

particularly characteristic of South Asia, where the number of protected areas has grown impressively over the past two decades. However, as population growth and increased demands from rural peoples for biological resources have grown even more rapidly, protected areas have often become the focus of intense struggles between biodiversity conservation and development demands. There is an urgent need — at the local, national, and regional, levels — to demonstrate the practical benefits of protected-area management to local and rural communities in ways that ensure the long-term ecological integrity of protected areas.

Professor Adrian Phillips, in his address at the opening of this 42nd Session, presented in brief the historical background and details of the tasks ahead in view of the changing scenario in different parts of the world.

Basically, IUCN's mission is to influence, encourage, and assist, societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of Nature and consequently ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and sustainable ecologically. Briefly, IUCN stands for conservation and ecologically-sustainable development. This applies equally to protected areas. Moreover, IUCN is on its way to implement decentralization and regionalization programmes, extending its services to global membership while keeping in view the priorities and needs of natural communities.

The CNPPA mission, as approved by the IUCN General Assembly in January 1994, is to 'promote the establishment and effective management of a world-wide network of terrestrial and marine protected areas'.

After the Bali Congress in 1982, the next World Parks Congress was held in 1992 at Caracas in Venezuela. Such a Congress, held once in ten years, is organized by CNPPA. The Caracas Congress listened to alarming reports about the present and future threats to the world's protected areas. However, it had a positive outlook in presenting a vital input to the Rio 'Earth Summit' on Environment and Development. Thus the Caracas Action Plan represents the conclusions of the Congress and provides a pattern of action to help shape the programme of CNPPA.

The Caracas Action Plan conveys four key messages:

- 1) Protected areas must be integrated into larger planning frameworks (e.g. within a national conservation strategy, and into policies for sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism).
- 2) Support for protected areas needs to be developed among local communities and non-traditional interest groups (such as industrialists, the media, and even the military).
- 3) The capacity for management needs further development, including such matters as training of protected-areas staff.

- 4) International cooperation should be expanded, especially in financing protected areas.

#### *New Perspective on Protected Areas*

The above-mentioned messages, emerging from the Caracas Action Plan, reflect the facts that:

- Protected areas are to be managed *with* and *through* local populations, not against them.
- Protected areas must be seen to be of value to society if they are to survive — they cannot any longer just be 'set aside' from the mainstream of a country's pursuit of 'sustainable development'.
- Protected areas are linked to practically every aspect of a nation's concern, and are touched by nearly every arm of public policy.
- The traditional view of protected areas, as national parks to be owned and run by the State and from which local people will be banned, must be supplemented by other models based on partnerships with local communities, NGOs, and private owners.
- Managing protected areas calls for a very wide range of skills — above all, the skills of dealing with human beings.

Conflict resolution, marketing, public relations, communication skills — these, more than mere animal wildlife management, are the hallmark of the successful protected-area manager in the 1990s.

#### *Future Tasks of CNPPA*

Responding to the Caracas challenge, CNPPA has now developed a clear view of its major tasks, namely:

- to develop regional action plans to implement the Caracas Action Plan;
- to stimulate the preparation of national systems plans for protected areas, especially relevant to the requirement of the Convention on Biological Diversity to conserve biodiversity;
- to communicate policy advice to protected-area planners and managers; and
- to develop guidance on such key issues as tourism and protected areas, the economic benefits brought by the existence of protected areas, and methods of financing protected areas — for each of which a task-force operates.

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### **India's Rajaji National Park and Threatened Elephants**

The focus of the Center for Elephant Studies is on two urgent needs:

- 1) To find suitable corridors for the Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) herds to migrate between the bifurcated Park areas that are separated by the River Ganges, thereby relieving them of excessive concentration, disturbances, and dwindling of food reserves; and
- 2) to find solutions to the growing conflict between 'Man and Elephant', as hunger for land and its concomitant

pressures of human population are mercilessly destroying the habitat, with grave environmental consequences.

The Rajaji National Park covers an area of 831 sq.km, with a resident Elephant population of over seven hundreds. The majority of the herds are boxed into the western edge of the Park, so being devoid of sufficient access to the eastern region owing to mushrooming growth of towns, villages, industrial complexes, and irrigation networks.

