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**OUTCOMES OF THE IUCN WORLD
CONSERVATION CONGRESS ON INVASIVE SPECIES
MANAGEMENT**

(Hawai, September 2016)

*Document prepared by
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on behalf of the Bern Convention*

OUTCOMES OF THE IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS ON INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT, RELEVANT TO THE BERN CONVENTION

Report established by:

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INTRODUCTION

The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) of the Council of Europe has a specific article on this threat (Article 11, paragraph 2.b), requiring Contracting Parties “to strictly control the introduction of non native species”, and has worked for many years on this issue. In order to help interpret these obligations, the Convention since 1992 the Bern convention established a "Group of experts on Invasive Alien Species", that meets regularly and produced recommendations to be discussed by the Standing Committee of the Convention. Over the years, the Bern Convention has adopted numerous recommendations on invasive species, and has produced documents on this issue, including guidelines and codes of conduct, and a European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, developed in collaboration with the IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (IUCN ISSG) and adopted in 2003. Since then, the Bern Convention and the IUCN ISSG have had a constant and very productive collaboration, that has led to establishing several joint Codes of Conduct and Guidelines.

On the basis of this long-standing collaboration, the Secretariat of the Bern Convention has asked the Chair of the IUCN ISSG to co-organise an event at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in September 2016 in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

THE IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

The IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), held every four years, is the world's largest environmental and nature conservation event. The 4th WCC has been hosted by the Government of Hawai'i in Honolulu, and has been attended by over 10,000 delegates from all over the world, including governments, civil society, indigenous communities, industries, and other private sectors, universities. This has been the first time the IUCN Congress has been hosted by the United States, home to over 100 IUCN member organisations.

As in the previous occasions, the WCC was broken into two parts: the Forum and the Members Assembly. The Forum is the largest knowledge marketplace for conservation and sustainable development science, practice and innovation with over 600 sessions addressing a wide range of issues. It is open to the public and a great place to learn, share, network and influence. The Forum informs the Members' Assembly, taking place immediately after, that is the governing body of IUCN, where the over 1,300 members of the IUCN collectively decide on actions to address the most pressing and often controversial conservation and sustainable development challenges.

The WCC 2016 had as its theme “planet at the crossroads”, focusing its debate between meeting the immediate needs of human civilization and the long-term impacts doing so may have on the planet's capacity to support life.

Also because of the location of the WCC 2016 - hosted in an island of the Pacific region, severely affected by biological invasions – and of the excellent preparatory work done by the hosting committee, supported by the IUCN ISSG, the Congress had a significant focus on invasive species, with numerous events organised during the Forum on this specific threat.

ORGANISATION OF A “FULL-DAY CONSERVATION CAMPUS EVENT” DURING THE WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS ON THE TOPIC OF INSTITUTIONALIZING INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAMMES

The IUCN ISSG has made a proposal for organising a Conservation Campus titled “Make it a Priority and Make it Stick!; How to Effectively Institutionalize Invasive Alien Species Programmes”. The proposal was submitted jointly with the Non-native Invasive Species Council of the US Government, and Island Conservation, and was formally supported by the Bern Convention.

The proposal was accepted by the organisers, and was held on September 3.

Aim of the Conservation Campus was to train the audience on how to integrate the invasive alien species issue into other high priority agendas (e.g., national security), develop mechanisms for inter-ministerial communication and cooperation, establish relevant authorities and financing mechanisms, and apply the best available science to decision making.

Facilitators of the Conservation Campus were Piero Genovesi, Chair of IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group, Gragg Howald, of Island Conservation, Shyama Pagad, Programme Officer of the IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group, Jamie Reaser, Executive Director of the U.S. National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat.

Speakers included Karl Campbell with Island Conservation, Mick Clout Emeritus Professor at the University of Auckland, New Zealand and founding Chair of the Invasive Species Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Steve Edwards of IUCN, Valerie Hickey Practice Manager of the World Bank, Tim Hirsch of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Nick Holmes with Island Conservation, Olivier Langrand, Executive Director of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), Christy Martin, program manager and public information officer for the multi-agency/NGO Hawai'i Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), Andy Sheppard Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO, Australia.

BERN CONVENTION AT THE CONSERVATION CAMPUS

The Bern Convention was formally acknowledged for its support at the Conservation Campus, and the logo of the Convention was displayed as a key partner of the initiative.

Piero Genovesi gave a presentation on the development of a European policy on Invasive Alien Species, and reported in detail the history of the establishment of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species of the Council of Europe, explaining how this document was pivotal to the development and adoption of the EU Regulation 1143/2014 on the management of invasive alien species.

