

THE FUTURE OF LIFE

our values for action



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With thanks

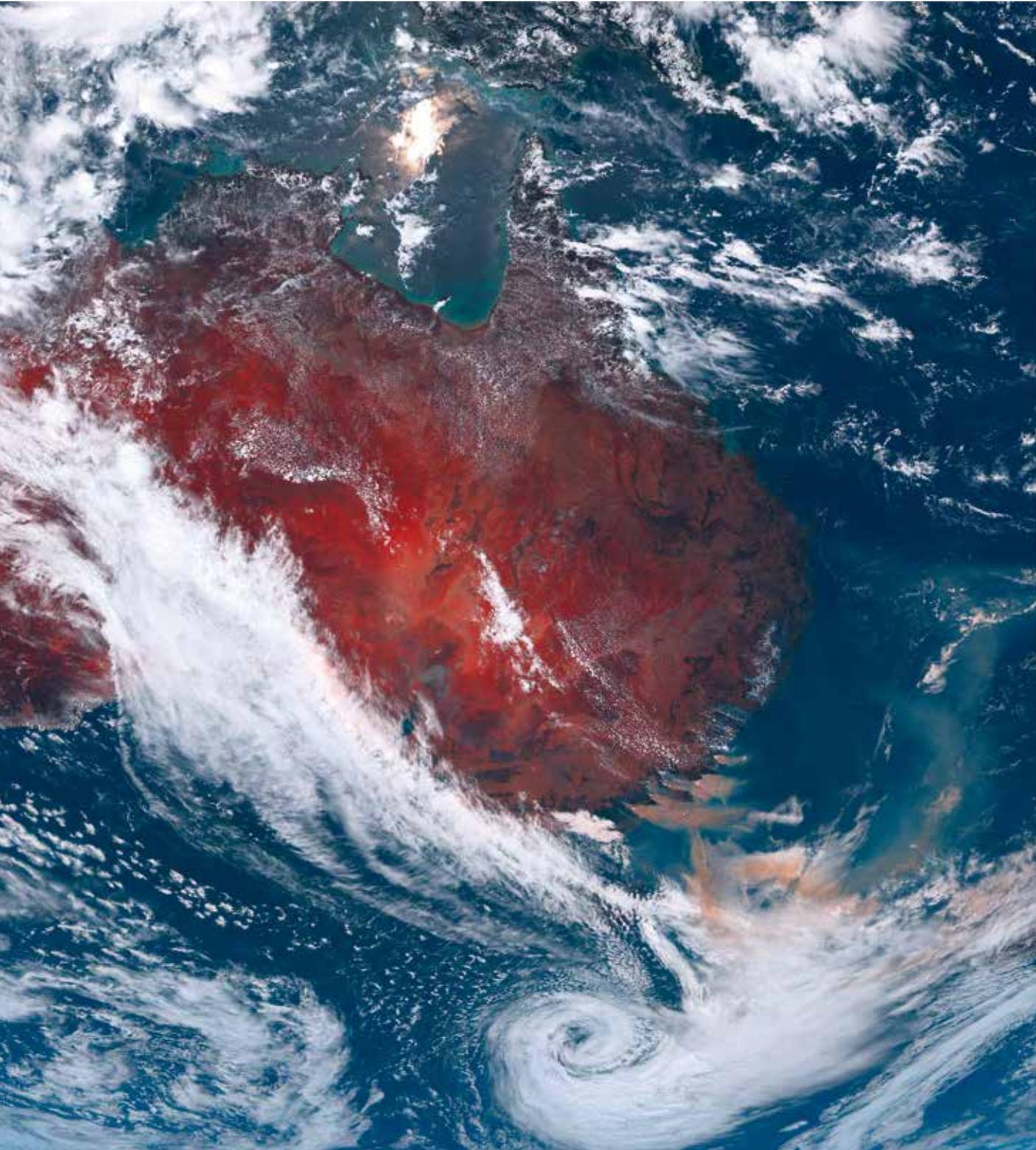
The IUCN French Committee sincerely thanks the National Centre for Space Studies for allowing it to use satellite images of the Geoimages bank (www.geoimage.cnes.fr), images chosen to evoke the beauty of the Biosphere, but also its fragility.

Our thanks also goes to Patrick Blandin, Frédéric Ducarme and Damien Marage, thanks to which amazing species symbolize the diversity of the living world.

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Preface

To advance nature conservation, we regularly renew our approaches to a changing world, where new issues are emerging or becoming more pervasive, and new opportunities for action are emerging. Our concepts are being revisited and our practices are being improved by the latest scientific knowledge. IUCN plays an important role in this area through its global network to share expertise and exchange solutions to protect, sustainably manage or restore nature.

In the same way, we need to regularly revisit our ethical approach to nature conservation. Often caught up in the immediacy of action to respond to the emergencies of the degradation of nature, we do not take the time to redefine the values and vision we carry. Or to reaffirm them. For this crisis of erosion of biodiversity that the planet is currently experiencing is above all a crisis of the relationship of humanity to the living, of which it is nevertheless closely a part of and for which it is responsible.

So, what are our values and vision and how can they be a guide for action? This is the task of the “Ethics in Action” working group, led by Patrick Blandin and Damien Marage, whom I thank warmly. At the end of their work, a text was proposed and approved by the Board of Directors of the IUCN French Committee, which brought together all its members.

The group was based on the work undertaken by IUCN since its creation in 1948 in Fontainebleau and on the proposal of the IUCN French Committee, approved by the World Congress of Nature in 2004, to relaunch work on the ethical vision of IUCN, which became the Biosphere Ethics Initiative in 2010. But since then, the crisis has escalated, and it has become more urgent than ever to call for profound change: we must think differently about how we interact with the world and thus our ways of inhabiting the Earth.

On the occasion of the IUCN World Nature Congress in France in 2021, we wanted to highlight, in addition to our recommendations on various global biodiversity issues, the ethical vision of the IUCN French Committee and to make it known to other IUCN members around the world. I invite you to discover our manifesto “The Future of Life - Our Values for Action” and to draw inspiration from it for your strategies and your activities.

