



WPC Recommendation 16

Good Governance of Protected Areas

Governance involves the interactions among structures, processes traditions and knowledge systems that determine how power and responsibility are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens and other stakeholders have their say. It is a concept that applies at all levels in the field of protected areas – site, national, regional and global.

The degree to which protected areas meet conservation objectives, contribute to the well-being of society and achieve broad social, economic and environmental goals is closely related to the quality of their governance. Thus, protected areas are relevant, benefit society-at-large, and are a legacy to future generations.

'Good governance' was identified by the *World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation* as being "essential for sustainable development" and States committed themselves to:

- 'good governance' through the *Monterrey Consensus on Financing and Development*, and
- promote democracy and the rule of law through the *UN Millennium Declaration*.

As an example, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is designed to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable growth, acknowledges that development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace, and 'good governance'.

Further, the United Nations Secretary General has stated that 'good governance' is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development".

Practically, protected areas should be managed in keeping with the Ecosystem Approach as defined by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (*Decision V/6*) which can be summarised as a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Also, the *IUCN /WWF Principles of Indigenous/Traditional Peoples and Protected Areas* includes a principle that decentralization, participation, transparency and accountability should be taken into account in all matters pertaining to the mutual interests of protected areas and indigenous and other traditional peoples. And, the UNDP has published a list of characteristics of 'good governance' and there is growing recognition of the key elements that constitute 'good governance'.

Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Stream on Governance: New ways of working together at the Vth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):

RECOMMEND governments and civil society:

1. ENDORSE the importance of governance as a key concept for protected areas and PROMOTE 'good governance' as essential for the effective management of protected areas of all types in the 21st Century;
2. RECOGNISE that governance of protected areas should reflect and address relevant social, ecological, cultural, historical and economic factors, and what constitutes 'good governance' in any area needs to be considered in light of local circumstances, traditions and knowledge systems;
3. ADOPT "Legitimacy and Voice", "Accountability", "Performance", "Fairness", and "Direction" as general principles of 'good governance' for protected areas in the 21st Century and use them as a basis for developing their own principles to improve protected area management;
4. URGE all those involved in the establishment and management of protected areas to strive to pursue the above principles for 'good governance' including attention to:
 - a. recognition of the diverse knowledge systems;
 - b. openness, transparency, and accountability in decision making;
 - c. inclusive leadership;
 - d. mobilizing support from diverse interests, with special emphasis on partners and local and indigenous communities; and
 - e. sharing authority and resources and devolving/decentralizing decision making authority and resources where appropriate;
5. RECOGNISE that 'good governance' contributes to the achievement of the objectives of protected areas and to social acceptance and sustainability of conservation in the long term;
6. ENCOURAGE and IMPROVE the capacity of managers of protected areas to apply the above principles of good governance in implementing the ecosystem approach advocated by the Convention on Biological Diversity and dealing with global change; and

7. CALL on the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to address the matter of good governance in the programme of work for protected areas, in particular with regard to capacity building needs and exchanges of experiences and lessons learned.

Stream: Governance: New ways of Working Together

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