

## **UK COMMITTEE FOR IUCN-UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008

At Defra, Nobel House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR

1315-1600hrs

**Present:** Chris Mahon (Chair), Joanna Robertson (JR), Mike Pienkowski, Trevor Salmon (by teleconference), Martin Spray

**In attendance:** Vin Fleming and John Henson Webb (Secretariat)

### **1. Chair's welcome**

CM welcomed the participants to Nobel House and thanked TS for making the arrangements.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Alistair Gammell, Mark Huxham, James Robinson (JRo) and Stuart Brookes.

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

With no further amendments received, the minutes of ExCo52 were adopted.

### **4. Countdown 2010 parliamentary seminar preparatory discussion**

VF provided minutes from previous meetings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on wildlife and conservation to illustrate the likely audience and attendance for an IUCN UK Committee event. It was suggested that ExCo members might invite or remind MPs about this event personally. It was also suggested that the APPG on Overseas territories be invited to participate. It was suggested that we put a ceiling of 15 on IUCN Committee members who were present (to avoid swamping the meeting) and MP suggested inviting Council members of the UKOTCF. It was also suggested that Emily McKenzie (JNCC) be invited for her expertise on ecosystem valuation.

In discussion it was agreed that April 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> were the preferred dates (with the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> as secondary options. Given the time constraint of one hour, there were to be four key speakers, with an introduction from CM:

- Introduction to Countdown 2010 – Professor Macgregor-Reid
- Marine biodiversity – Sarah Fowler / Jo Oldaker
- Overseas Territories – Mike Pienkowski
- Ecosystem Services/ connectivity and/or targets post-2010– (speaker to be recruited)

Each presentation would be kept as short as possible (maximum of 7 minutes) to allow for a question and answer session or less formal discussion over refreshments. Free-standing displays and handouts could also be utilised if the option was available. It was thought to be important that the message delivered through the seminar should contain a positive message but indicate where the UK Government could act to help reduce biodiversity loss. To this end it was vital that the speakers should communicate between themselves so that the presentations provided a unified picture.

Suggestions for a title for the seminar noted the use of a strap-line to 'set the scene' for the event:

- "Countdown to 2010: progress toward the biodiversity target"
- "Countdown 2010: are we making progress?"
- "Countdown 2010: UK progress toward UK international biodiversity targets"

**Action 53.4.1 TS to approach Defra colleagues regarding potential Ecosystem Services speaker**

**Action 53.4.2 MP to approach UKOTCF colleagues regarding attendance at seminar**

**Action 53.4.3 Secretariat to approach Emily McKenzie regarding potential Ecosystem Services presentation**

**Action 53.4.4 Secretariat to pursue logistics for seminar with Cara Downey**

### **5. 4<sup>th</sup> World Conservation Congress in Barcelona**

- ***Preparatory discussion on date, venue and topic***

The Secretariat noted that, at the time of ExCo 53, little information was available on the Congress venue and, therefore, whether rooms were available for holding side events that had not already been confirmed. As a UK Committee event was thought to be useful method of promoting the Committee

and its activities it was suggested that an event away from the main venue might be pursued if no other options were available. An evening event, avoiding the first few days and any other high profile events was considered the best option, with both the "Who Pays?" project report and the European Landscape Convention possible topics for the event.

**Action 53.4.1 Secretariat to pursue enquiries regarding a venue for a UK Committee event at Barcelona**

**Action 53.4.2 TS to pursue enquiries regarding facilities at the Diagonal Silken Hotel for staging a UK Committee event**

It was reported that TS would be part of the UK delegation to Barcelona; CM would attend as UK Committee Chair and act to co-ordinate UK Committee activity in Barcelona; JR indicated that she would attend if there were sufficient reason for her presence.

With papers for the Congress being made available in May (rules of operation require all papers to be available 150 days before the start of Congress) the suggested date for the pre-Congress Members' meeting was Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June (subject to AG's availability). The meeting would discuss key messages that the UK Committee could take to the Congress and any Congress themes or issues which the UK Membership thought required a UK position and what outcomes the UK would want from the Congress. A second Members' meeting would then be held in September to finalise UK Committee activity.

**Action 53.4.3 Secretariat to contact AG regarding availability on 18<sup>th</sup> June for pre-Congress meeting**

**Action 53.4.4 Secretariat to email UK Committee Members' regarding pre-Congress meeting and preferred location**

**53.4.5 Secretariat to invite David Henshilwood to assist at June Members' meeting**

**53.4.6 Secretariat to determine date for September Members' meeting**

## **6. UK Overseas Territories**

MP reported that progress toward the Reunion conference had been challenging for the organisers at IUCN Office for Europe, partly related to making use of the success of achieving its adoption by the French EU Presidency. The Biooverseas initiative group (including UKOTCF) were continuing to help provide a small advisory team (with a meeting on march 14<sup>th</sup>), within the much larger, representative steering group.

The Overseas Territories Consultative Council (a meeting of Ministers or equivalents from UKOTs with UK ministers) had Environment Charters on its recent agenda, and the UKOTCF were continuing to raise the importance of these at the request of NGOs and others in the UKOTs.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee are investigating governance in the UKOTs, and UKOTCF as well as some member organisations have given submissions. On the basis of other submissions, Committee members are expressing concern at the difficult in free-speech in certain territories. This has major implications also for the environment, and residents in Turks & Caicos Islands, British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Anguilla, Cayman Islands and others have expressed concern at built development without proper process, closed decision making, and large-scale inappropriate development impacting important natural areas, even those which are theoretically protected. Parliamentarians from the FAC are visiting several Territories.

On a more positive note, the British Virgin Islands have at last passed legislation to empower the BVI National Parks Trust to manage its national parks.

