

4.042 Establishment of a transboundary Peace Park between Honduras and Nicaragua

RECOGNIZING that the mountains between the Republic of Honduras and the Republic of Nicaragua are a uniquely valuable natural resource and hold La Botija Natural Protected Area and Multiple-Use Area Cerro Guanacaure in Honduras and Tepesomoto-La Patasta Reserve and National Monument Cañón de Somoto in Nicaragua;

AWARE that this southernmost limit of the natural American pine range provides non-timber forest products, forest carbon stocks, critical habitats and a biological corridor for endangered, threatened, migratory and endemic species, and water catchment areas that feed transboundary watersheds and provide vital water supplies to urban, rural and indigenous populations;

EMPHASIZING that improving the management of existing protected areas and providing sustainable practices in surrounding areas will foster tourism and environmental goods and services for present and future generations;

RECALLING that, despite times of armed conflict, this mountain region continues to exhibit unique ecological attributes that justify transboundary collaborative conservation approaches which foster peaceful relations while addressing common environmental threats;

GRATEFUL that both Honduras and Nicaragua promote cooperation and peace-building, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and ecological and environmental conservation through the System of Central American Integration (SICA) of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, the Central American System of Protected Areas, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and IUCN, as well as through being State Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), all of which are implemented through the respective environmental laws of Honduras and Nicaragua;

RECOGNIZING that the Constitutions of both countries guarantee the right to a healthy environment, including for the rural populations of this region, and that subsequent legislation with its respective particularities in both nations authorizes the establishment of systems of protected areas and the participation in transboundary conservation projects;

MINDFUL that the *Bishkek Mountain Platform* established by the United Nations Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (Kyrgyzstan, 2002) identifies the importance of transboundary mountain regions in protecting ecosystems, eliminating poverty and food insecurity, and promoting peace and economic equity;

RECALLING that Recommendation V.15 *Peace, Conflict and Protected Areas* noted by the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress (Durban, 2003) recognizes that effectively managed protected areas contribute to a just peace as a fundamental precondition for the conservation of biodiversity and other natural and cultural resources;

AWARE that the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has contributed to the Parks for Peace Initiative through its study on *Transboundary Protected Areas for Peace and Co-operation*, and that many states have furthered biodiversity conservation and peace by establishing peace parks; and

CONSCIOUS that the ministerial studies by the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources of Honduras and by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Nicaragua, facilitated by scientists at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Pace University School of Law, the United Nations University for Peace,

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and other institutions in Honduras and Nicaragua, indicate that social and ecological conditions could be improved by transboundary management and would be facilitated by designation and management as a transboundary protected area;

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

1. CONGRATULATES and THANKS the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua for recognizing the cultural and ecological importance of the mountainous regions along their shared border and their commitments to sustainable development and nature conservation in these areas, including efforts to create management plans in the protected areas;
2. COMMENDS local stakeholders for their initiatives and efforts to identify opportunities for transboundary conservation and management; and
3. CALLS ON the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua to:
 - (a) develop cooperatively a transboundary protected area with a regional joint management system to integrate existing protected areas (La Botija Natural Protected Area and Multiple-Use Area Cerro Guanacaure in Honduras and Tepesomoto-La Patasta Reserve and National Monument Cañon de Somoto in Nicaragua) and surrounding areas, so that shared and common resources can be managed harmoniously for conservation and sustainable development;
 - (b) recognize and support civil society and local authorities, in accordance with Principle 10 of the 1992 *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, in their efforts to organize themselves in order to have a leading role so that shared and common resources in this area can be managed harmoniously for conservation and sustainable development; and
 - (c) work within a multi-stakeholder participatory framework to identify common management practices that are based on the parallel laws of each nation, as well as customary laws, to facilitate capacity building and information and technology exchanges, and to identify funding opportunities and assist in the procurement of funds, in order to ensure sustainable development, natural resource conservation and peaceful resolution of conflicts in the management of the transboundary area;

In addition, 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:

4. RECOMMENDS that the Director General, in consultation with the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and other interested international organizations, support and encourage Honduras and Nicaragua, in consultation with the IUCN National Committees in those countries, to jointly manage this transboundary protected area by:
 - (a) providing guidance to and facilitating cooperation among stakeholders on both sides of the border;
 - (b) undertaking studies of natural and cultural resources in the area; and
 - (c) supporting inclusion of the area in the programme of work of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.

State and agency members of the 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 U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.