

#### 4.119 Protection of rangers within and in areas adjacent to protected areas

NOTING that Article 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity regards Protected Areas as important 'in situ' conservation areas that conserve biological diversity and that Contracting Parties are required to ensure that these areas are protected by sound legal and management strategies;

ACCEPTING the value of protected areas, which are of extreme importance for biodiversity conservation;

RECALLING the theme Benefits Beyond Boundaries of the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress, Durban, 2003;

UNDERSTANDING that the term 'Beyond Boundaries' refers to environments beyond protected area boundaries where environmental conservation is also practiced;

FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution 2.37 *Support for environmental defenders* adopted by the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000) called on the Director General to speak out publicly and forcefully when environmental advocates are threatened and to discourage harassment or persecution of environmental advocates using all appropriate means;

CONVINCED that managers of protected areas who bring ecosystem threats to the attention of the public and national and international authorities should not suffer retaliatory actions directed against them personally or against their means of operation;

CONCERNED that rangers in protected areas worldwide provide frontline protection and consequently face a variety of serious risks including being threatened, physically assaulted or killed in performing their duties and that such risks are increasing at an alarming rate;

AWARE that rangers are susceptible to violence for many reasons and from many quarters, stemming from criminally motivated poaching and commercial exploitation of resources that rangers defend in the course of their duties in protected areas and beyond boundaries, as components of the world's biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage;

ALSO AWARE that rangers work in remote locations, alone or in small patrol groups, with limited or poor communications, and limited availability of support and backup;

NOTING that in Africa and many other parts of the world, rangers work in the face of, and sometimes in the midst of, military conflicts and warfare and face armed poachers, rebels and militia in these circumstances;

GREATLY VALUING the recognition, through the Packer Award presentation made at the Vth IUCN World Park Congress in Durban, 2003, of rangers who have given their lives as supreme sacrifice for protection of the areas in which they worked;

ACKNOWLEDGING the fact that without protection by rangers the continued protected area status of many sites would become seriously compromised leading to loss of biodiversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING FURTHER that the preparedness of rangers in protected areas worldwide can be improved, and many of the threats facing rangers prevented, reduced or eliminated by improved staffing and training, increased support and resources, and increased awareness; and

SERIOUSLY CONCERNED about the continuing threats to rangers and the inadequate support of their critically important role and function in protection of the integrity of protected areas and biodiversity protection beyond protected area boundaries;

#### **The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:**

1. CALLS ON IUCN's members to take the necessary actions to ensure adequate protection of rangers who are defending the integrity of protected environments worldwide; and
2. CALLS ON IUCN's members, and interested stakeholders, including civil society, local and international NGOs, and foundations to support an initiative to 'Protect the Protectors of protected areas' worldwide, by:

- (a) adopting and promoting:
  - (i) adequate legal frameworks, formal legislation and operational capability (including regulations, policies, standards and operational plans) to enable rangers to perform their protection duties in safety;
  - (ii) enforcement or enactment of legislation specifically providing for protection of rangers and enabling vigorous pursuit and prosecution of those contravening such legislation;
  - (iii) threat assessments to enable swift development and implementation of appropriate types and levels of protection for rangers; and
  - (iv) policies to ensure that personal protection equipment that is serviceable and commensurate with the level of the risk that may be encountered by rangers is provided to them; and
- (b) ensuring that:
  - (i) rangers' functions, including operational facilities and equipment, are adequately and appropriately funded; and
  - (ii) rangers are afforded organizational leadership, support, funding, training and equipment, and appropriate remuneration to enable the professional execution of their protective functions.