Maud Lelièvre
President of the IUCN French Committee



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Nature, in its three kingdoms, is threatened on all sides by the progress of industry. Human activity is encroaching into regions once inaccessible to its enterprises; its caprice or its short-sighted utilitarianism jeopardizes the existence of a large number of animal and plant species. [...] All friends, all defenders of Nature must come together to raise their voices, [...] and exercise a protective action that safeguards our natural heritage for the future.

*Letter of invitation to the first International Congress for the Protection of Nature,
Paris, December 1922*

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The gradual depletion of natural resources is already leading to a deterioration of the conditions of life for humanity. Since their renewal cannot keep pace with their destruction, the time has come to convince man of the close dependence he finds himself with them. If we are to stop this dreadful development, man must become part of the need to protect and even regenerate these resources and consume them only sparingly, so as to guarantee the prosperity of the world and its future peace. The Protection of Nature now appears to be of vital importance for all people...

*Preamble to the Constitution of the International Union for the Protection of Nature
Fontainebleau, France, October 5, 1948*

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The Union is concerned with values more, I would say, even than with science. For science should be the servant not the master of mankind. Our strategy must be firmly based in realism, but it must move ahead with vision. We should be the architects of guided change (call it development if you will) in the direction of increasing [...] the good life.

Duncan Poore, Interim Director General of IUCN, 1976-77

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IUCN's goals are to influence, encourage and help societies around the world to maintain the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and environmentally sustainable.

IUCN Statutes, amended in 2016



Preamble

The human species, no more and no less than other species, is the result of the emergence of living systems transforming their own local and global living conditions, while constituting an increasingly complex network of interdependencies within the biosphere. We, the living species today, are interdependent and related, formed in the immense movement of evolution, a trajectory begun a few billion years ago.

On the geological time scale, it is only very late that our species has shown itself capable of modifying the planetary ecological network, spreading there, but never extracting itself from it. It has modified many ecological systems, domesticated plant and animal species, created new landscapes and, in turn, has changed, diversified, biologically and culturally.

Every species is an “engineer” in that it shapes its ecological niche through its interactions with its physical, chemical and biological environment. Some are more obvious than others. Organizing the conditions of its numerical growth, the human species, by “building its niche”, quickly reduced the space available for other species, eliminated many of them, hindered the expansion of many others, changed the composition of the atmosphere, invented and introduced many biocide molecules into ecological systems, and cluttered all environments with its waste. And it has invaded itself, degenerating the diversity of its local populations, its languages, its cultures¹.

The Earth has experienced many "crises" throughout its history, but never before had such a total, rapid, upheaval caused by a single species, to the point that some do not hesitate to consider it a new geological period, the Anthropocene.

While the number of humans continues to grow, the search for new wealth and the race for profits captured by minorities result in increased inequality, and an increasingly intense and widespread deterioration of ecological systems. The planet is becoming less and less livable for more and more so-called wild species and for more humans. Forced migration, conflicts, and diminishing diversity in the living world are the already visible consequences: violence between humans and violence against other living things is inseparable. Evolution, now strongly constrained by human interactions with other components of the biosphere, is taking on a worrying trajectory, and humanity is torn

1. It was this observation that led the United Nations in 2007 to proclaim the intrinsic rights of peoples who were victims of the multiple prejudices caused in particular by colonization, termed "indigenous" peoples.



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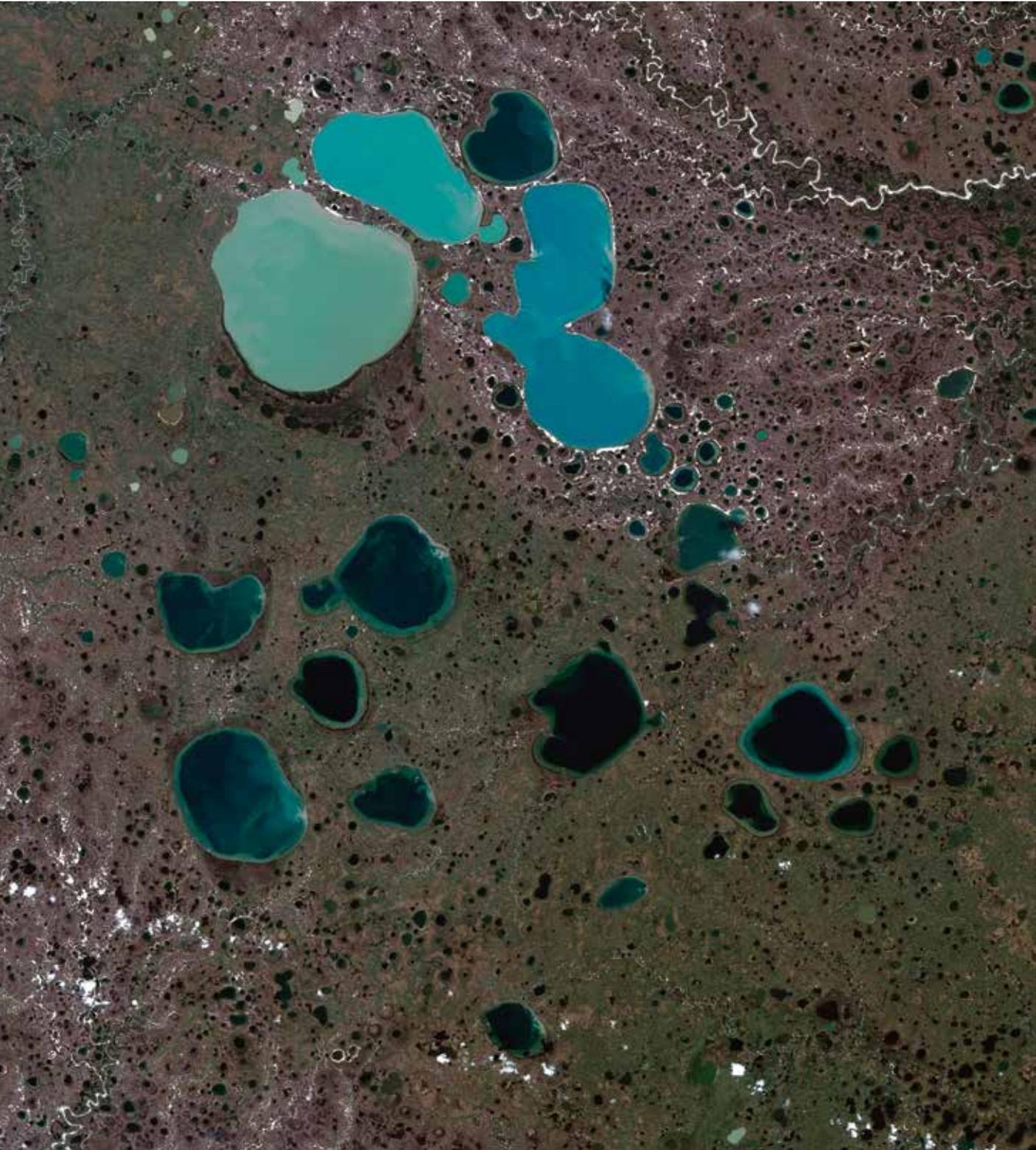
between the discourses of those who announce the end of the world and those who are satisfied with business as usual.