A fire on Tristan da Cunha has destroyed the fish-processing plant (the main source of income for the island) which also housed the island's main generator.

Finally, the UKOTCF have started a cross-territory environmental education project for the UKOTs and Crown Dependencies, comprising three strands:

- An exchange of information on teaching resources
- Virtual tour of the Territories
- A web-based discussion group on environmental matters aimed mainly at young people.

## **7. Secretariat Report and contract renewal**

The contract between JNCC and the UK Committee for provision of Secretariat services expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. VF reported that, following internal discussion, the JNCC would not offer to provide this service following the expiry date due to other priorities following the JNCC strategy and because, after providing the service for 9 years with a subsidy from JNCC and the country agencies, it was timely that another body took the role. Consequently the UK Committee would need to consider

seeking a new provider. CM noted this with disappointment citing the loss of expertise and continuity that JNCC had provided but was grateful for the year's notice to plan any handover.

In discussion it was noted that the proposed Review of the Committee and Secretariat might help determine the form and functions required of the new Secretariat. Therefore, any tender process would commence after the completion of the Review. VF noted that when the Secretariat contract was up for renewal in 2000 all the received tenders exceeded available Committee funds, so the JNCC, with additional voluntary contributions from the country agencies and JNCC, had taken over the role.

JR asked whether the JNCC would have any direct involvement with the UK Committee after the Secretariat contract expired. VF replied that agency involvement was through the agreed lead agency, in this instance CCW, so the JNCC would not need direct representation. However, VF committed to providing a smooth transfer of responsibility and that we would continue to help with any queries following the 31 March '09.

CM asked that the Committees' thanks to the JNCC be recorded for their support as Secretariat.

## **8. UK Committee Review**

- ***Discuss draft questionnaire to Members***

In discussion a number of suggestions were provided for amending the draft questionnaire. It was suggested that the survey could be run during April<sup>1</sup> for a two week period enabling results to be available by early May for preliminary analysis by the June members' meeting. We should actively chase member participation and CM would write a covering note to the survey.

**Action 53.8.1 ExCo to provide Secretariat with any further amendments to questionnaire by April 28<sup>th</sup> (deadline extended due to late production of minutes)**

**Action 53.8.2 Secretariat to circulate amended Questionnaire to ExCo (as pilot in web format)**

In consideration of the structure of other European National Committees, it was recognised that there seemed to be no one model for a National Committee (or its Secretariat) with examples ranging from an un-funded single person operation through to an organisation of forty people with a multi-million euro budget. It was suggested that the Review might help clarify the most appropriate future structure of the Committee.

**Action 53.8.3 Secretariat to use SurveyMonkey for Members to view Review Questionnaire by May 6<sup>th</sup> and chase for responses after one week (deadline May 23<sup>rd</sup> – see footnote below)**

The preliminary analysed responses from the Questionnaire should be available at the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, with the final output ready for the September meeting.

CM suggested a new category of IUCN UK membership to cover the private sector and proposed that in 2009 the UK Committee could address business and biodiversity, an emerging issue, and invite participation from the CBI and related organisations. A question on this subject could be added to the questionnaire. The UK Committee could pioneer private sector involvement and a conference presented an opportunity for engagement. It was suggested that it would be valuable for Secretariat to undertake a review of the constitution and rules of operation for the Committee in time for the next ExCo – not only in respect of this issue but more widely (e.g. with respect to the timing of AGMs respective to the end of the financial year).

**Action 53.8.4 Secretariat to obtain further copies of Pan-European Newsletter (Vol 15) on "Business and Biodiversity" for distribution to senior figures in private sector**

**Action 53.8.5 TS to provide potential private sector contacts**

**Action 53.8.6 Secretariat to review UK Committee Constitution and Rules of Operation for ExCo 54**

## **9. Nomination / Election of future UK Committee Chair**

VF noted that, had Andy Brown still been Committee Chair, a Chair-Elect would now be shadowing him through until the 2009 AGM. Although CM's election as Chair had happened under atypical circumstances, there was no need for him to be identified as 'interim-chair' as he was the elected chair of the Committee and not to refer himself in that way undermined his position. It was recommended and agreed by ExCo that CM would be referred to as 'Chair' until such time as circumstances changed.

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<sup>1</sup> Deadlines will need to be amended to enable non-attendees time to comment on the questionnaire)

## **10. Countdown 2010 Focal Point activities**

The Secretariat reported that JNCC had now signed a declaration.

**Action 53.10.1 Secretariat to provide MP with Countdown 2010 Declaration for UKOTCF**

## **11. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting**

**Action 53.11.1 Secretariat to add European Work Programme to ExCo 54 agenda**

Giant's Causeway: TS noted that Graham Seymour (EHS) had been involved in reviewing and amending the development proposals and that they were awaiting a response from the World Heritage Secretariat. The UK Committee would await further details, recognising that it may need to comment at a later date.

**Action 52.13.3** ExCo to consider possible topics which the Committee might support financially – this will be subject to the outcomes of the Committee Review.

- ***Finance update***

The finances were noted as being in good order, with funds available for UK Committee activities at the Barcelona Congress. The Secretariat reported that costs associated with the Parliamentary Seminar were not known at this stage.

## **12. AoB**

The Secretariat reported that £12500 was to be received from Natural England in support of an IUCN WCPA project. The funds would be held temporarily before being transferred to the WCPA or a nominated recipient.

## **13. Dates of future meetings**

- ***Finalise Meeting Cycle for 2008***

**Action 53.13.1 ExCo to provide availabilities for meeting dates to Secretariat**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June – Pre-Congress Members' meeting – venue to be arranged

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September – ExCo 54 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-Congress Members' meeting – London (venue to be arranged)

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November – ExCo 55 – teleconference