

RES 3.017 Promoting food sovereignty to conserve biodiversity and end hunger

UNDERSTANDING that IUCN's Vision of "A just world that values and conserves nature" inevitably depends upon ending hunger and poverty – which is also the first and most important of the United Nations (UN) *Millennium Development Goals*;

NOTING with alarm that more than 800 million people live in hunger and that approximately 80 percent of those live in rural areas and lack adequate access to basic productive resources such as land, according to UN data;

REMINDING that the conservation of biological and cultural diversity is critical to the world's continued production of safe, adequate and culturally appropriate food;

OBSERVING that the existing wealth of agricultural biodiversity is available largely as a result of thousands of years of careful breeding and development by small-scale producer communities (indigenous peoples and local communities, including farmers, livestock keepers/pastoralists, fisher-folk, and others) and provides the basis for their food security;

AWARE that sufficient food is now produced to feed the world, although much more effort is needed to promote sustainable means of food production;

CONCLUDING that hunger and poverty will not be ended by increased globalization of food production, which is linked to an increased dependency on very few species of crops cultivated as large-scale monoculture systems;

AWARE that food insecurity and conservation of the world's biological heritage must be addressed through assuring access to genetic and productive resources and ensuring respect for human rights, particularly the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, contained in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*;

MINDFUL that it is essential to recognize and protect indigenous peoples' and/or local communities' control of their lands, territories and natural heritage, and their traditional collective land tenure systems, as necessary for their survival and continued ability to conserve biological resources;

FURTHER MINDFUL that security of tenure for traditional and local communities is also necessary for their survival and ability to conserve biological resources;

CONCERNED about the increasing concentration of ownership and access to productive resources consequent to privatization of public goods and patenting of technological processes linked to biological resources and related knowledge;

TROUBLED that great biodiversity loss is due to unsustainable and dependency-generating forms of agriculture, such as industrial, large-scale and high-input agriculture, extensive monocultures for export, patenting of technological processes related to biological resources and massive international trade in agriculture;

ALARMED that in many regions the first victims of the loss of agricultural biodiversity and globalization of agricultural trade are women and children;

NOTING that in response to these challenges civil society groups, led by peasants' movements, have developed a 'food sovereignty' platform, i.e. a set of alternative policies to the dominant model of liberalization of agricultural trade;

NOTING that food sovereignty:

- (a) is rooted in the right of peoples and countries to define their own agricultural and food policies;
- (b) prioritizes access of small-scale producer communities to productive resources;
- (c) commits to respect, conserve, restore, and protect all natural resources, including protection against endangering technologies such as use of Genetically Modified Organisms, and promotes equitable and ecologically sustainable community-based agricultural practices;
- (d) is not opposed to trade but advocates for a system of international agricultural trade that prioritizes local production for local markets before export; and
- (e) supports agricultural research led by small-scale food producers;

WELCOMING the recommendation of the 'UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food' that "Food sovereignty be considered as an alternative model for agriculture and agricultural trade" (UN Economic and Social Council document E/CN.4/2004/10, submitted to the 60th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, 2004);

RECOGNIZING many points of commonality between the concept of food sovereignty and IUCN policy, such as concern about the environmental impacts of modern agriculture (IUCN Resolution 14.3 *Environmental effects of modern agriculture*), the green revolution (Resolution 1.63 *The Promotion of Organic Agriculture*), pesticides (Resolutions 15.5 *Development Assistance*, 16.5 *International Trade in Pesticides and Other Biocides* and 17.20 *Transfer of Technology Relating to Contaminating Products Including Pesticides*), trade (Resolutions 16.22 *Environmental Impact of Trade and Aid on Developing Countries*, 18.20 *Trade Agreements and Sustainable Development*, 19.25 *The Relationship Between Conservation and Trade*, and 2.33 *Trade liberalization and the environment*), and the linkages between poverty and environmental degradation (Resolution 2.36 *Poverty reduction and conservation of environment*);

FURTHER REGOGNIZING that the *IUCN Intersessional Programme 2005–2008* includes three relevant Key Result Areas (KRAs); KRA 2: *Social Equity*, KRA 5: *Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods*, and KRA 4: *International Agreements, Processes and Institutions for Conservation*; and

RECOGNIZING that food sovereignty offers an essential framework for examining the links between poverty and environment as well as developing valuable approaches to biodiversity conservation, cultural survival and the elimination of hunger;

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

1. URGES all IUCN members, Commissions and the IUCN Director General to give due consideration to policies in support of food sovereignty as they relate to achieving the Mission and Vision of IUCN and to their application in all stages of biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and poverty eradication;

2. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General to:

(a) take an active role in working with states and relevant international organizations and processes to advocate for a food sovereignty approach; and

(b) develop an inter-programmatic initiative on 'Biodiversity and an End to Hunger' to enhance understanding of the relationship between hunger eradication and biodiversity conservation (including agricultural biodiversity) and cultural diversity, with the participation of IUCN Commissions and interested IUCN members; and

3. CALLS UPON the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, within the framework of its mandate, and the IUCN Secretariat, working with interested IUCN members and relevant partners, to spearhead initiatives on food sovereignty by:

(a) enhancing and articulating the understanding of the relationship between food sovereignty and the IUCN Vision, and identifying key areas of relevant work;

(b) enhancing understanding of the impacts of social and economic policies such as commodity dumping, privatization of natural heritage, and economic sanctions, including blockades on both poverty and the conservation of biological resources, including agricultural biodiversity;

(c) enhancing understanding of conditions, methods and tools by which biodiversity conservation and an end to hunger can be pursued and achieved in a synergistic fashion, as envisioned under the concept of food sovereignty;

(d) promoting and supporting the development of effective policies and practices on the basis of the above understandings; and

(e) developing the relevant capacities of IUCN component programmes, members and partners.

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.

The Nature Conservancy Council of New South Wales provided the following statement for the record:

We are concerned that [this resolution] equals a major shift in the focus of IUCN policy away from biodiversity conservation and towards dealing with socio-economic issues (deserving of attention) that will weaken IUCN's capacity. The alternative approach could be to form partnerships with social issue-based organizations.