

WCC-2012-Rec-160-EN
Preservation of oasis ecosystems

AWARE of the capital importance of and recognizing the role played by oasis ecosystems in:

- a. the settlement of human populations and their socio-economic stability resulting from the everyday activities continuously being generated by the oasis in respect of the populations, their livestock and local agriculture; and
- b. the preservation of the environment through recycling and reuse *in situ* of the waste and by-products from farming and livestock-rearing activities;

CLARIFYING that, nevertheless, these ecosystems are impacted by the damaging effects of new technology, and that assessments both on global and lower levels have reached the conclusion that oasis ecosystems are currently seriously threatened and are becoming increasingly degraded;

RECALLING that oasis ecosystems constitute viable and habitable systems thanks to their different components: climate, water, soil, vegetation, micro-organisms, animals and people, but above all thanks to the interactions that connect them;

NOTING that oasis ecosystems are unique in terms of their biological and ecological diversity; they are like authentic outdoor biodiversity laboratories, and are being studied carefully by national and international institutions as well as the scientific community;

AWARE of the constraints and threats facing oasis ecosystems in terms of their natural resources, including:

- a. the misunderstanding of the potential of the phylogenetic resources, which require identification, inventorization and evaluation;
- b. the decrease in water resources;
- c. the problems of sanding over due to local desertification as a result of human interventions;
- d. the salinization of soils following the prolonged use of saline irrigation water and the lack of control of irrigation (doses and frequency) and drainage;
- e. genetic erosion caused by the generalization of certain cultivars for exclusively commercial purposes;
- f. crop protection problems (diseases, pests);
- g. the lack of control of introduced cultural techniques;
- h. the inadequacy of the infrastructure for the promotion of local products;
- i. the alarming loss of local social, technical and cultural know-how;
- j. runaway, chaotic urban development; and
- k. the fact that all the above constraints continue to exert pressure on the resources needed for the maintenance of the oasis ecosystem and the survival of local populations;

BEARING IN MIND the main ecological, economic and sociological consequences of human impacts on oasis ecosystems, today the preservation of these ecosystems is not simply an absolute priority, but an urgent objective that all national and international stakeholders must achieve; and

RECALLING the actions started by:

- a. the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);
- b. the Network of Associations for the Sustainable Development of Oases (RADD0); and
- c. the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs' Directorate General of Globalization, Development and Partnerships;

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

1. CALLS UPON national governments to acknowledge that the oasis systems and the populations who live there are undergoing significant technological, socioeconomic and cultural changes, whilst these agricultural systems are specific cases of adaptation to climate change, and have, since the Mesolithic Period, provided a livelihood for many local people, creating a highly specialized and unique way of life;
2. URGES international institutions to support projects to strengthen the resilience of these ecosystems and their capacity to adapt to climate change through:
 - a. in-depth analyses and exchanges of points of view on the current situation regarding the main challenges and issues characterizing oasis ecosystems in different countries in terms of sustainable development, governance systems, vulnerability, resilience and adaptation to climate change through meetings, training courses and seminars;
 - b. raising the awareness of decision makers concerning the importance of the oasis ecosystem for the natural environment and the economic and social conditions of oasis populations; and
 - c. strengthening the skills of local people in terms of the protection, conservation and enhancement of oasis products through exchanges of experience between different countries;
3. CALLS ON the States containing these ecosystems:
 - a. to raise people's awareness about oasis areas, presenting them as fragile ecosystems that form part of humanity's cultural and ecological heritage;
 - b. to affirm the need to safeguard oases in the face of the challenges related to development and the environment;
 - c. to favour the oasis ecosystems' process of adaptation to climate change through reinforcing the financing provisions and improving knowledge of the impact of climate change, vulnerability and adaptation;
 - d. to support small-scale sustainable agriculture in oasis zones;

- e. to associate peasant organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations, taking local know-how, traditional techniques and management models into account;
 - f. to establish a political, institutional and social framework adapted to removing the restrictions limiting the replicability of these types of agriculture;
 - g. to integrate the natural oasis heritage into their sustainable development strategy; and
 - h. to develop and reinforce scientific research into oasis ecosystems; and
4. ENCOURAGES States and governmental organizations:
- a. to create Local Development Plans (LDPs) for oases, based on their geographical, topographical and biological particularities;
 - b. to promote conservation initiatives for this natural and cultural heritage through the classification of at least one oasis per country as a protected area;
 - c. to create a national genetic heritage conservatory for each country;
 - d. to raise awareness of the need for improved management of water resources in oases; and
 - e. to establish a political, institutional and social framework adapted to removing the restrictions limiting the replicability of these types of agriculture.

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.