

WCC-2012-Res-115-EN

Strengthening biocultural diversity and traditional ecological knowledge in the Asia-Pacific island region

RECOGNIZING that the rapid change seen in island ecosystems of the Asia-Pacific region, occasioned by the change in fishing grounds due to climate change and natural disasters such as mega-earthquakes and tsunamis, as well as due to excessive fishing activities and marine pollution, is leading to the decline of biocultural diversity;

RECALLING that Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) highlights the importance of traditional knowledge related to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and that IUCN has implemented related actions based on the idea that biodiversity and cultural diversity are interlinked;

CONSIDERING the need to make progress on discussions and actions about conservation models based on traditional ecological knowledge relevant to the wise use of biodiversity in island-coastal areas whose ecosystems are weakened by climate change and over-exploitation of resources, and where associated traditional cultures are affected by such changes in ecosystems; and

CONVINCED that the establishment of specialist groups within the IUCN Commissions would be a very useful step to advance the conservation of biocultural diversity in island-coastal areas of the Asia-Pacific region;

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

1. CALLS ON Members of the United Nations, including IUCN State Members in the Asia-Pacific region, to support activities for conservation of biocultural diversity and traditional ecological knowledge in island-coastal regions based on its uniqueness and scarcity;
2. ENCOURAGES IUCN Members, local governments and NGOs, to recognize the importance of traditional ecological knowledge for the wise use of biological resources in island and coastal areas, and to engage in supporting the preservation of traditional knowledge and biocultural diversity;
3. REQUESTS the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (Island Ecosystems Thematic Group) to:
 - a. advance the conservation of biocultural diversity and traditional ecological knowledge in island-coastal regions providing support for research activities related and carried out by institutes and NGOs; and
 - b. explore the need for an international instrument within the United Nations for the conservation of biocultural diversity and traditional ecological knowledge in island-coastal regions, inviting IUCN State Members to engage in its promotion and support; and
4. URGES the Director General, under the Global Island Initiative, to pursue a focus on Asia-Pacific island biocultural diversity, led by specialists on policy and practice of island-coastal biocultural diversity conservation, including scientists specializing in humanities, in conjunction with related organizations such as the CBD and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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.