

WCC-2012-RES-022-EN

Supporting regional initiatives to conserve mammal diversity in West and Central Africa

RECOGNIZING the mission of IUCN in promoting the conservation of biological diversity since its inception;

ALARMED at the increasing loss of forest and savannah habitats in West and Central Africa;

AWARE that large mammal populations in protected areas in West and Central Africa have declined by 85% between 1970 and 2005, a decline which appears overall greater than in Eastern and Southern Africa;

DISMAYED that the Western Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) has recently been categorized as Extinct on the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* and that Miss Waldron's Red Colobus (*Procolobus badius waldroni*) has not been observed for over 25 years despite surveys;

ALARMED that large carnivores like the African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*), the Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and the Lion (*Panthera leo*) are now extirpated from many former range states in West and Central Africa, with evidence for only a few reproducing populations in the region;

AWARE ALSO that many other species, including Jentink's Duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*) and Niger River Red Colobus (*Procolobus pennantii epieni*), are now severely threatened due to illegal killing and continuing loss of habitat;

CONCERNED that the illegal killing of African Elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) has become a widespread threat across the African continent more than ever, with the highest level in West and Central Africa as evidenced by the recent massacre of hundreds of elephants in Bouba Ndjida National Park in Cameroon and the confirmed population crash in Northern Central African Republic;

FURTHER AWARE that the decline of the mammalian prey base is having a detrimental impact on other species and being implicated as one of the drivers of the severe declines observed in large vultures in West and Central Africa, with some species having declined by 98% in the region;

NOTING studies that have revealed that populations of a number of large mammal species occurring in the region, including Lion, Roan Antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) and Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), are genetically distinct from those occurring elsewhere in Africa, making this region very important for conserving the maximum diversity present within a species;

RECALLING that most countries in the region have adopted the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* and the Aichi Targets, including Target 12, which requires that "By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained"; and

WELCOMING the existing initiatives for a Central African Elephant Conservation Strategy and the programme for Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE), the Conservation Plan for the Pygmy Hippopotamus, the Regional Great Ape Action Plan, the Regional Conservation Strategy for Chimpanzees in West Africa, the Regional Action Plan for

Antelopes in West and Central Africa, and recent initiatives for the development of Regional Conservation Strategies for large carnivores and their prey, including the Regional Conservation Strategy for Lions in West and Central Africa, the Regional Conservation Strategy for Cheetah and Wild Dog for North, West and Central Africa, the Central Africa Wildlife Trade Law Enforcement Action Plan recently approved by the COMIFAC Council of Ministers, and the launching of the Large Carnivore Initiative in West and Central Africa in 2011 with the involvement of several IUCN Members and IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Specialist Groups;

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

1. APPLAUDS the establishment of regional conservation initiatives in West and Central Africa, as mentioned above;
2. CALLS UPON all IUCN Members worldwide to support these initiatives;
3. CALLS UPON range States in the region to develop national action plans for Lion, Cheetah and African Wild Dog and their prey as part of a strategy for long-term conservation and to invest in implementation of these national action plans;
4. CALLS UPON all stakeholders to encourage and launch new initiatives in West and Central Africa for halting and reversing the declining trends of mammals, and biodiversity in general, in the region; and
5. REQUESTS the Director General, SSC and the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), to provide policy support to these new initiatives and to bring them to the attention of range States and international donors, like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).