Anticipated as early as the 19th century by the American George Perkins Marsh, who predicted in 1864 the depletion of resources, the degradation of land and the change in the climate, today's global crises force humanity to confront its responsibilities. There is no time for ambiguity, mediocre compromises, soft transitions. The success of nature conservation policies is insufficient, the international community ritually makes it the observation from one decade to the next.

The Earth is turned upside down: is this not the result of a crisis of governance, both local and global? And is this crisis of governance not rooted in a crisis of values, a crisis of ethics? We must act with urgency.

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Born in 1948 with the support of UNESCO, in the aftermath of an appalling global conflict, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature carried a message of peace. This was a major milestone in the already long history of nature protection. An international organization of states, public bodies, international, national and local associations, an organization that fundamentally relies on thousands of scientific experts, IUCN has now more than ever, in this agonizing beginning of the 21st century, an immense moral responsibility. With its history and its expertise in ethics, science, and law, it must offer the human community a mobilizing vision, a source of hope for humans seeking ethical benchmarks. In order to do this, we must revise our philosophy, our policies, our way of life.

To be clear about the values that underpin its vision, IUCN can no longer simply envisage, such as in its supporting slogans, an organization for a “[fair world that understands the value of nature and preserves it](#)”, or even to simply say: “[Value and preserve nature](#)”. What do we even mean by “the value of nature”? Didn't Western civilization consider wilderness as land “to be developed”, “à *mettre en valeur*”? Why does “value” always seem to prioritize the burning of the Amazon rainforest to make way for pastures, or the destruction of Orangutan habitat – our Indonesian cousins – to make way for palm oil plantations? The current trend towards the incorporation of biodiversity into the market economy may suggest that all ecosystems and species they support are “replaceable,” i.e., each ecosystem destroyed could be recomposed to “equal values” later, or even somewhere else. And what do we mean by “valuing nature”? Massive tree plantations, valued for their role in carbon sequestration, may not constitute real forest ecosystems and may not be adapted in the territories where they are carried out. This trend has brought the concept of ecosystem services to the forefront. While it deserves to be supervised both scientifically and ethically, this concept is important to underline the extreme dependence of the economy on nature. However, vigilance is required in the face of the excesses of the commodification of the living.

Since its origins, IUCN has engaged in ethical reflection and has promoted strong values, influencing, through its experts, international texts such as the World Charter for Nature adopted by the United Nations in 1982. But these values must not be secondary to those underlying economic practices that have disastrous environmental and societal consequences. We must affirm the pre-eminence of the institution's core values and design slogans that express them: communication in the field of ethics is a difficult art, because it is necessary to avoid both empty phrases and those that, influenced by the times, could give rise to regrettable interpretations.

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An equitable world would reflect the diversity of human cultures and their conceptions of human relations to nature. Each culture has its own way of “understanding the value of nature”: the ethical diversity of humans is a fact. This is a major challenge. What values would be shared, what paths could be found to overcome the global crisis and establish a lasting living community of humans, in all their diversity, and with other living things?

Human history is marked by contrary and competing systems of values and interests, often for access to resources and territorial expansion, and often provoking individual and collective violence. But it is also, conversely, by the search for intelligent compromises, by tireless actions for peace, by altruistic dynamics, commitments to take care of others.

There needs to be a common ethic, through shared values and principles of action. An ethic that not only helps to curb human violence against humans and nature as a whole, but which, beyond that, opens the prospect of a better life together. Was this not, in 1948, the hope of the founders of IUCN who, after the horror, claimed that the protection of nature would contribute to world peace?

IUCN, since its inception, has relied on scientific knowledge. This is its strength and contributes greatly to its legitimacy. Thanks to science, many dreams have come true in our daily reality. But many times, its applications lead to the question “how far is too far?” And above all, while the degradation of the biosphere is accelerating intensely, the solution is not in the Promethean race to technological “progress”. The problems that need to be solved have their origins in ethical and political choices. IUCN, in order to help overcome them, must assert itself more than ever as a societal institution that invites us to “change change”, which conceives a different vision of our relationship with nature, which offers a new meaning to human adventure. We must go down a new path. The IUCN French Committee wants to contribute to this, by drawing inspiration in particular from the reference texts available to the IUCN in matters of ethics: the UN World Charter for Nature (1982), the Earth Charter (2000) and the Biosphere Ethics Initiative (2010).

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There is an urgent need to build a shared vision of the core values that will be the basis of ethical principles for the emerging global community.

Earth Charter, 2000



A desirable world



Let us ensure that our time is recognized in history as the awakening of a new form of homage to life, a firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the acceleration of the struggle for justice and peace, and the happy celebration of life.

