

Summary Notes: Meeting of the Informal Discussion Group on Environment (IDGE)

29 October, 2008* 10:00 – 12:30

NEMC Conference Room – 4th Floor, Pamba House, Pamba Road

(for additions, corrections, or more information please contact Jessica Campese at jesscampese@gmail.com)

Agenda

- Welcome and brief introduction from participants
- Brief review of current IDGE objectives and structure
- Round-table discussion on possible ways to improve objectives/ structure/ function of IDGE
- Communications
- Next steps

Participants

- Abdulrahman Issa (IUCN – Tanzania Country Representative, IDGE Meeting Chair)
- Steve Ball (Mpingo Conservation Project)
- Jessica Campese (Consultant – IUCN ESARO/ Tanzania)
- Rehema Mtingwa (Communications and Campaign Manager, Mama Mimitu)
- Aichi Kitanyi (ICRAF – World Agroforestry Centre - Country Representative)
- Mary G. Kivaria (Environmental Education Co-ordinator, Ministry of Edu. And Vocational Training)
- *Several notes also received from participants interested but unable to attend meeting, including MNRT (Wildlife Division, Wetlands Unit), UDSM – IRA, CARE, Danish Embassy*

Summary of Meeting Outcomes

IDGE status

- IDGE mission is still valid, and serves a function that is still in demand from members. IDGE can provide opportunities for members, including by bringing together partners from multiple sectors and interest areas.
- There is a commitment to IDGE, both from IUCN as the organizing group and from members, but IUCN, in partnership with IDGE members, needs to work together to see that IDGE can be revitalized as an effective multi-stakeholder forum.

IDGE structure/ function

- IDGE should remain open / multi-stakeholder forum (all sectors welcome)
- Communications should be multi-directional (not just from IUCN) and email list should make this simple
- IDGE meetings should complement (and where appropriate be combined with) meetings and events of other related forums wherever possible.
- IUCN should pursue possibility of collaborating more closely with TNRF, and is taking this up as a first step

IDGE topics/ scope

- Members should consider expanding scope of issues to major, pressing challenges (climate change, biofuels),
- List of thematic areas should also remain focused / not too long
- Current list needs to be revisited as a group and likely reduced (*this did not take place during meeting*)

IDGE membership and communications

- IUCN and all IDGE members should encourage and actively pursue new and broader membership
- IUCN should create a single email address for IDGE (dedicated listserve) and all IDGE members should be welcomed to communicate directly with the full list, rather than only sending messages through IUCN.

Next steps

- IUCN will pursue ways to coordinate and collaborate with other related forums, including TNRF
- IUCN will create dedicated email address (listserve) for easy multi-direction communication

- Members are encouraged to notify IUCN about additional interested members and/or additional ideas/suggestions/ comments on IDGE structure and function, including communications

Detailed Notes on Discussions

Welcome and introductions

- Participant introductions
- Review history and current status of IDGE
 - Long time since last meeting, due in large part to staffing issues.
 - Calling this first meeting to review best ways forward
- Few in attendance, but information to be shared with full member list for additional feedback

Objectives and Structure of IDGE:

- Reviewed IDGE profile developed in 2000, including intentions, objective, organizational structure.ⁱ
- Of note in this existing profile, among other things, is that IDGE is:
 - Intended to facilitate broad-based and impartial discussion on environment, with particular attention to environment-development issues.
 - Not an advocacy organization, but a forum to share lessons and ideas which can initiate/inform advocacy work taken forward by other individuals or groups.
 - Focused on sharing information about specific projects (on-going, proposed, completed).
 - Meetings organized around projects and themes
 - Led by an organizing group responsible for arranging meetings (IUCN), including any necessary preparatory meetings.
 - Venue for sharing information via email between meetings. Members with information or documents they'd like circulated should send them to the organizing group (IUCN) for distribution [*note request for this process to be changed*]
 - Theme groups should develop and make presentations on specific issues
- *IDGE profile is open for revisions – Group was invited to share suggested changes*
- Group discussed current role of/ demand for IDGE and its relation to other forums, including TNRF. Discussion points included:
 - Demand for IDGE remains
 - Also need to acknowledge difficulty in maintaining momentum in group like IDGE.
 - IUCN has commitment and capacity to organize the group, but is also seeking support from members in reviving it.
 - Engagement varies across members, times, issues, and all face challenge given number of other commitments; IDGE has no specific member commitments in terms of time/ activity required.
 - IDGE is open for revision as part of this revitalization process and members are encouraged to share inputs/ ideas on way forward.

Suggestions for changes to IDGE structure/ function:

Membership and scope/ role of IDGE

- Actively seek additional membership from across multiple sectors, including academic institutions
- Seek ways for IDGE to coordinate with/ complement TNRF and other related forums.
- Focus on pressing issues – biofuels and climate change among others – but at the same time recognize that current set of meeting themes is too broad and many are cross-cutting; list needs to be better targeted
- Set smaller working groups on particular issues (where such working groups don't already exist) and seek to coordinate with existing working groups on other issues (e.g., TNRF Forestry working group)

Meeting structures/ timing

- Consider reducing number of meetings (less than once per month)
- Take opportunities to meet as side event at other organized meetings on environment throughout Tanzania

- Coordinate with other Forums (TNRF, relevant Government-led forums, etc) and combine meetings wherever possible and appropriate

Communication

- Need single email address (listserv) that is shared by all members. This will simplify multi-directional communications and email list management
- Would be helpful if IDGE-related information were available on web, but there isn't a clear need for a dedicated IDGE website.
 - One option is a single page on IDGE, hosted from IUCN webpage, but also linked to from willing IDGE member websites
 - IUCN will pursue this and other options and report to group

Next steps / Way forward

- IUCN to reach out to TNRF to see if / how we can coordinate and collaborate
- IUCN to establish dedicated email list (one address all members can share)
- IUCN and all members to invite additional members
- Members to provide additional feedback on IDGE structure/ scope/ communications.

ⁱ Document sent to full IDGE list prior to meeting