (and IUCN is in a very strong position to do it) but the

The concept of a Green New Deal is floated here, and we are confident it would repay careful consideration.

Union should argue from a position of strength and not be afraid to disengage if this seems justified. We are convinced that even industry, in the long run, will benefit

from and will be grateful about such as a principled stand.

All the changes we are suggesting as necessary will cost money. But money is available. If the current massive subsidies to fossil fuels were shifted, even gradually, towards renewable sources and energy saving

technologies, we would go a long way to addressing the shortfall. Even better, additional money could be found if polluting industries would pay a more realistic contribution to funding the solutions.

In this light, and in the light of current enormous profits of some companies, the argument for a carbon tax is simply compelling. At a time of jitters about a global recession, the idea of governments taking a hand at addressing the problems by creating new and sustainable jobs through a large scale change in energy technologies becomes increasingly attractive. The concept of a Green New Deal is floated here, and we are confident it would repay careful consideration.

...promoting a genuine and radical change to energy supply: a veritable Energy Revolution, replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.

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