

**WCC-2012-Res-039-EN**  
**Healthy parks healthy people**

RECOGNIZING that there is much evidence to demonstrate the integral link of nature with human health and well-being;

NOTING that IUCN has often endorsed and promoted the significance of this symbiotic relationship either overtly or implicitly, but it has yet to formally adopt the need for related action;

ALSO NOTING that the April 2009 edition of IUCN's publication *World Conservation* was devoted to 'human health and the environment';

UNDERSTANDING that the modern world is facing a challenging future, in which non-communicable diseases (NCD) are the leading cause of death, more and more health risks are linked to lack of physical activity and poor diet and where the global urban population now exceeds the global rural population;

CONSIDERING the following statement of the World Health Organization (WHO), "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity";

UNDERSTANDING that there is a direct relationship between physical activity and risk reduction for coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes and there is a dose-response relationship for cardiovascular disease and diabetes with risk reductions routinely occurring at levels of 150 minutes of activity per week;

RECOGNIZING that the *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health* endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2004, and the *Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2008–2013* urge Member States to implement programmes and actions to increase levels of physical activity among their populations;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the "Health benefits of contact with nature" report commissioned by Parks Victoria (Australia) and produced by Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia (originally 2002, revised 2008) – the first comprehensive worldwide literature review to identify the evidence for the many benefits (both mental and physical) that nature can provide to individuals and communities – has been highly acclaimed internationally;

NOTING that the much acclaimed World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) publication *Arguments for Protection – Vital Sites – The contribution of protected areas to human health* supported by WHO and the World Bank identifies many of the benefits that can be realized;

AWARE that the National Trust (United Kingdom) recently released a report "Natural Childhood" which highlights the need to accommodate contact with nature into children's development;

RECALLING that at the last IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2008 the significance of the relationship between nature and public health was recognized as one of the (three) Thematic Streams: "Healthy environments – healthy people";

MINDFUL that in planning discussions for the VI<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress (Australia, 2014), it is evident that the IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme views the significance of the synergistic relationship between biodiversity and human health as a vital component of that event's programme, one which will contribute to greater recognition of the value of nature;

HIGHLIGHTING that the US National Park Service, recognizing the value and importance to its responsibilities, has adopted a “Healthy Parks Healthy People” approach as a major strategic direction and in November 2011 announced its “Healthy Parks Healthy People” US Strategic Action Plan, intended as a blueprint for illuminating and magnifying the power of the National Park System to promote health and well-being;

NOTING that the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016* is overt in its acknowledgement that biodiversity, conservation and ecosystem management can support human well-being; and

EMPHASIZING that in April 2010 the inaugural International “Healthy Parks Healthy People” Congress, staged by Parks Victoria in Melbourne, Australia attracted 1200 delegates representing a variety of related disciplines from 37 countries, and resulted in the Melbourne Communiqué which forms the basis of the present motion;

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

1. WELCOMES IUCN’s progressive recognition to date of the benefits of enhancing healthy ecosystems and human health and well-being synergistically;
2. RECOMMENDS that IUCN and IUCN Members adopt the “Healthy Parks Healthy People” philosophy and commit to a further understanding and strengthening of the connection between nature and people, recognizing that success depends on interdisciplinary collaboration and alliances;
3. RECOMMENDS that IUCN and IUCN Members work in close cooperation with WHO, and other global bodies, to strive for a healthy planet and healthy humanity, and continue to promote, facilitate and advance the health and vitality of the world’s parks and communities;
4. RECOMMENDS that IUCN and IUCN Members undertake, collaboratively with key global bodies, research and analysis to better develop compelling rationale for this approach to national, sub-national and sectoral policies;
5. RECOMMENDS that IUCN and IUCN Members implement initiatives that deliver both human health and biodiversity outcomes, to promote them globally, and to forge partnerships and alliances with the health and medical care community to raise recognition of parks and protected areas as a healing tool and a vital source of health and well-being; and
6. CALLS UPON all constituencies of IUCN and their partners and stakeholders to adopt the “Healthy Parks Healthy People” philosophy.