

#### 4.017 Stopping the amphibian crisis

REALIZING that over 300 million years ago amphibians were the first vertebrate animals to occupy terrestrial environments;

NOTING that amphibians are sensitive indicators of the quality of the environments they inhabit and that in many parts of the world they have considerable economic and cultural importance for many people;

FURTHER NOTING that the Species Survival Commission (SSC) has been concerned with the rapid declines of amphibian species populations worldwide since 1990;

ACKNOWLEDGING the efforts for the Global Amphibian Assessment, a collaboration led by scientists from IUCN, Conservation International and Nature Serve, with participation by over 600 amphibian experts from more than 60 countries;

AWARE of the alarming initial results of this work, in which, of the 5,918 known amphibian species assessed, 1,896 species (32%) are classified as Threatened, with 456 of these being Critically Endangered;

NOTING this is considerably higher than the comparable figures for Threatened birds (12%) and mammals (23%), the only other animal groups for which comprehensive global assessments have been completed;

ALARMED that 34 amphibian species are known to have become extinct, one is classified as Extinct in the Wild, 130 have not been found in recent years and are possibly extinct, and another 1,382 species are Data Deficient and many of these may be in trouble;

APPLAUDING the development and publication by IUCN in 2007 of the *Amphibian Conservation Action Plan* that calls for immediate actions to:

- (a) expand understanding of the causes of rapid declines and extinctions of amphibian species globally, including the effects of pathogens, pollutants and climate change;
- (b) further document amphibian diversity, and how it is changing;
- (c) develop and implement long-term conservation programmes, including regulation of unsustainable trade in many species; and
- (d) undertake emergency responses to immediate critical situations involving a pandemic fungal disease and also imminent obliterations of the habitats of species with extremely small geographical ranges;

RECOGNIZING the efforts of IUCN to work in partnership with various international bodies to protect habitats and species, and that such partnerships exist with the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), WWF, World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), and many governmental and donor organizations; and DEEPLY CONCERNED that it is unlikely that the 2010 goal - to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biological diversity - posited by the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) will be reached in respect of amphibians;

**The World Conservation Congress, at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the IUCN Programme 2009-2012:**

REQUESTS the Director General to:

- (a) use the existing partnerships with international bodies to help implement amphibian conservation, encompassing assessment, research and both *in situ* and *ex situ* measures;
- (b) establish a focus within the core programme area "Conserving Biodiversity" on the implementation of existing policies and governance systems with a goal of:
  - (i) bolstering research;

- (ii) establishment of protected area management systems and ecological corridors especially for amphibians; and
  - (iii) concomitant renewal of the Global Amphibian Assessment efforts with special attention to the species previously classified as Data Deficient; and
- (c) have the Secretariat support and cooperate with the continuing efforts of the Amphibian and the Conservation Breeding Specialist Groups of SSC to:
  - (i) address this unparalleled conservation crisis; and
  - (ii) support the development of other collaborative efforts to implement the *Amphibian Conservation Action Plan* of IUCN, especially those involving diverse disciplines.