

KCS at the IUCN World Conservation Congress

Updates on the Congress - Hawaii



Our Deputy CEO, Mt Baboloki Autlwetse is delighted to share updates on the IUCN World Conservation Congress from Honolulu, Hawaii. On its 5th day, the congress is still running at a 24/7 pace with parallel session and intense debates.



The President of IUCN, Zhang Xinsheng ... "We have the right people here at this Congress to take bold steps to turn this world around."

The IUCN Congress started on a high note after His Excellency the President of America Barrack Obama quadrupled the size of a national marine monument of north western Hawaii, called Papahānaumokuākea Marine Monument. The size has been increased to be twice the size of Texas. This development inspired Speakers during the official opening as they indicated that the step taken by the President shows there is a need for real solutions to real problems. The Marine monument is indicated to be hosting some of the species that are nearing extinction.

Speakers during the official opening called upon stakeholders (especially the Business community) to take responsibility and care for the environment. The US Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, indicated that the US is committed

to conservation as indicated by the expansion of the marine monuments.

The Governor of Hawaii, David Ige, also indicated that his state does not want to be left behind as he indicated that he has committed to protecting 30% of highest priority watersheds by 2030. He

indicated that the main reason for this was because the coral reefs provide capital for spectacular marine life and feed the communities of Hawaii.

IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng, as he officially opened the Congress, stressed that with more than 8000 participants from over 180 countries and with the congress in USA for the first time, we should understand that there is a limit to what the earth can offer and it is up to IUCN Members to show the world out there on the power they have. He indicated that members have the power to change policies, demonstrate nature-based solutions with scientists backing them up, and those with resources both technical and financial assisting in the implementation of the solutions. He indicated that IUCN needs to take the lead in implementation of the sustainable development and green energy initiatives. And further thereto, a need to take the world from the tipping point where it is now, to a turning point. He encouraged that congress take bold decisions and be united in their diversity to find sustainable solutions. He concluded by encouraging young people to take part in the congress as they are the future leaders of the world.

The congress has started with sessions where sharing and learning takes place and will be followed by the members forum where discussions and resolutions on the tabled motions will take place. Also during this time the motions will be voted for possible update into the next IUCN programme 2017 to 2020.

And back home here, we are following the discussions very close on specific Congress Motions. Of particular interest is the motion of closing domestic markets for ivory. The voting on Congress Motions will run from 7th to 9th September 2016. The motion also calls for support to the countries that have elephants. But as we all know, it easy to close markets but difficult to make countries contribute to elephant conservation (including those that do not have elephants). Other motions discussed and scheduled to be voted on relate to how developing countries will be supported to adapt and increase their resilience to Climate Change. KCS remains keen on these resolutions as they are at the centre of the Society's work in Botswana.



A sign of Botswana's commitment to elephant conservation - the elephant sculpture made entirely from ivory tusks at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, Gaborone, Botswana.

From Honolulu,

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