

WCC-2012-Rec-156-EN

Biodiversity conservation in the protected natural area under the sacred natural site modality of Huiricuta and the historico-cultural route of the Huichol people

CONSIDERING that Huiricuta is a landscape of particular global importance due to the combination of its natural and cultural values, in addition to being representative of the Chihuahuan Desert, one of the three most biodiverse semi-desert ecoregions of the planet, for which reason it has been protected by an Official Decree and has a Management Plan designating the region the Protected Natural Area under the Sacred Natural Site modality of Huiricuta and the Historico-Cultural Route of the Huichol People;

RECOGNIZING that, given the importance of the aforesaid region, it appears on the Mexican Tentative List of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); and that, due to its biodiversity, it is an Area of Importance for the Conservation of Birds (AICA, Área de Importancia para la Conservación de Aves) and a Priority Land Region (RTP, Región Terrestre Prioritaria), and that there are specific national programmes for the recovery of priority species such as the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – Conservation Programme for Species at Risk (PROCER, Programa de Conservación de Especies en Riesgo);

UNDERLINING the fact that it is located in the south-east section of the Chihuahuan Desert where the greatest concentration of endemic and threatened cacti is found, as well as the highest peaks of the aforesaid ecoregion, which confers on it a special singularity and importance based on the coexistence of habitats and species of markedly diverse and heterogeneous environments, and therefore great ecological, biographical and cultural relevance, resulting in an area of unique characteristics which contribute to highlighting its importance for biodiversity conservation, and which are:

- a. large altitudinal gradient (1,500–3,180 MASL) associated with climatic, geomorphological and edaphic zoning, which are the factors responsible for the diversification of the landscape, flora and vegetation;
- b. its latitudinal and altitudinal location confer on it the character of a biogeographical island, a refuge for communities and species belonging to other latitudes which have remained in the region as relicts following the most recent glacial and interglacial periods: notable in this respect is the presence of flora and fauna with Holarctic characteristics, as well as vegetation communities vicarious to those present in the Sierra Madre Oriental; and
- c. the mountainous section of the region and its different forest communities, in addition to being a habitat for a great variety of organisms, has a vital function related to the capture and regulation of the water that supplies the springs and aquifers of the sierra and the surrounding plains;

RECOGNIZING that the combination of these factors has resulted in the unusual representation of habitats and species present in the area, some of which are considered charismatic and of interest for conservation in that they are included on legal and technical protection lists, or that they constitute a unique biogeographical phenomenon owing to their rare or relict character;

UNDERLINING the fact that there are species of flora and fauna found in the region that are subject to special protection due to their level of threat or rarity, that are listed in the Official

Mexican Regulations (Norma Oficial Mexicana) NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010, Environmental protection – Species of wild flora and fauna native to Mexico – Risk categories and specifications for inclusion, exclusion or modification – List of species at risk, in addition to being cited in legal instruments such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, including the following important examples:

- a. 250 species of fauna, including important examples of amphibians such as toads *Anaxyrus cognatus*, *A. punctatus*, *Incilius nebulifer* and *I. valliceps*; rare reptiles such as lizards *Cophosaurus texanus*, *Holbrookia maculata*, *Barisia imbricata*, *Phrynosoma modestum* and *P. taurus*; snakes *Hypsiglena torquata*, *Pituophis deppei*, *Masticophis flagellum*, *Lampropeltis getulus*, *Thamnophis cyrtopsis* and *T. eques*, considered threatened; mud turtles *Kinosternon herreraei* and *K. hirtipes*; as well as five species of rattlesnake (*Crotalus* spp.), subject to special protection;
- b. The following are among the mammalian species of Nearctic or northern origin considered to be in the risk category which live in the region: Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*), Desert Shrew (*Notiosorex crowfordi*), Mexican Long-tongued Bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*), Greater and Lesser Long-nosed Bat (*Leptonycteris nivalis* and *L. curasoae*), Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculatum*), Phillips's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys phillipsii*), Cactus Mouse (*Peromyscus eremicus*), Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis*) and Puma (*Puma concolor*); and
- c. Birds constitute the most numerous group with approximately 153 species distributed throughout the area, including the Golden Eagle, Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) in danger of extinction; other raptors such as falcons and owls: Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*), Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*), *Athene cunicularia* (Burrowing Owl), *Strix occidentalis* (Spotted Owl); and threatened songbirds and ornamental birds Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) and American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*), and also Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) and Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), listed as a rare species;

