



PRESS RELEASE
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The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico admitted to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization.

Following a rigorous evaluation process, the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico recently became a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This places the non-profit organization as the only member on the Island which belongs to this prestigious global entity.

Founded in 1948, IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization which gathers sovereign states, government and non-government entities, into a unique alliance composed of over 1,100 member organizations from approximately 160 countries. It seeks to strengthen the work of its member networks and associates to enhance its capabilities and support the establishment of global alliances that safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

With respect to this inclusion, Fernando Lloveras San Miguel, Esq., Executive Director of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico said: "In addition to the privilege of being part of the most important worldwide conservation organization, the inclusion of The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico to the IUCN makes everyone in our organization proud to receive this coveted distinction granted to so few of those engaged in conservation efforts worldwide."

"Being part of the IUCN is an acknowledgement of the quality and excellence of the administrative efforts of the Conservation Trust with respect to our natural protected areas, recognizing the significance of our contribution to the conservation of the Island; validates once more our high level of integrity in operations and management; and affords us the opportunity to reach out and exchange information with other countries and counterpart organizations which share our mission on a worldwide level," continued Fernando Lloveras San Miguel.

Dr. Grethel Aguilar, Regional Director of IUCN for Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean stated: "We welcome the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico as a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization." "This new member of the IUCN gives us great satisfaction, not only for the enormous contribution and experience that this organization adds to the conservation efforts in the Caribbean and the world, as well as the fact that it opens the doors to an island of exceptional natural and cultural richness," she added. "We hope this relationship will bear precious fruit and knowledge that will benefit the wellbeing of the environment and the people in and outside of Puerto Rico," she concluded.

Members of the scientific community on the Island also commented on the inclusion of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico to the IUCN. "Membership in the IUCN highlights the excellent work of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico and ushers them into the international scene of promoters of the conservation of nature, which will encourage the adoption on the Island of vision, strategies and objectives in accordance with initiatives that have been adopted regionally and globally," stated Eugenio Santiago, PhD, Associate Professor and Researcher of Botany of the University of Puerto Rico, and Director and Curator of the Herbarium of the Botanical Garden of the UPR.

Dr. Armando Rodríguez, Dean of Research of the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, Bayamon Campus, added: "The affiliation of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico to the IUCN opens another great opportunity for the wildlife of the Island and the Antilles to be viewed with the importance it deserves; an importance rooted in its high endemic level."

Lloveras San Miguel continued by stating that: "We are certain that our membership in the IUCN will enhance our ability to adopt policies and solutions to the problems confronting our country in terms of the low percentage of conservation (8%) that we actually have, and its implications in economic terms and with respect to quality of life." Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic have protected about 25% of their natural areas, while Puerto Rico has only protected 8%.

Within the IUCN, Puerto Rico is part of the Mesoamerican Region, which includes Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. To date, the work of the IUCN in the Caribbean is concentrated in the Caribe Insular section, an area that has a unique biodiversity whose conservation and management of natural resources are at the heart of the challenges faced for sustainable development.

The mission of the IUCN consists of influencing, encouraging and helping organizations on a global level to conserve the integrity and the diversity of nature, and to ensure the equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources. A central secretariat coordinates the IUCN Program and offers services to its members, to whom they provide strategies, services, scientific knowledge and technical support to help them reach their objectives.

By means of its six working Commissions, the IUCN has at its disposal some 11,000 expert volunteers that form working groups and technical teams specializing in the conservation of species, biodiversity, as well as management of habitats and natural resources. The Union has helped many countries to prepare National Conservation Strategies, and puts its knowledge into practice through the field projects it supervises.

For additional information regarding the Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) please visit their website at <http://www.iucn.org/about/>

ABOUT THE CONSERVATION TRUST OF PUERTO RICO (CTPR)

The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico is a non-governmental, non-profit institution whose mission is to ensure functional and healthy ecological systems in the islands of Puerto Rico, and to promote within its inhabitants a sense of responsibility towards the conservation of nature, to enable us to depend on the services of ecosystems which will help us reach our social, economic and quality of life goals.

The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico believes that we can reach our maximum potential, individual as well as collective, if we can sustain the services of the ecosystems on the islands of Puerto Rico, and if we respect all of the life forms with whom we share our natural environment. The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico reaches its objectives by the acquisition of natural areas and the creation of conservation easements, as well as the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of important historic structures located in lands of high ecological value, among other mechanisms. As part of its mission, the Conservation Trust develops educational programs which focus on creating awareness and encouraging actions that meet the need to protect and conserve natural areas. It also oversees a program of nurseries dedicated to the production, distribution and planting of species of trees native to Puerto Rico with the goal of helping to preserve the biological diversity of our islands. The only beneficiary of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico is the people of Puerto Rico.

In early 2012 the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico received the accreditation seal of The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, a highly coveted distinction in the field of conservation in the United States, which recognizes that this organization meets the highest standards of ethics, transparency and excellence in all of its operations. Moreover, the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico is part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a prestigious organization that includes over 1,200 organizations around the world; and is a Statewide Partner of the National Conservation Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), the lead organization in the United States which is dedicated to historic preservation.