Earth Charter, 2000

Voices have been raised for a long time calling for a new vision of the relationship of humanity with its biosphere. The Earth Charter says nothing else. But we note that many leaders struggle to build such a vision, because they have to face short-term issues, or because some, linked to selfish interests, oppose it.

While acknowledging that the continuous advances in science are the result of the legitimate exercise of human curiosity, the IUCN French Committee does not adhere to a vision of the future that proposes that the only solution to the biosphere crisis is an ever-increasing deference to technology, even if it was “eco- or bio-inspired”, especially since many advocates of this vision are more interested in profits than concerned with a “better life together”. While welcoming the immense benefits of human creativity, we deplore the fact that its misguidance has contributed to the current crisis, and we believe that the view of science without ethical discernment, or “without conscience”, is not acceptable. In addition, we know that science shifts the boundaries of the known and the unknown. In this context, which invites scientific experts to exercise humility, nature conservation often makes decisions in uncertainty, without being able to wait for further advances in knowledge.

That said, the IUCN French Committee considers that IUCN – enlightened by the ever deeper understanding of the world provided by the natural and human sciences, informed by them of the evolution of the state of the biosphere, rich in knowledge acquired over a long period of time and by local people in close contact with their living environments – must contribute to the development of a new vision. IUCN cannot be alone, of course. But, heir to the history of nature protection movements, it has every legitimacy to promote a radical change that ensures that the entire world living, in all its diversity, has its place on the planet.



As an actor in the conservation of nature, the IUCN French Committee wants a world where humans recognize themselves as members of the entire biosphere, humbly respectful of other living beings, their evolutionary companions, whatever species they belong to. It wants humans, in all their diversity, wherever they live, and whatever their cultures, knowledge, and beliefs, to weave together and with all life **relationships of solidarity**, allowing every human being to live better, where they desire, and to **flourish in conviviality**. The IUCN French Committee thus emphasizes the need for an approach that seeks the “**better-being**” of the individual and collective in humanity and in the entire living world, to promote a “**living better together**” because there is only one biosphere.

While our Western civilization was built on the idea that we possess, or own, nature, its resources, and its production capacities, we must now reverse the perspective, and recognize that every human being is “possessed” by a living environment. This is a radical challenge to our philosophical, legal, and political traditions on the appropriation of nature. It must be recognized that these traditions are not those of the majority of indigenous peoples, for whom the idea that individuals belong to Mother Earth is central. This vision of nature is inspiring. Arrogance must give way to humility, domination to reciprocity. Strange as it may seem to us as Westerners, an aboriginal hunter who thanks the prey he kills has as much to teach us about our relationship to nature as a daring gene-manipulating biologist.

Solidarity implies responsibility, a responsibility to be exercised with lucidity, with discernment, because there are interactions with other species that can play against the better-being of humans. The IUCN French Committee therefore calls for **individual and collective accountability** to the evolutionary dynamics of the Earth and to wildlife, species of which we must never forget that ours, *Homo sapiens*, is a relative.

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Our core values



Man has enough objective reasons to focus on safeguarding the wild world. But nature will only be saved by our hearts. It will only be preserved if man shows her a little love, simply because she is beautiful and because we need beauty, whatever form we are sensitive to because of our culture and our intellectual formation. For it is also an integral part of the human soul.

*Jean Dorst
Before Nature Dies, 1965*

The IUCN French Committee sees other species as the "evolutionary companions" of humanity and each individual in that composition is an actor acting within the biosphere, like every human. Taking note of this reality, we attribute to every living thing **a value of existence**, because by existing, this being participates in interdependencies that step-by-step generate the ecological functioning of the biosphere. We also attribute to it **a value of memory**, because this being, the result of an uninterrupted sequence of reproductions and modifications in the history of life, holds in its genetic material "a written trace" of this history, our history, which is expressed in its morphological and functional characteristics. Finally, we attribute a **future value** to the extent that, if this being reproduces, it transmits to its descendants genetic information that can contribute to their ability to adapt to changing ecological contexts.

Accordingly, building on the World Charter for Nature, the Earth Charter, and the Biosphere Ethics Initiative, the IUCN French Committee **declares that its vision is based on respect for all living things and more broadly for the ecological communities they form all over the planet.**

The IUCN French Committee affirms that recognizing and respecting the existence of other living beings, different from us, in an altruistic state of mind, is an essential step in the construction of the individual and collective identity of humanity, and therefore in our better-being. We know at the same time that the existence of each human requires that plants and animals be consumed. This is natural because the biosphere works and is perpetuated by an unceasing flow between life and death. Establishing a fair line between legitimate harvests and unacceptable violent behavior is a delicate ethical problem. The IUCN French Committee notes that certain societies give examples of practices which show a deep respect for the species from which they remove individuals out



of necessity, and they invite us to be inspired by them in all situations where the removal of living beings is considered necessary, including in the context of scientific research.

Beyond the values of existence, memory, and the future that the IUCN French Committee attributes to each living being, we grant the same values to ecological communities which, with different compositions, form from place to place the tissue of the biosphere. This primarily concerns wild ecosystems, those which are the least modified by human activities. But it also concerns, secondly, landscapes resulting from long co-evolutions with human societies with multiple languages, cultures, and practices, resulting locally in original assemblages of ecosystems and species, assemblages often highly diversified.

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Our invitation



Consider each question from an ethical and aesthetic point of view, as well as from the point of view of its cost-effectiveness. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

*Aldo Leopold
The Land Ethic, 1949*

Respectful of the cultural diversity of humans, the IUCN French Committee does not propose a “code” in order to set the limits between what should be done and what should not be done, but guidance stemming from its vision and its values. In the spirit of the Biosphere Ethics Initiative, it invites individuals and groups to walk together towards a more desirable world, by indicating objectives allowing them to structure their actions:

The French IUCN Committee,

noting the solidarity that exists between all living organisms, including humans, due to their direct and indirect interdependencies,
calls for all action to help maintain this solidarity;

noting the diversity of life forms with which humans are united,
calls for respect for all these forms of life and for action to maintain their diversity and the diversity of the communities they constitute all over the planet;

recalling that humans and the entire living world are linked by a permanent process of co-evolution, and **noting** that human activities have initiated this process in a dynamic causing the joint degradation of the living conditions of humans and other living beings,
invites to design all actions in such a way that they contribute to the better-being of humans and other living beings.