RECOGNIZING that conservation based on culture has provided protection for natural sacred places of indigenous communities, which are home to a rich biodiversity, and a safeguard for valuable landscapes and ecosystems;

EMPHASIZING that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recommends the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach, acknowledging human beings as part of this approach, and urges Parties to foster and implement projects, thus permitting promotion of the concept of this site of natural and cultural heritage as one that validates the aforesaid approach;

AWARE of the importance of the CBD, and that protected sites are at risk and subject to a wide range of pressures and threats such as impacts caused by the extractive industries, poverty, tourism and irresponsible recreational activities, and degradation of the natural elements and surrounding territory;

CONCERNED that the existence of a declaration of protection and zonification for the purpose of the sustainable use of the area has not been sufficient to secure the conservation of species which are subject to national or international protection of any kind; and

BEARING IN MIND that a range of national and international declarations, programmes and documents recognize the close relationships that exist between cultural values,

environmental management and biodiversity conservation, including the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the CBD (Articles 8j and 10c), the *Earth Charter* (principles 8b, 12 and 12b), the United Nations *Declaration on Economic and Social Rights*, and the *Global Environment Outlook* (GEO-4) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. CALLS ON the Government of Mexico to comply with the treaties, regulations, programmes and management plans which pertain to the conservation of the Protected Natural Area under the Sacred Natural Site modality of Huiricuta and the Historico-cultural Route of the Huichol People and all its species;
2. CALLS ON the Mexican authorities to comply with the objectives of the Decree and the Management Plan for the Protected Natural Area under the Sacred Natural Site modality of Huiricuta and the Historico-cultural Route of the Huichol People in the municipalities of Catorce, Villa de la Paz, Matehuala, Villa de Guadalupe, Charcas and Villa de Ramos in the State of San Luis Potosí, Mexico, especially with the programmes for:
 - a. research on the Legal Framework of the Huiricuta Sacred Natural Site;
 - b. assessment of the surface water quality in the sacred site;
 - c. cultural communications project;
 - d. identification of underground hydrological flow systems in the north-east of the State of San Luis Potosí;
 - e. inventory of soil, flora and fauna;
 - f. ecology of the cactus Peyote (*Lophophora williamsii*);
 - g. environmental history of the Sacred Natural Site;
 - h. mercury in sacred land; study of mining sites in Huiricuta;
 - i. development of a Sacred Natural Site Administration Programme;
 - j. observance and compliance with the Zonation, the Environmental Management Units, Management Categories and all the programmes for sustainable use in accordance with the general Sacred Natural Site objectives; and
 - k. compliance with the provisions of the administrative regulations of the Management Plan;
3. EXHORTS the National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (CONANP, Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas) to comply with the Conservation Programme for Species at Risk (PROCER), especially the Conservation Action Programme (PACE), for the Golden Eagle;
4. URGES CONANP and the National Commission for the Use and Management of Biodiversity (CONABIO, Comisión Nacional para el Uso y Manejo de la Biodiversidad) to take the actions necessary for the protection and monitoring of the priority regions Area

of Importance for the Conservation of Birds Sierra de Catorce (AICA No. 81) and Priority Land Region Tokio (RTP No. 80);

5. EXHORTS the Secretariat for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) to apply the Official Mexican Regulations NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010, Environmental Protection – Species of wild flora and fauna native to Mexico – Risk categories and specifications for inclusion, exclusion or modification – List of species at risk, in conjunction with the environmental provisions of the Protected Natural Area; similarly encourages the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples, within the area of its competence and with effective consultation with both sectors, to monitor, strengthen and systemize the coordinated and combined efforts, in the spirit of conserving the cultural and natural heritage of Mexico;
6. INVITES the environmental authorities to ensure the informed participation of local communities, indigenous peoples, civil organizations, and scientific and academic associations in the participatory planning of activities to be developed in the Protected Natural Area of Huiricuta, endeavouring to emphasize conservation of biological diversity; and
7. REQUESTS the Director General to establish a working group with the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), in order facilitate harmonizing their national and regional benchmarks in one programme with the Mexican Government and providing, as far as possible, technical and scientific help to Mexico to implement the actions deriving from the Management Plan for the Protected Natural Area under the Sacred Natural Site modality of Huiricuta and the Historico-cultural Route of the Huichol People and the PROCER.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.