

WCC-2012-Res-023-EN

Support for national and regional initiatives for the conservation of large mammals in the Sahara

RECOGNIZING IUCN's mission, since its creation, to promote the conservation of biodiversity;

AWARE that desert ecosystems and their biodiversity are particularly vulnerable to natural and anthropogenic climate change;

RECOGNIZING that the Sahara is very rich in biodiversity, which is often underestimated and is potentially important in the provision of ecosystem services and genetic resources;

RECOGNIZING that the populations of large mammals have declined dramatically in desert ecosystems, and in the Sahara in particular;

ALARMED that all eight species of Saharan ungulates as well as their subspecies are either threatened with extinction or already extinct, the Bubal Hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus buselaphus*) is classified as Extinct, the Scimitar-horned Oryx (*Oryx dammah*) is Extinct in the Wild and six others are classified as Endangered or Critically Endangered;

RECOGNIZING that the African Lion (*Panthera leo leo*) and the African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*) have been exterminated from the Sahara and that the Northwest African cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus hecki*) is classified as Critically Endangered;

AWARE that three of the large mammal species living in the desert require vast ranges in order to survive;

NOTING that desert ecosystems have attracted very little interest or support from the global conservation community, despite covering over 17% of the world's biomass and containing a high level of biodiversity, including 25% of the world's terrestrial vertebrates;

ALARMED at the lack of attention paid by the world, including donors, to large desert mammals, despite their current status, the continuous degradation of their habitat (complicated by climate change), and the growing prevalence of extractive industries and armed conflict; and

WELCOMING the initiatives carried out by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) / French Global Environment Facility (FGEF) "Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes" Project, by the Sahara Conservation Fund and by the Sahelo-Saharan Interest Group (SSIG) as well as the recent Regional Conservation Strategy initiative for the Cheetah and the African Wild Dog in Northern, Western and Central Africa carried out in 2012 by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Cat and Canid Specialist Groups;

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

1. WELCOMES the implementation of regional conservation strategies such as the Regional Conservation Strategy for the Cheetah and African Wild Dog in Northern, Western and Central Africa;
2. ALSO WELCOMES the new initiatives in Chad aimed at reintroducing the Scimitar-horned Oryx, the efforts made by Morocco and Tunisia to reintroduce the Scimitar-horned Oryx, the Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*) and the Dama Gazelle (*Nanger dama*)

and the work carried out by Niger that has led to the establishment of the Termit Tin Toumma National Nature Reserve covering 100,000 km² and aimed at protecting important Saharan species of flora and fauna, including the Addax, the Dama Gazelle and the Cheetah;

3. INVITES all IUCN Members around the world to support these initiatives and their local and regional implementation;
4. INVITES States in the region to support the development of red lists and the implementation of national action plans to conserve all the endangered mammals in the great Sahara Desert, within the framework of a long-term conservation strategy and to invest in the implementation of these national action plans;
5. CALLS ON States in the region to examine the possibilities of collaborating in the protection and restoration of populations of large mammals that inhabit the desert and roam over cross-border zones;
6. CALLS ON States within the geographic range, if necessary, in liaison with the private sector, to ensure that the development of the extractive industry is planned carefully in order to avoid any negative impact on threatened large animal species or their habitats;
7. URGES the Director General to provide political and technical support for these initiatives, in consultation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM);
8. CALLS ON IUCN, in collaboration with its Members, to work with States within the region to strengthen the current network of protected areas in the desert by focusing on the reinforcement of skills and on the identification and implementation of conservation tools and appropriate techniques; and
9. RECOMMENDS that the Director General brings the urgent need to conserve the large mammals of the Sahara Desert to the attention of States in the region as well as of international donors such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the African Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB), the World Environment Fund (WEF) and the European Commission.