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Benchmarks for action

Interacting differently

Designing an action in such a way that it contributes to the better-being of human beings implies in each of those concerned by this action, its implementation and its consequences, more than a spirit of tolerance: a true listening to others. On this condition, negotiation is the mechanism that must enable the emergence of joint projects while respecting the ethical diversity of actors. Of course, scientific knowledge, but also other knowledge, can be mobilized by stakeholders. However, in the fields of natural sciences, uncertainties about the consequences of decisions are generally great. “The knowers” must all the more help to find non-irreversible solutions, which express the solidarity of humans with other living things, while respecting their future value. In any case, technology must remain a humble servant, for it is up to human collectives, both locally and globally, to choose their goals and the paths to achieve them.

If all action is to be conceived and conducted in a spirit of solidarity with the living world, and in respect to its diversity at the level of ecosystems, species and genetic heritage, the problem arises of making “nature present at the negotiating table”. The value of existence that we give to living beings and the ecological systems in which they interact implies that we recognize their right to exist, and therefore occupy the spaces that are necessary for them, and that we impose on ourselves the duty to consider this right in any decision-making. It is therefore for humans to exercise a common responsibility towards other living beings and their ecological organizations. This is at the local level as well as that of the biosphere, which implies that local decisions are made in a spirit of planetary solidarity.

That which is the subject of a common responsibility could be considered a “common good.” While acknowledging a pedagogical interest in this concept, the IUCN French Committee wishes to emphasize its anthropocentric connotation, and it invites us to think about our relations with other living beings in a clearly altruistic way: wanting their “better-being”, this must result in the maintenance of conditions allowing all species to participate in the functioning of the ecological systems of which they are a part and to pursue their own evolutionary path.



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As living beings, humans interact with their environments and with other humans, transforming our places of life. In principle, this requires no moral judgment. More transformative than any other species, ours has long worked on the domestication of animals and plants, resulting in a wide variety of breeds and varieties, and correspondingly shaping multiple landscapes. These are true co-evolutionary processes that have contributed to the diversification of the biosphere. However, species have been eliminated, and an increasing proportion of the living world is at risk. Even many breeds and varieties from domestication are at risk of disappearing, if they have not already done so. At the same time, there is a possibility - and perhaps growing - that some species may interact with humans to the detriment of human better-being, which calls for discernment in decision-making.

This is why the IUCN French Committee puts forward as a principle for action the **objective of minimal interference**: any action should be designed and conducted in such a way that it interferes in the least possible way with spontaneous biological and ecological processes.

From this point of view, the development of genetically modified organisms raises delicate questions: one might be tempted to characterize as minimal interferences molecular manipulations that are increasingly targeted, while the introduction into ecosystems of organisms thus produced could generate serious interference at the level of certain populations, or even that of large communities of species. Today, advocates for the “new GMOs” produced through gene drive are considering both fighting invasive species and recreating extinct species. Gene drive actually offers three major options of use that can affect biodiversity and the functioning of life: reducing or even eliminating the populations of a species; modifying the characteristics of a population or species, such as the proportion between males and females; protecting a population or species, for example by reducing its susceptibility to disease. In addition to the specific risks that these techniques present, risks that are far from being fully assessed, they raise fundamental ethical questions, creating the possibility of replenishing extinct species, or creating organisms that do not exist and may never have existed.

Because we believe that relationships with humans and other living beings should be based on respect for their lives and their genetic integrity, the IUCN French Committee opposes the use of genetically modified organisms by gene drive or any technique of manipulating genomes and their functioning for applications in the field of nature protection. It considers that it is much more urgent to act directly on the causes of biodiversity erosion than to invest in the manufacture of organisms whose insertion into ecological systems is necessarily risky. From this perspective, we hope that at the national level, as well with the whole of IUCN, an in-depth, independent ethical reflection will be undertaken in order to bring to the debates already underway the specific contribution of the



actors of nature conservation, focused on the problems posed by these technological developments in terms of the future of species, and the functioning and evolution of ecosystems.

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Inhabiting differently the Earth