THE HONOLULU CHALLENGE ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

As an outcome from the Conservation Campus as well as of the other events held during the WCC on the issue of invasive species, there has been a call from the Union, the host community in Hawaii, including experts, governmental and intergovernmental representatives, NGOs, and protected area managers for greater action on addressing invasive alien species. Based on this call, we collectively launched “The Honolulu Challenge on Invasive Alien Species” to respond to this threat, that was a bottom-up initiative, developed during the congress. Already during the Congress we received formal statements from Governments, GOs, and NGOs, supporting the Challenge, and committing to increasing their action on invasive species in different ways. The Honolulu Challenge was launched officially during an event, at the presence of key IUCN people, and of Braulio Diaz, of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Bern Convention was listed from the very beginning of the Honolulu Challenge as a supporter of the initiative, and its logo is in the webpage of the Honolulu Challenge.

The outcome document of the Congress “Hawai'i Commitments” recognises the Honolulu Challenge on Invasive Alien Species (<https://portals.iucn.org/congress/hawaii-commitments>) in its preamble: "Building on the Paris Agreement on climate change, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Promise of Sydney, Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Earth Charter,

and The Honolulu Challenge on Invasive Alien Species, the World Conservation Congress was a unique opportunity where different voices came together to find common ground in a spirit of partnership and collaboration.”

The IUCN has created a dedicated website, where the Honolulu Challenge and the commitments will be posted.

HONOLULU CHALLENGE AT THE 13TH CBD COP

The Honolulu Challenge on Invasive Alien Species will be also presented in a dedicated event at the 13th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cancun, where the Council of Europe, at the presence of the Secretary of the Bern Convention, Iva Obretenova.

Appendix



The Honolulu Challenge on Invasive Alien Species

Invasive alien species (IAS) are animals, plants or other organisms introduced by humans into places outside their natural range, where they become established, generating a negative impact upon native biodiversity, ecosystem services and human wellbeing.

IAS are among the most significant drivers of species extinction¹ and ecosystem degradation, and are also a global threat to agriculture², food security and human health³ and many other ecosystem services including economic activities and cultural integrity. The huge scale of the socio-economic costs caused are poorly understood, but are estimated to be almost 5% of global GDP⁴. Hawaii, which hosted the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress, is sadly at the forefront of alien species invasions. Of an estimated 1093 native endemic Hawaiian plants, 415 have been assessed for the IUCN Red List and 87% of these are classed as threatened due to impacts from IAS.⁵

Unfortunately, the problem is getting worse with biological invasions on the increase⁶ due to ever increasing movement of people and goods around the world, and because of the synergistic effects of climate change. Although developed countries have borne the brunt of biological invasions to date, it is emerging economies with some of the world's poorest communities and biodiversity rich areas that face the greater risk in the future^{7,8,9}. If an introduced species becomes established and spreads, it can be very costly and difficult to eradicate and often mitigation of the impacts of the IAS is the only option. This makes prevention the most cost effective measure by far. This however can be very challenging for countries with contiguous borders.

In 2010 almost all of the world's governments adopted at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP 10 the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which included a commitment to address IAS (Aichi Target #9): *“By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment”*. This Strategic Plan has since been endorsed by other biodiversity related conventions and by the UN General Assembly.

¹ Bellard et al. 2016. Alien species as a driver of recent extinctions. *Biol. Lett.*

² Panini et al. 2016. Global threat to agriculture from invasive species. *PNAS*.

³ Mazza et al. 2013. Biological invaders are threats to human health. *Eth, Eco & Evo*.

⁴ Pimentel et al. 2001. Economic and environmental threats of alien plants, animal and microbe invasions. *Agr. Eco. & Env* [>1.4 Trillion USD]

⁵ IUCN. 2016. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2016-2.

⁶ Tittensor et al. 2014. A mid-term analysis of progress toward international biodiversity targets. *Science*

⁷ Seebens et al. 2015. Global trade will accelerate plant invasions in emerging economies under climate change. *Global Change Biology*

⁸ Paini et al. 2013. Global threat to agriculture from invasive species. *PNAS*

⁹ Early et al. Global threats from invasive species in the 21st Century and national response capacities. *Nature Communications*

In addition the importance of reducing the impacts of IAS to support sustainable development was reinforced in 2015 through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has a target (#15.8) specifically on IAS “*By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species*”

There has been some progress with meeting these targets, but it is far from adequate. While governments, NGOs and communities are increasingly taking steps to eradicate and control IAS, preventative measures have been taken in only a limited number of countries. As a consequence, the overall rate of invasions, with great economic and ecological costs, shows no sign of slowing¹⁰. In fact, only 3% of countries are currently on track to meet these international commitments¹¹.

Most countries, and in particular those in the developing world, have limited capacity to act and are likely to suffer high environmental, social and economic impacts as a result. Therefore they need urgent support in developing measures to prevent future invasions and manage existing ones.

