4.019 The World Species Congress

RECALLING that the Preamble to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979) states: "*Recognizing* that wild animals in their innumerable forms are an irreplaceable part of the Earth's natural system which must be conserved for the good of mankind" and "*Conscious* of the ever-growing value of wild animals from environmental, ecological, genetic, scientific, aesthetic, recreational, cultural, educational, social and economic points of view";

NOTING the inextricable and increasingly well recognized contribution that wild species make in providing ecosystem goods and services;

ACKNOWLEDGING the lead role of IUCN, including contributions from thousands of individuals through the Species Survival Commission (SSC), in providing authoritative information on the status of species through the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*;

ALARMED that the *IUCN Red List* shows that rates of species extinction and threat are extremely high, and rising, at great cost to the integrity of the natural world and its human inhabitants alike;

RECALLING that the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in response to rising extinction rates, committed themselves "to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth";

WELCOMING the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a new biodiversity target for *Millennium Development Goal 7*, which addresses Environmental Sustainability, calling for nations of the world "to reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss" with progress to be measured by the *IUCN Red List Index*;

CONCERNED that, despite this commitment, society's response to mass extinction remains insufficient to prevent it;

FURTHER CONCERNED that continued loss of biodiversity will have serious consequences for human communities whose livelihoods and well-being depend on the maintenance of healthy, free-living, self-sustaining populations of a diversity of species;

NOTING that at the first meeting of the Chairs of the SSC Specialist Groups, 11-14 February 2008, a resolution in support of a World Species Congress was adopted unanimously;

NOTING as a model the great impact of the World Parks Congress, convened by IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), in shaping policy and practice for protected area conservation; and

RECOGNIZING the convening role and power of IUCN relative to the global conservation community;

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, in consultation with the Commissions and IUCN's members, and the wider conservation community from all sectors of society, including but not limited to governments, multi-lateral agencies, foundations, non-governmental organizations, accredited zoos and aquaria, botanic gardens, academia, the media and the business sector, to:

(a)   consider and consult with the intent to convene a World Species Congress within a reasonable timeframe;

(b)   note that the objectives of the proposed World Species Congress, which should be scientifically based, would be to highlight the status of the planet's species, articulate and review the consequences of the threats that they face, and chart their future conservation;

(c)   ensure that the substantial funding required for the proposed World Species Congress is secured from external sources, and does not represent a drain on IUCN's flexible financial or human resources;

(d)   ensure that the outcomes of the proposed World Species Congress support and enhance the objectives of international agreements related to species conservation; and

(e)   ensure that the proposed World Species Congress draws together and synthesizes activities already included in the IUCN Programme, and does not add new elements to the Programme.