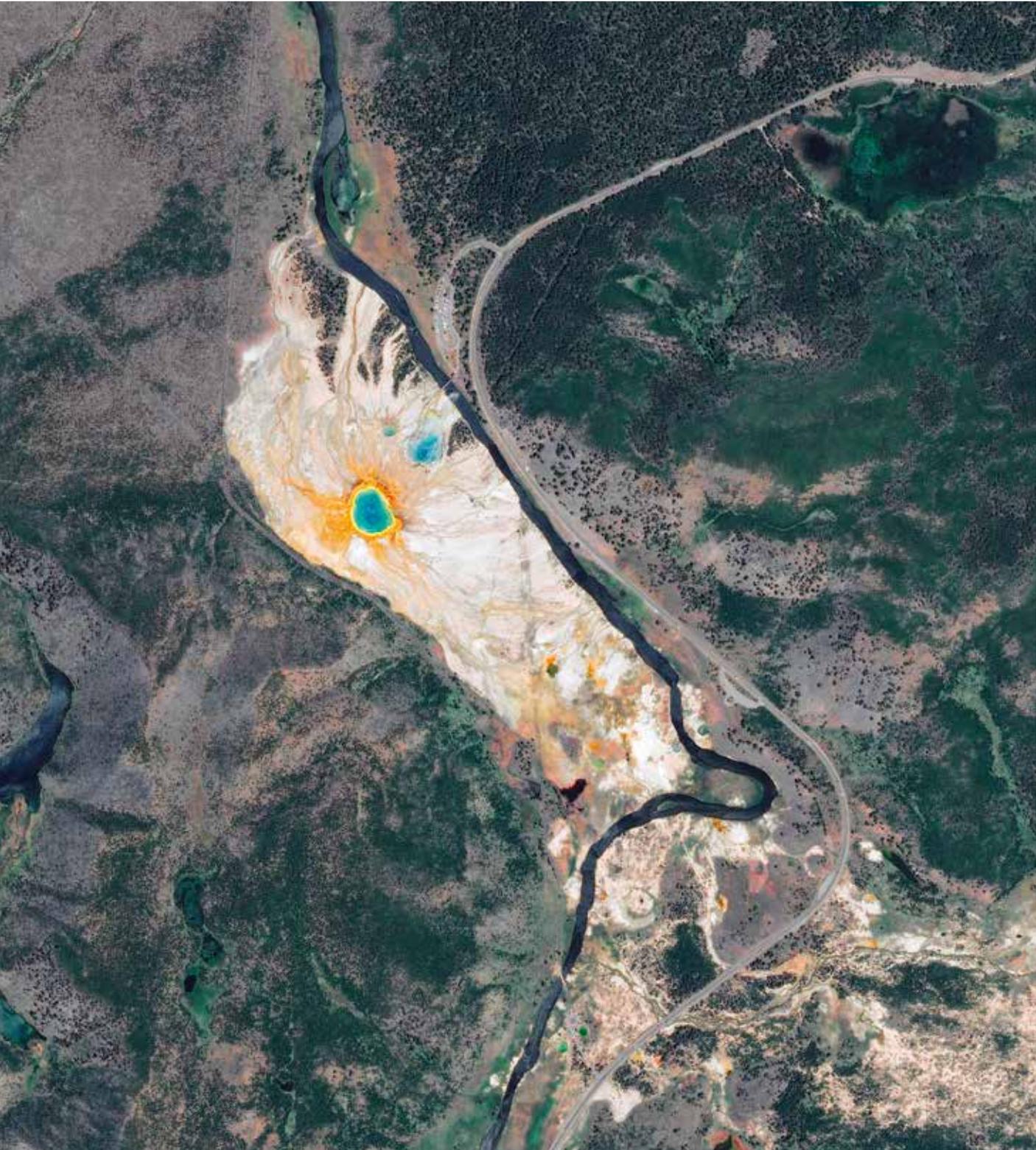
Let us imagine that a spider thinks like a human being, perhaps it would come to regard the populations of insects it feeds on as great providers of “services”. Nature is made up of a huge web of “mutual services” rendered by the environments and the species that occupy them. It is therefore not surprising that humans look at nature from the perspective of the “services” it renders to them, and so the conservation community sees the concept of “ecosystem service” as a useful way to better engage with the political and economic world. The IUCN French Committee obviously assumes this anthropocentric vision, but it invites us to reverse the perspective, and calls for the question: “What services do we provide to nature?”

The IUCN French Committee wants humans to organize their way of inhabiting the Earth in such a way that the wild world can be perpetuated, because it is both a legacy-memory of evolution, a contributor to the ecological functioning of the biosphere on which human better-being depends, and a matrix of future developments. Cherishing the diversity of the wild world, humans should optimize the conditions of its existence and evolution, dedicating to it the necessary spaces within our common home, the Earth, spaces whose motto could be “**peace for nature**”. In this sense, deciding not to do anything about certain spaces would be an expression of human respect for the freedom of other living things.

However, the wild world cannot be confined exclusively to spaces that would be forbidden to humans, since being in nature can be favorable to their better-being. On the contrary, as part of an ecological continuum from the most wild of spaces to the heart of cities, human habitat development must be designed so that diverse representatives of the wild world can take place everywhere and spontaneously perpetuate themselves there, in terms negotiated and adjusted to ensure “living better together”.

The IUCN French Committee denounces the ways in which space is used, which, while constantly consuming natural spaces and reducing biodiversity, physically and culturally distance the majority of humans from nature. On the other hand, we point out that throughout the world, local co-evolutions between human societies and elements of the wild world have produced new landscapes and diverse plant and animal varieties, as well as the cultural diversification of these societies. We therefore want humanity to perpetuate their legacy, not only for their memory value, but also as sources of solutions to imagine the multiple possible modalities of “living better together”.

Traditionally, conservation policies have emphasized the need to dedicate spaces to the protection of environments and species, sometimes to the point of excluding human populations. IUCN has played and plays an important role in defining protected areas and their reasoned classification. The increase in protected areas is still a stated goal internationally and nationally. This policy, despite many imperfections in its implementation,



