



WWF CONSERVATION PULSE

DECEMBER 2015

We close an extraordinary year with yet another important conservation success. The Paris Agreement is the first time that all the world's nations have agreed to take action on climate change; this is an unprecedented convergence of political will, of acting for the common good to prevent catastrophic climate change. Coming on top of the UN approval of a new 15-year sustainable development deal and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the first ever UN resolution against wildlife crime, we can look back on a stellar year for the environment. Yes, all these successes will still require further sustained effort from WWF and our partners, but take a moment to celebrate this progress and the years of work that made it possible. These achievements, together with the many others reflected in previous editions of *Conservation Pulse*, are all fully in line with WWF's new global conservation goals. More important, they also reflect the common ambition, collaboration and inspiration that are the driving force of the new goals. We thank all the teams that have contributed to getting so far on these fronts and for the many other successes WWF has helped record in 2015.

We wish all the best for the season and for an inspiring 2016. To quote US President Barack Obama on the Paris climate deal: "Together we've shown what is possible when the world stands as one".

*Deon Nel, Acting Executive Director, Conservation
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Paris COP21 ushers in global transition

In a moment described as historic by many commentators, the world's governments finalized a global agreement in Paris on 12 December that lays the foundations for effective long-term efforts to fight climate change. The agreement is the first ever to commit all countries to cut emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. Particularly significant are the following commitments: to keep global temperature increases well below 2°C and endeavour to limit them to 1.5°C; to review each country's contribution to emission cuts every five years – with a global stock-taking in 2018 – to help scale up efforts to reduce emissions; and to seek a balance between emissions and absorption by forests and oceans by the second half of the century. On financing the costs of fighting climate change in developing countries and those most vulnerable to its impacts, countries affirmed the target of leveraging US\$100 billion annually by 2020, with increased funding in future years. Samantha Smith, leader of WWF's climate and energy team, said: "We are seeing the start of a global transition towards renewable energy". She added: "The talks and surrounding commitments send a strong signal to everyone – the fossil fuel era is coming to an end. As climate impacts worsen around the world, we need to seize on the current momentum and usher in a new era of cooperative action from all countries and all levels of society."



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Tweet your leader!

WWF's innovative Tweet Your Leader campaign enabled people throughout the world to send a message to their political leaders at the Paris climate summit urging a fair and effective global climate deal. The campaign ran through the duration of the summit to let leaders know that the eyes of their citizens were on them. In three simple steps, people were invited to select their leader's publicly listed Twitter handle and send them a formatted tweet assuring them of their support. People who tweeted also received a personalized thank you message from @earthhour and were invited to continue their journey with WWF and Earth Hour through email sign-ups and donations. In the three-week campaign, www.tweetyourleader.org saw close to 24,000 visits from more than 60 countries. With more than 40 WWF offices around the world promoting the campaign, over 4,200 tweets were sent, gathering close to 800 million impressions for the campaign hashtag #ChangeClimateChange. The campaign gained support from heavy-weight influencers such as Mark Ruffalo, Mia Farrow, Lana Parrilla and even the ubiquitous video game franchise Angry Birds, helping to position WWF and Earth Hour as a movement to show that changing climate change is possible when we act together and harness the power of the crowd.



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Celebrating leadership

WWF celebrated four outstanding individuals as Leaders for a Living Planet for their work to preserve key threatened habitats and species in Europe. Stanley Johnson, Henriette Bastrup-Birk, Claus Stuffmann and Hemmo Muntingh are among the key founders of the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive adopted in 1992, considered one of the EU's strongest pieces of environmental legislation. The award ceremony, which was held in Brussels on 15 December, aimed to celebrate the people and values that led to the creation of such visionary laws for nature protection, and of Natura 2000, the world's largest protected area network. The directives help secure 27,000 natural sites and their wildlife and ecosystem services. EU Environment Ministers met the following day to adopt conclusions on the Mid-Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy – Europe's strategy to halt the loss of nature by 2020 – where they reconfirmed the central role of the Nature Directives in bringing biodiversity loss to an end by 2020 and agreed to focus on their effective implementation and enforcement across Europe. Earlier this year a coalition of non-governmental organizations including WWF launched the Nature Alert campaign. This was in response to plans announced by the European Commission to change the Birds and Habitats Directives, a move likely to water down EU legal standards on nature protection. Since then, more than half a million people, 11 Member States, the EU Parliament and the Dutch Parliament have called on the EU to save Europe's nature laws. The WWF campaign will continue until a decision is taken in 2016.



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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

panda.org

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