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HDN: A Knowledge Basket on the Interrelationships between People and Nature

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IUCN initiated the development of the HDN knowledge basket at the 2012 World Conservation Congress in Jeju, Korea. At that time, a steering group was formed with representation from the IUCN secretariat, Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy and its cross-commission themes and members. The aim of the HDN knowledge basket is to promote the uptake of existing knowledge and generate new knowledge on the interrelationship between humans and nature, focusing on the use and reliance on ecosystem services and their contribution to local livelihoods and well-being. In order to meet this aim a process has been initiated to develop approaches, tools and standards along with associated capacity building. This will support better data collection, documentation and understanding of local social-ecological contexts that are relevant to policy formulation and development interventions and that result in tangible improvements to livelihoods and well-being. Workshops held during 2013 identified the need to link development and conservation through the HDN knowledge basket to complement existing IUCN knowledge products with a conservation focus (e.g. Red List of Threatened Species). This led to a focus on the multi-faceted role that species and ecosystems play in the lives of remote, rural and coastal populations recognizing that for many indigenous peoples and local communities in such regions there is a reliance upon the harvest of species from forest, aquatic, marine/coastal dryland and grassland ecosystems for subsistence and as a source of cash income. While provisioning has often been treated through an economics lens it was emphasized that this material utility is often underpinned by deep-seated cultural norms, values and beliefs and the use of species and ecosystems is also an expression of individual and group identity. HDN has been developing conceptual thinking to ensure its approach integrates cultural processes into provisioning practice while noting that there are other symbolic interrelationships with both species and landscapes that also must be considered. This presentation will provide an overview of the HDN knowledge basket and progress to date and set the context for the four conceptual discussion papers that follow. The goal of HDN is to build partnerships, linkages and synergies with other researchers, practitioners and agencies working on the interrelationships between people and nature. This panel will provide an opportunity to obtain direct feedback from conference participants and identify people interested in becoming involved in shaping the HDN knowledge basket through participation in the review and revision of discussion papers as well as other potential partnerships.