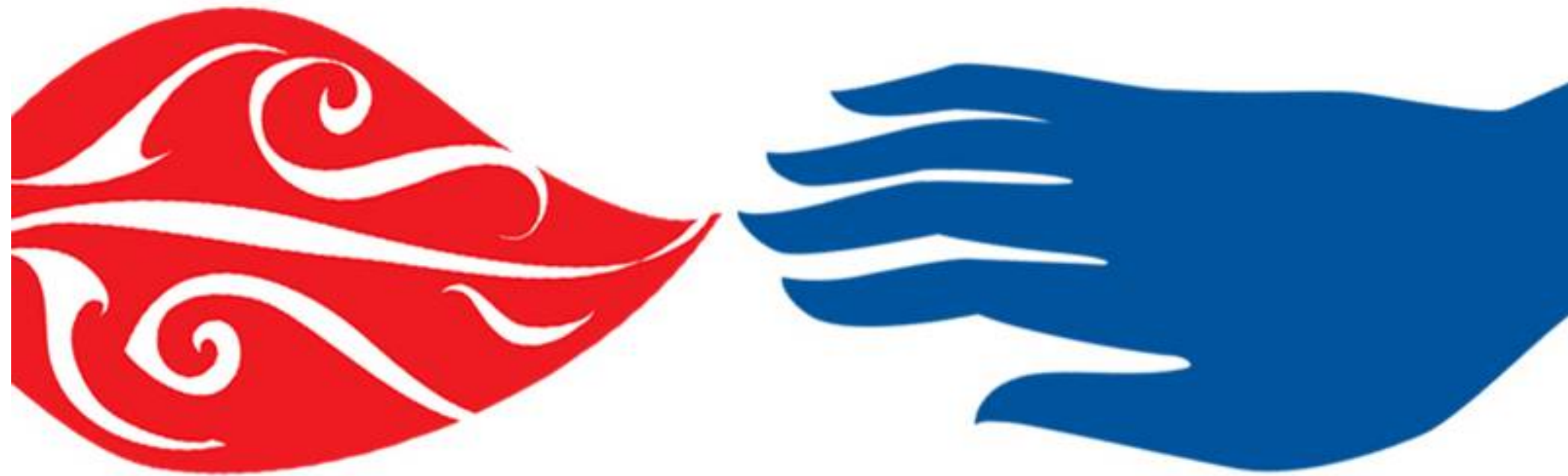


Will capitalism conserve or consume the planet?

Key messages and opportunities



WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS
BANGKOK 17-25 NOVEMBER 2004



IUCN
The World Conservation Union

Corporate roles and responsibilities

Over 50 sessions involving the private sector

including Global Synthesis Workshops on:

- Corporate social responsibility – Help or hindrance?
- Certification for sustainability – Key issues and challenges
- Certification for sustainability – The state of the art
- Investing in Sustainability – What tools do we have? What tools do we need?
- Business & biodiversity partnerships – Making it happen!



Corporate social responsibility – Help or hindrance?

Key messages

- **Consensus** – need **both** regulatory & voluntary approaches
- **Necessary** – a **diversity** of approaches towards companies
- **Fundamental** – **principles** to underpin engagement



Corporate social responsibility – Help or hindrance?

Key opportunities for the IUCN community

- Work through **supply chain** to reach **small business** and build **financial incentives** for them to address biodiversity
- Find ways of **measuring** progress towards **outcomes**
- Build **structures** for a sustained and sustainable dialogue
- Establish **best practice** for addressing **community** issues
- Strive for **consistency** in defining what is important and why
- Challenge to work **together** towards **robust regulation**



Certification for sustainability – Key issues and challenges and the state of the art

Key messages

- “Certification” alone is not “sustainability.” – important to better understand linkages between certification and other sustainability mechanisms
- For certification to work, need to create mutual understanding
 - business must understand and help achieve sustainability objectives
 - NGOs must understand and accept the need to provide tangible benefits to business
- New initiatives developing the certification-for-sustainability concept – applications in green markets, greening other markets, and targeting actors other than final consumers.
- BUT there are limits to the sheer numbers of standards that can be developed and applied – need an understanding of when standards are an effective tool and when other mechanisms should be used



Certification for sustainability – Key issues and challenges and the state of the art

Key opportunities for the IUCN community

- Certification initiatives need to be tuned for developing countries and regions – for example, cost factors
- Understand the relationship between voluntary standards and mandatory requirements
- Needed focus on enforcement and monitoring – whether under regulations or voluntary certification
- Innovative use of certification to achieve sustainability objectives -- for example, national park
- Importance of participatory decision-making mechanisms



Investing in sustainability – What tools do we have? What tools do we need?

Key messages

Biodiversity is material to investment.

- International financial institutions mainstreaming environmental and social considerations in investment decisions and setting standards for project financing
- Private sector financial institutions beginning to look at biodiversity as part of the risk screening of their investment portfolios and partnering with client companies to improve corporate biodiversity performance
- Sustainability factors being recognised as a key determinant to the success rate of investments in small and medium enterprises (SMEs)



Investing in sustainability – What tools do we have? What tools do we need?

Key opportunities for the IUCN community

- IUCN can and should engage with the world of banks, insurance companies and pension funds and ensure the robustness of the industry's biodiversity policies
- The environmental community needs to better elicit and communicate the business case for biodiversity
- The conservation community is well positioned to promote responsible SMEs and provide a window for identifying investment opportunities



Business & biodiversity partnerships – Making it happen!

Key messages

- With hard work and commitment, biodiversity partnerships – like marriages – are working.
- Investment in courtship – really getting to know each other – is critical to success.
- Substantive and sustained human and financial resources for partnerships are both a necessity and a challenge.



Business & biodiversity partnerships – Making it happen!

Key opportunities for the IUCN community

- IUCN members and partners engaged in partnerships should share experiences and lessons learned.
- NGO capacities need to be built or coordinated to address both corporate policies (at the head office level) and corporate actions (at the operational level).
- Guidelines need to be developed on how best to accept private sector funds without compromising integrity or independence.



Will capitalism conserve or consume the planet?



The short answer is yes.

