

## RESPECTED AUTHORITY CONVENING IN KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

**The World Conservation Union (IUCN)** is the world's leading authority and democratic platform in conservation and sustainability. It convenes a range of stakeholders including its 1,050 member organizations, as well as partners from governments, the private sector and NGO's. It brokers between them to find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development needs. Decision-making is done on its authoritative scientific credibility based on a network of 10,000 scientists.

IUCN:

- Develops cutting-edge conservation **know-how** and science, particularly in species, eco-systems, biodiversity, and the impact these have on human livelihoods.
- Takes **action** in field projects around the world to better manage natural environments and improve peoples' lives.
- Supports governments, agencies and international conventions to improve on and develop new legislation, **policy** and best practice.
- **Empowers** people and institutions to implement laws, policy and best practice by providing science, mobilizing organizations, training people and monitoring results.

**Kruger National Park, Friday, 16 November 2007:** The governing body of the world's leading authority on environment and development, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), is convening away from its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, for the first time in its 59 year history.

IUCN, established in 1948, is the only organisation of its kind in the world, comprising of some 1,050 members including nearly 200 governments and more than 800 non-governmental organisations. It is the only environmental organisation that has been afforded Permanent Observer Status at the United Nations. The governing body of IUCN, the IUCN Council, functions much like a non-executive board and performs a political and strategic oversight role.

The Council is meeting from 18 to 20 November 2007 at Mopani Rest Camp, Kruger National Park, on invitation of its current President, Mr. Valli Moosa, former Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in South Africa. South Africa has been holding the Presidency of IUCN since 2004 and will carry on doing so until the World Conservation Congress to be held in Barcelona Spain in October next year.

"With the breakdown of multi-literalism globally, the value of an institution such as IUCN should not be underestimated" Moosa underlined. "It would be close to impossible to establish an organisation of this kind in today's geo-political environment. Furthermore, IUCN is uniquely positioned to convene a wide range of stakeholders on the most pressing matters relating to environment and development and it does so in a manner that not even the United Nations can. At the same time, it has the organisational structure to influence decision-making and policy from this important institution (*United Nations*) to grass-roots level."

The prospect of convening this historic meeting in South Africa, co-hosted by SANParks and South African Tourism, has attracted much attention. "South Africans are acutely aware of the benefits to be derived from tourism development." Moeketsi Mosola, Chief Executive of South African Tourism said. "Since 2000 we have established ourselves firmly as the leisure tourism destination of choice globally. The time is now opportune to focus more strategically on other opportunities to be leveraged such as those yielded through business tourism. Intergovernmental meetings form an integral part of such a strategy. Building on our successes and experiences from meetings such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, we offer an unbeatable portfolio of services and infrastructure required by such clients. South Africa is honoured to host the IUCN governing body outside of Geneva for the first time in its history" Mosola concluded.

Dr. David Mabunda, Chief Executive Officer of SANParks, added that "It was a historical moment when South Africa hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress in 2003, with South African National Parks (SANParks)

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organizing the event on behalf of the country. It is therefore, befitting that once again, South Africa's premier conservation agency should be co-hosting the IUCN Council in South Africa's internationally recognize brand and one of the leading national parks in the world. SANParks is greatly honoured to be given this opportunity once again and we believe that this is an indication of the good standing we have as an organization in the area of protected area management."

Further information on IUCN and the meeting of its Council in Kruger Park may be obtained from the website  
[http://www.iucn.org/members/council/council\\_68/](http://www.iucn.org/members/council/council_68/)

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