The Park itself has unique ecosystems and wider eco-complexes which comprise the 'Shivalik Ranges', formed by the 'debris washed down from the Himalayas' millions of years ago. It supports at least 25 mammal species and 315 species of birds.

Geologically the Shivaliks are fragile, consisting of boulders and conglomerates of variegated clay together with coarse-grained coloured sandstone and brown shale. This weak constitution is vulnerable to erosion. Being forested, however, the tree cover mainly of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) has so far been able to staunch the flow of rain-water, reducing runoffs and erosion. During the monsoons, the streams that remain dry for most of the year are converted to raging torrents carrying huge boulders and trees downstream. When the rain subsides, the streams revert to their bone-dry appearance almost within hours, leaving only scattered traces of water.

The inescapable compulsion due to human necessity has now opened up the forest canopy, encouraging rain-water to wash the topsoil from the hills, along with boulders and rubble which find their way to flat stream-beds called 'raos'.

Adding further to these conditions, with indiscriminate lopping and felling of trees, a downward spiral of action has resulted in staving off regeneration and seeding. Thus, sunlight filtering through the open canopy has encouraged weed growth, so that 40% of the ground cover is now choked with lantana, parthenium, *Cannabis sativa*, and *Cassia tora*.

Because of the lack of ground-cover, much of the natural flora has died and Elephants are unable to find sufficient food-source. With herd numbers rising alarmingly in these reduced habitats and scarce food-sources, the Elephants have no alternative but to invade cultivated



FIG. 1. A herd of Elephants in the Rajaji National Park.

fields outside the Park, which results in increased incidents of human casualties caused by Elephants in search of food.

Now, the very survival of the Elephants is at stake, these being the last forests in Northwest India where Elephants still reside. But with the flood-tide of human encroachment, if nothing is done soon, they will eventually, and most regrettably, vanish from them and foreseeably for ever.

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### OECD Review of Rural Policy in Switzerland

The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development) Group of the Council on Rural Development reviewed rural policy in Switzerland in the course of its meeting in Paris from 7th to 9th December 1994. After Finland, this was the second review by the OECD of the rural policy of a Member country.

Switzerland is densely populated in comparison with most OECD Member countries, but 40% of its population still lives on the more than 80% of its territory which is described as rural. Moreover, rural areas make a significant contribution to the national economy and not merely to Switzerland's image in the world.

As part of its government's programme for the period ending in 1995, the Swiss Federal Council has set the goal of reorienting its current regional policy. One result of the cooperative efforts of the federal offices concerned with the new orientation of regional policy has been the development of a draft *Action Programme to Overcome Structural Changes and Promote Cooperation in Rural Areas*. The design of the draft programme was carried out with the support of the Advisory Commission to the Federal Council on Regional Policy.

From the outset, Switzerland collaborated actively with the OECD, which has been addressing this issue for several years. Thus, the Organization was invited by the Swiss authorities to carry out an 'ex-ante' review of the REGIO-Plus Programme before its submission to the Swiss decisionmakers for approval. In that context, OECD experts also carried out on-the-spot studies of the current structures and forthcoming challenges in various rural areas of the Jura, the Plains, and the Alps.

In view of the coming structural adjustment in the agricultural sector (agricultural policy reform and the GATT Agreement), and of the industrial and services sectors' tendency towards spatial concentration, the development of Switzerland's rural areas requires, as in other OECD countries, appropriate structural measures to be taken by the federal authorities.

The problems and challenges of rural development must, by their nature, be dealt with locally, but consideration must also be given to their regional context as well as to the growing integration of rural areas into the national and international economy. These issues must also be addressed in the light of the major spatial impact of many of the sectoral policies that are introduced by the federal authorities.

The draft 'REGIO-Plus Programme' is aimed at helping to resolve these issues. By design a multidisciplinary, market-driven incentive programme, its goal is to help rural areas to adapt to structural adjustment by promoting and turning to account their economic and socio-cultural diversity and multifunctionality.

By promoting the implementation of innovative, exemplary and economically-viable projects, the establishment of new kinds of partnerships and institutional arrangements and, finally, the enhancement of Switzerland's rich natural and Man-made heritage, REGIO-Plus gives rural policy sufficient scope to deal with changing conditions in Switzerland and in the world. As one of a series of similar initiatives taken by other OECD Member countries, it is of international importance.