



Our Reference:

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## Message from UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner to UNEP-WCMC Proteus Meeting

Dear colleagues,

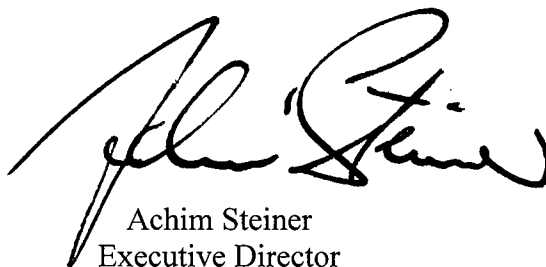
I would like to express my strong appreciation for the support that the private sector has been providing through the Proteus Project to help UNEP access important global data of pivotal importance to biodiversity conservation. My predecessor, Klaus Toepfer, delivered a supportive message in person to one of the early meetings, hosted by Premier Oil in 2003, and while I cannot be with you in person today, please be assured that I share his warm regard for the partnership that has been forged under the Proteus banner.

The corporate Proteus partners have already shown vision and commitment by supporting recent infrastructural knowledge management developments at UNEP-WCMC, and by helping reshape the World Database on Protected Areas. This is a vital resource for decision-making, not only within the private sector, but in the context of international processes such as the Millennium Development Goals and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Today's meeting of the Proteus Partners opens the possibility for another step forward by bringing us together to explore data sharing with our colleagues from the international conservation community – Conservation International, one of the most prominent US-based NGOs, from BirdLife, the pre-eminent world bird conservation body, and from my previous "home", IUCN – the World Conservation Union. Many sections of the private sector need accurate spatial data on nature in order to reduce various business risks and the idea that a conservation and private sector coalition might be created to provide a step-change in data availability is an extremely attractive one to me, and I will ensure that UNEP will do whatever it can to mobilise support for the proposals that will emerge from your discussion and recommendation.

I hope that your meeting goes well and look forward to learning of its outcomes.

With best wishes,



Achim Steiner  
Executive Director