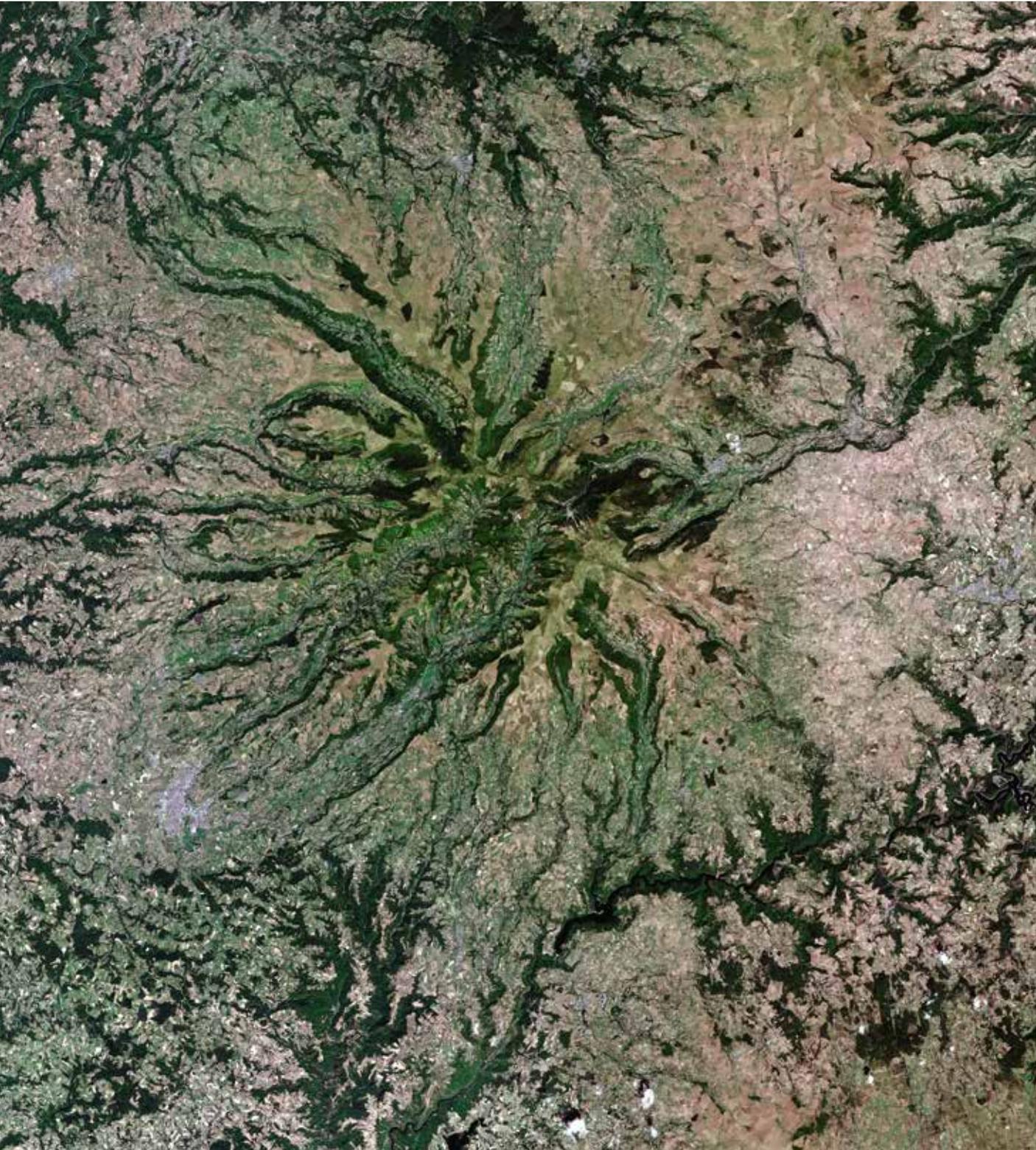
has undeniably had real success, whether it is the creation of new protected areas or the improvement of the situation of certain species threatened with extinction. However, it is clear today that it is insufficient, as the global erosion of biodiversity continues. The French IUCN Committee therefore calls, once again, for a reversal of perspective: the conservation of the diversity of the living world must be an objective integrated into global policies for the management and development of all types of spaces, from the wildest, where it is decided to do nothing, to the most transformed. For this, a renewed conceptual approach is needed, based on the notion of territory.

By territory, the IUCN French Committee means a space defined by a “natural” history, i.e., geological, geomorphological, biogeographical, ecological, floristic and faunistic, and by a human history, whose interference with natural history, along a trajectory initiated more or less far in the past, has helped to shape the current physiognomy. The planet is thus a diverse mosaic of territories. To want to inhabit the Earth differently, after finding that too many territories have been engaged on trajectories with disastrous consequences for humans and other living beings, is therefore to want to initiate new local trajectories.

The IUCN French Committee invites the development of territorial projects aiming at new ways of organizing the lives of humans and other living beings, in order to actualize the desire to “living better together”, by engaging all territories in an ecological transformation controlled by local actors within the framework of participatory and democratic governance. But there is only one biosphere. No territory is isolated: it is part of the global ecological network, it is a node of flows that start from it, converge there, cross it. Humans and other living things may be rooted there for a long time as a result of ancient migrations, while others arrive or depart. The living spaces intersect. Local projects can therefore only make sense, from a social and political point of view, if they take this reality into account and are designed in a spirit of global solidarity, through local, regional, and international alliances.

Respecting other living things requires that humans organize an equitable sharing of space from the local level to a global scale, in a way that each species can have spatial and trophic resources ensuring its long-term survival. We know that an equitable sharing of wealth would allow more people to live decently. But at the same time, humanity must reduce its ecological footprint globally, including the artificialization of land. Taking up the idea that the protection of nature is of vital importance to all peoples and for peace, and recalling that IUCN, since its inception, has given itself education as a goal, the IUCN French Committee invites IUCN to promote the idea that social and economic justice and nature conservation are two inseparable objectives.

Ensuring an equitable sharing of space between humans and others living within an integrated, systemic design of the management and planning of a territory involves rethinking our property and use rights, as species do not know the boundaries of land, while many of them have their own ways for defining their vital spaces. Respect involves



diplomacy: we must look for ways of using space that allow humans and living animals to co-exist without mutual discomfort, which means knowing how to detect and understand the signals by which others draw their own maps. The problem obviously does not arise in the same way depending on whether one considers a large predator or a dandelion, species that need large spaces with low human interference or those that can live as close as possible to our homes. For the IUCN French Committee, it is not a question of fragmenting the territories into zones of exclusion, the wild there, the domestic here. On the contrary, it is a question of organizing the co-habitation of humans and non-humans “for mutual benefit”. This is the condition of living better together.

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Our commitment

IUCN was originally called the International Union for the Protection of Nature. Nature was attacked by man, it had to be protected. Later, the term “Protection” was replaced by “Conservation”: natural resources that were overconsumption or even at risk of being destroyed should not be lost. The turbulent history of the use of these words is that of a terminological competition that reflects a competition between different visions of human relationships with nature, between different value systems. Today, in this global upheaval called the “biodiversity crisis”, the urgency is undoubtedly of protection so that the diversity of the living world is preserved. But for what purpose?

The values defended by the French Committee of IUCN, the vision it proposes give a horizon: better living together, conviviality between the living, humans and all others, from each place to the entire biosphere.

