

10th IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for West Asia Wraps Up in Riyadh with Bold Environmental Initiatives

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, September 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 10th IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for West Asia, hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represented by the National Center for Wildlife (NCW), concluded today in Riyadh after three days of dynamic discussions and workshops. The forum was held under the patronage of His Excellency Abdulrahman AlFadley, Saudi Minister of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, Chairman of the Board of the National Center for Wildlife. Her Excellency Dr. Yasmin Fouad, Egyptian Minister of Environment, and H.E. Razan Al Mubarak, President of IUCN, attended and actively participated alongside over 200 experts and specialists representing IUCN member organizations and various local and international stakeholders.



10th IUCN Regional Conservation Forum

During the forum, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched its Protected Areas System Plan, which serves as a roadmap for establishing and managing protected areas across the country. This initiative is a critical step toward achieving the 30x30 target, set in 2021, to protect 30% of the Kingdom's terrestrial and marine areas by 2030—a central pillar of the Saudi Green Initiative.

The forum featured sessions and workshops that addressed pressing environmental issues, biodiversity restoration efforts, nature-based solutions, and the inclusion of protected areas in the IUCN Green List. Participants discussed the application of modern innovations and technologies in conservation efforts, as well as the interconnectedness of water, energy, food security, and ecosystems. Emphasis was placed on strengthening local community engagement in ecosystem restoration initiatives, with the goal of achieving ecological representation of 30% in terrestrial, inland water, coastal, and marine areas by 2030. Discussions also focused on enhancing the ability to adapt to climate change, addressing land degradation and desertification, and aligning these efforts with sustainable development goals.

Sustainable land management practices were examined to ensure sustainable food production, efficient water management, and combating land degradation and desertification. The forum also highlighted opportunities and solutions for marine environments, focusing on reducing marine ecosystem degradation and overfishing through innovative strategies and collaborative approaches for effective marine governance. Additionally, discussions touched on the economic impacts of environmental degradation, mechanisms for carbon sequestration, and the expansion of renewable energy systems.

Dr. Mohammed Qurban, CEO of the National Center for Wildlife, stated: "This forum not only fosters vital knowledge exchange but also reinforces Saudi Arabia's commitment to environmental leadership, particularly through our 30x30 initiative. The Kingdom's ambitious target to protect 30% of its terrestrial and marine areas by 2030 is a cornerstone of our broader conservation strategy, aligned with the Saudi Green Initiative. As we work to safeguard biodiversity and address climate change, the insights and collaborative spirit shared during this forum will play a crucial role in achieving these goals."

He further added, "The discussions held here on sustainable management and biodiversity restoration reflect the power of collective efforts in tackling environmental challenges. The action plans and resolutions presented highlight the importance of regional and international collaboration in environmental stewardship. We look forward to tangible results that strengthen global efforts in biodiversity conservation."

The outcomes of the forum are expected to contribute to preparations for the upcoming World Conservation Congress next year, where the strategies discussed at this event will feed into global conservation efforts. The IUCN Regional Conservation Forum, held every four years and hosted by one of the 13 member countries, remains a vital platform for advancing conservation initiatives across the region.

The forum concluded with renewed commitments to joint action, underscoring the Kingdom's growing role in global conservation efforts and its dedication to preserving biodiversity for future generations.

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