

REC 3.113 Conservation of Saiga antelope *Saiga tatarica tatarica* and *Saiga tatarica mongolica*

NOTING that the Saiga antelope is one of the key species of fragile steppe ecosystems in the Northern Palearctic occurring in the Russian Federation and Central Asia;

RECALLING that the Saiga antelope was listed in Annex II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1995 and was included in 2002 in the *IUCN Red List* as a Critically Endangered species;

NOTING the recent decisions of the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to CITES concerning urgent conservation measures for the Saiga antelope;

RECOGNIZING that the Saiga antelope is one of the most seriously endangered mammal species in the world today, and that its numbers have declined dramatically from about one million animals in 1990 to less than five percent of this figure today, primarily due to poaching for horns and meat;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the root causes of poaching lie in poverty, resulting from major changes in the rural economies of the main range states – Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia;

NOTING that poaching for meat and horns and illegal international trade in horns and other products, uncontrolled hunting, construction of irrigation channels, major roads and railways and other obstacles preventing natural migration have all contributed to the recent sharp declines of all populations of the Saiga antelope;

CONCERNED about the impact of continued poaching for horns for the traditional Chinese medicine trade on the Saiga population, and its huge negative effect on breeding success and the contribution to sharp declines in the populations of this species;

ALARMED that organized and widespread illegal hunting of Saiga antelope and consumption and smuggling of its products continue in spite of the rigorous measures taken by the governments of its range states to prevent this illegal activity;

STRESSING that unless current conservation measures are dramatically strengthened, poaching will continue and rapidly lead to extinction or near-extinction of the remaining populations, especially the Betpak-Dala population in Kazakhstan;

FURTHER NOTING the very substantial increases in human and financial resources for anti-poaching enforcement activities and public awareness made by the Governments of the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan under their *Restoration of the Saiga* strategies; and

WELCOMING the serious efforts made by the Chinese authorities to register legal stocks of Saiga horn and to combat illegal trade, including through significant seizures;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. URGES all states to strengthen and enforce legislation to conserve the Saiga antelope;
2. ENCOURAGES states, within their respective laws and regulations, to make inventories of existing commercial stocks of Saiga antelope products and to apply a registration system to these stocks;

3. CALLS ON all parties concerned to take measures for the signature or ratification of international and transboundary agreements such as the *Memorandum of Understanding on Saiga Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use* drawn up by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS);
4. RECOMMENDS urgent initiatives to improve the incomes of rural people in the Saiga antelope range countries and to support alternative livelihood activities;
5. WELCOMES the recognition by CITES COP13 of the need for various urgent conservation measures;
6. URGES the CITES Parties and Secretariat to work together to ensure that illegal international trade is totally eliminated; and
7. CALLS FOR significant increases in international support for conservation measures, especially for progress on proposals for a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, which has been delayed for some time.

The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record:

State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.