In Hawaii it is resoundingly clear that the indigenous people, the Native Hawaiians, have a deep understanding and relationship with the ‘āina--the land and sea, the natural environment and species--that stretches back more than a thousand years, and continues today. The arrival and proliferation of invasive alien species is disrupting this relationship. It is therefore essential that local communities and indigenous people are involved in the efforts to address IAS, in particular empowering First Nation’s People by recognizing their traditional ecological knowledge in legislation, to inform decision making, participation, policy, evaluation and outcomes of the management of invasive species¹².

There is, therefore, an urgent need to take the bold, yet practical, measures necessary to safeguard biodiversity and human wellbeing from the devastating impacts of invasive alien species.

¹⁰ Secretariat of the CBD. 2014. Global Biodiversity Outlook 4.

¹¹ CBD. 2016. Updated analysis of the contribution of targets established by parties and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.2

¹² in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

THE HONOLULU CHALLENGE ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

During the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, there has been a call from the Union and the host community in Hawaii, including experts, governmental and intergovernmental representatives, NGOs, and protected area managers for greater action on addressing invasive alien species in order to protect biodiversity and human wellbeing from their impacts.

For this aim to be achieved we need to...

Multiply efforts to develop and enact effective biosecurity policies and programmes for countries and islands

Enforce effective measures to address priority pathways of invasions, including efforts to strengthen collaboration with relevant sectors in particular agriculture and health

Greatly increase the number and scale of invasive alien species eradications, especially on islands and in other priority sites; by 2020 there shall be a doubling of commitments to achieve this goal

Substantially increase resources for invasive alien species management and control

Integrate invasive alien species into planning and management for Protected Areas and Key Biodiversity Areas

Invest in the development, application and sharing of innovative technologies, and other solutions to prevent further invasions, and eradicate or control invasive alien species

Institutionalise invasive alien species programmes across government ministries, co-operating with the private sector, NGOs, indigenous peoples and local communities, and other stakeholders on programme implementation

Support assessments on the social and economic impacts of invasive alien species

Engage with relevant sectors and civil society to raise awareness of the negative impacts of invasive alien species, including the compounded impacts under climate change, and increase public support for potential solutions

Work with public and private financial institutions to increase international financial flows and mobilise domestic resources for addressing invasive alien species

Enable enhanced knowledge on invasive alien species, their impacts and pathways of invasion, through investment in data collection, standardization, sharing and open access

Commitments towards achieving the **Honolulu Challenge**



**Department of
Conservation**
Te Papa Atawhai

*The New Zealand
Government commits to
making New Zealand
predator free by 2050.*

Specifically, that the country will be free of the most damaging invasive alien species (rats, stoats and possums) by 2050. The New Zealand government will work in partnership with others (indigenous people, communities, NGOs, scientists, business, philanthropists) to achieve this goal.

As an interim goal, **by 2025** the Government has committed to:

- 1) Eradicate all pests from all island nature reserves.
- 2) Develop a method for eradicating one of the key target pests from mainland New Zealand.



*The Australian Commonwealth Scientific
and Industrial Research Organisation
commits to **doubling of long term co-
investment** with partners into invasive
species management*

Specifically, CSIRO will double its long term co-investment with partners into invasive species management research plans for national priority pests, weeds and diseases, including biological control solutions where existing or applicable in the future and make our science, data and experience publically available.

This will include trialling a global first biological control program against an aquatic vertebrate pest (European carp) within the next 5 years to push the boundaries of this application of this approach.

In addition, CSIRO will double its investment in the risk assessment, public acceptability assessment, required new regulatory mechanisms and technical development of novel innovative technologies (genetic and robotic) and their application for the prevention, eradication and management of national priority pests, weeds and diseases to improve the cost-effectiveness of IAS response strategies.



*The BirdLife partnership aims to **remove invasive alien threats from at least a further 35 high biodiversity islands worldwide by 2020***

Specifically, the BirdLife partnership is by 2020 seeking to have removed invasive alien threats from a further 35 high biodiversity islands including those in the Pacific and African regions and UKOTs Gough, and Henderson. We will also support the development of biosecurity policies, legislative frameworks and their implementation in safeguarding these sites, and for all UKOTs, and Europe through strengthening of the EU regulations.



*Island conservation commits to **protect more than 100 threatened species at risk from invasive species on 40 islands by 2020***

Specifically, by 2020 Island Conservation is committed to supporting and working with island communities, stakeholders, governments, and NGO partners around the world to protect more than 100 populations of threatened species by removing invasive species on 40 islands. We will seek funding, policies, plans, and partnerships to advance these, and others', island conservation interventions. The dividends from this work will also benefit the local peoples' livelihoods and wellbeing, ecosystems, and 1000s of native island species.

Supporters¹³ of the Honolulu Challenge



¹³ Supporters include organisations attending the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress who were part of the development of the Honolulu Challenge, and additional organisations who have since lent their support.