Conviviality? The term may seem harmless. It is actually extremely demanding. How can we imagine working towards its concrete establishment without debating it and without the voice of other living things at the negotiating table? Each member of the IUCN French Committee, each of its committees, its experts, its working groups, are already working, and will work even more, towards this goal.

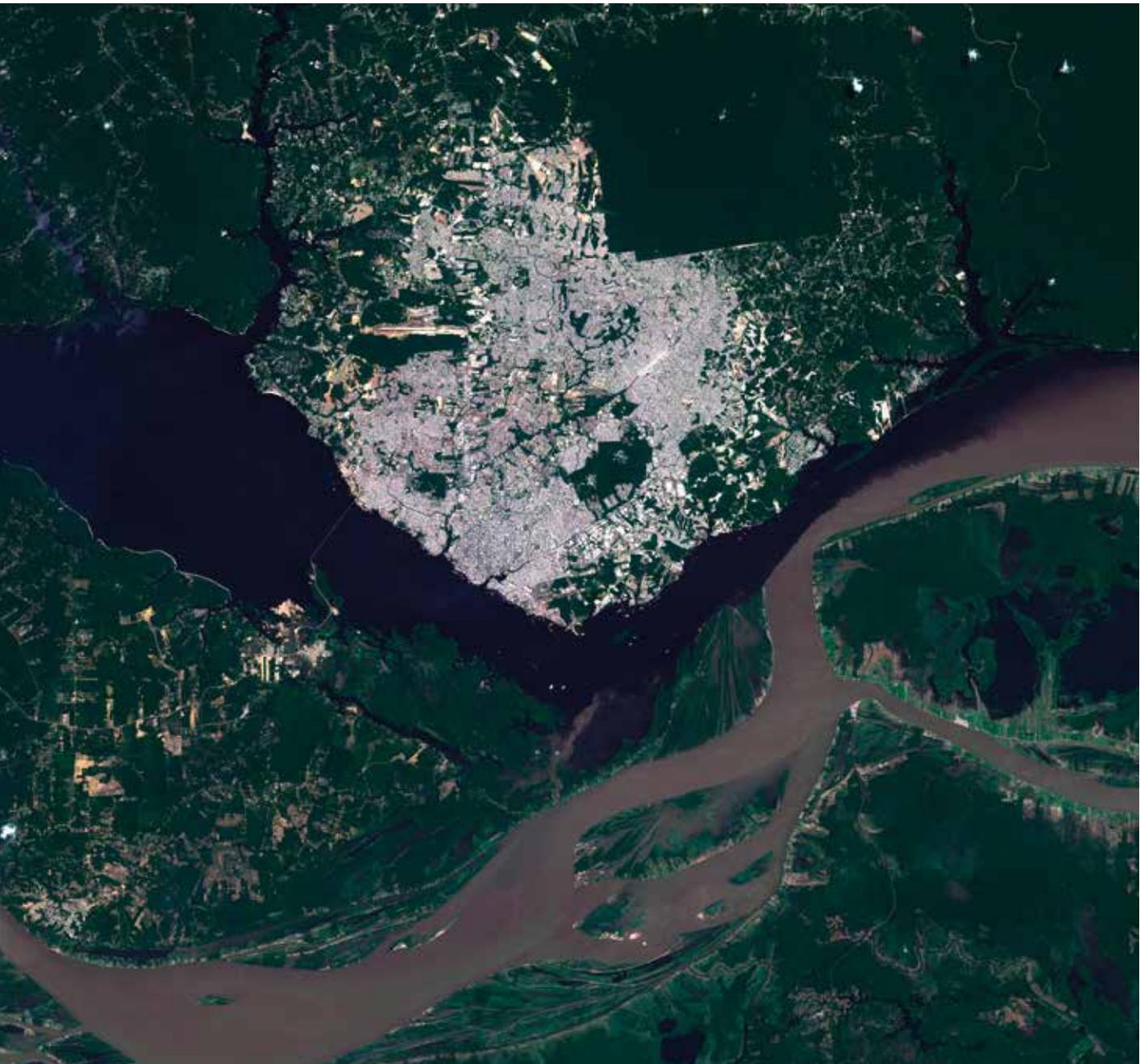
Imagine the better way of living together, make it desired, get IUCN's values to inspire our choices, guide our decisions and enlighten our actions, in all the areas in which we operate. Share them with multiple partners, associations, companies, local authorities, state services... and with citizens, young and old, present and future. This is IUCN's mission. The French Committee of IUCN is committed to this.

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We are humbly conscious that we humans and the other living beings, we form separate rivers with immiscible waters but who should irrigate with more wisdom our common land.

Damien Marage



Afterword

I congratulate the IUCN French Committee on this timely and important report. When I was Director General of IUCN (2007-2015), I often reminded my colleagues that the planet would be fine without us. But in this era of the Anthropocene, we are here, present, numerous, and with the immense responsibility to behave intelligently so that natural resources are used in a fair and ecologically sustainable way..

This document reminds us of the important work of IUCN since its inception: the World Charter for Nature, the Earth Charter, and, together with the IUCN French Committee, the Biosphere Ethics Initiative. It encourages us to undertake not only ethical reflection, but also the adoption of values that will guide us towards action informed by science, carried out in a spirit of solidarity, and respectful of cultural diversity. We have a duty to value Nature so that it can continue to be the sole life support for us and for generations to come.

This document, I hope, can be translated into the other two official languages of IUCN: English and Spanish, because its messages are important and should be known to members of our World Organization.

Julia Marton-Lefèvre
Paris, March 2021





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The French Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the network of IUCN members and experts in France. In an original partnership, it brings together 2 ministries, 13 public agencies and 47 non-governmental organizations, as well as a network of more than 250 experts. Through this mixed composition, the IUCN French Committee is a unique platform for dialogue, expertise and action on biodiversity issues, which also involves local communities and private companies. The IUCN French Committee aims to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable and equitable use of natural resources, in accordance with IUCN's mission defined at the worldwide. Its programmes are devoted to biodiversity policies, species, protected areas, ecosystems, environmental education, overseas and international cooperation.

