

## **WCC-2012-Res-033-EN**

### **Increasing the attention given to the conservation of fungi**

NOTING that fungi are an independent biological kingdom separate from animals and plants;

AWARE that there is widespread agreement among scientists that there are probably far more fungal species than plant species;

EMPHASIZING that fungi play a key role as the recyclers of ecosystems and that without fungi, life, if it were to exist at all on this planet, would be very different;

NOTING that fungi occur in all parts of the world, in all major freshwater, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and provide many of the checks and balances necessary for the healthy functioning of these ecosystems;

RECOGNIZING that fungi are enormously important in the provision of ecosystem services including:

- a. degrading plant debris and recycling the nutrients from plant decomposition;
- b. supplying key nutrients to plants (as mycorrhizal symbionts);
- c. acting as an important source of antibiotics, statins and other pharmaceuticals, as well as having other commercial and industrial applications; and
- d. being a much-valued human food source;

CONCERNED that the worldwide conservation movement gives fungi far less attention and priority than either animals or plants;

ALSO CONCERNED that only a handful of fungus species have so far been assessed for the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*;

STRONGLY BELIEVING that fungi are as threatened as animals and plants, as they have no special attributes which protect them from climate change, foraging, habitat destruction, persecution and pollution, and serious declines of certain groups of fungi have been linked to threatening processes such as nitrification; and

AWARE that as a first step in giving higher profile to the conservation of fungi, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) has established five Specialist Groups to work on fungi during the 2009–2012 quadrennium;

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

1. CALLS ON all of the component parts of IUCN, including Members, Commissions and the Secretariat, and the conservation movement more generally, to place much greater emphasis and priority on the conservation of fungi, and to recognize that fungi constitute a kingdom in their own right, and so the much-used phrase “animals and plants” is not a sufficient description of all life on Earth;
2. REQUESTS SSC, working with Members and partners as required, to greatly increase the number of fungal assessments for the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, focusing, among others, on:

- a. species dependent on highly threatened places, habitats or associations, and so which are *a priori* likely to face high extinction risk;
  - b. species for which extinction risk data have already been compiled, e.g. the 3,117 North American taxa for which data are maintained by NatureServe;
  - c. groups of fungi that are believed to be effective indicators of the impacts of major threatening processes such as nitrification;
  - d. well-known, charismatic fungi, including those of high value as food for humans; and
  - e. statistically representative samples of some of the better known fungal groups; and
3. CALLS ON all governments to give greater priority to mycology, including mycological taxonomy and the discovery and description of currently unknown species, and to underline the importance of building greater capacity in the science of mycology worldwide as an essential basis for future conservation measures.