

WCC-2012-Res-045-EN

Broadening awareness of benefits and relevance of protected areas

CONCERNED that the rate of biodiversity loss increased throughout the 20th century and has continued to increase in the first decade of the 21st century, and that global efforts to reverse this trend have not been effective;

FURTHER CONCERNED that all assessments since Rio show that most of the key drivers of biodiversity loss are increasing in intensity, and that no country was able to meet the 2010 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Biodiversity Targets;

AWARE that protected areas in the 21st century are increasingly becoming the key tool for protecting critical components of the planetary life support systems and other ecosystem services that are crucial to human well-being and life on Earth;

RECOGNIZING that in addition to being the cornerstones of biodiversity conservation, sustainable tourism, climate change adaptation and mitigation, among others, protected areas can also play a crucial role for:

- a. enhancing food production and food security by providing secure places for reproduction of valuable marine and terrestrial species, by stabilizing climates necessary for enhancing food production, by conserving key pollinators and by preserving crop varieties that are disappearing elsewhere;
- b. protecting water catchment areas that provide water for use by millions of people, and for sustaining agriculture, hydropower generation, manufacturing and industrial processes and many other sectors of the economy;
- c. enhancing human health by acting as repositories for medicinal plants, buffering people from the adverse impact of increasing vector-borne infectious diseases, and providing refuges of tranquillity in a busy urbanized world; and
- d. connecting people with nature through the great range of values and benefits they can provide to diverse communities, partners and stakeholders at local, national, regional and global levels;

RECALLING that the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* recognizes protected areas as critical elements for achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

FURTHER RECALLING that the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016* launched at the 2012 World Conservation Congress strategically positions protected areas at the centre of global efforts to secure biodiversity and contribute to nature-based solutions to many of societies' needs;

UNDERSTANDING that the ability of protected areas to provide ecosystem goods and services to support increasing societal needs is being undermined by a broad range of human activities;

CONCERNED that engagement for stewardship of protected areas has traditionally focused on a few stakeholders and sectors, thereby limiting the range of options and actions to effectively address the multiple threats they face at a scale sufficient to reverse the negative trends; and

REALIZING that the relevance of protected areas to wider society will be greatly increased and strengthened if appropriate measures are taken to raise society's awareness and appreciation of the value and benefits of protected areas and how human activities are

undermining the ability of protected areas to provide these benefits in the short and long term;

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

1. CALLS ON all IUCN constituencies to promote protected areas as natural solutions to a range of ecological and livelihood challenges and engage with partners and stakeholders in the planning, establishment and management of protected areas and in all other aspects of landscape management;
2. CALLS ON the world's protected area leaders to make a new and strengthened commitment to connect people with nature and to actively collaborate with a full range of partners and stakeholders including voluntary certification initiatives in order to inspire broad-based awareness, support, engagement and participation in conservation actions at all levels;
3. REQUESTS the Director General to work in close cooperation with the IUCN Commissions, particularly the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), and all global thematic programmes, along with terrestrial and marine protected area organizations and a full range of partners and stakeholders, among others sustainable forest management organizations (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council) to establish guidelines, targets and clear and measurable outcomes for connecting people with nature;
4. CALLS ON the Director General to support governments and NGO communities to fulfil international goals on food, water and health-related issues through the use of best practices that ensure the long-term protection of natural ecosystems and minimize impacts on protected areas; and
5. REQUESTS the Director General and the Chairs of WCPA and other IUCN Commissions, as appropriate, to work closely with organizations that promote sustainable food production (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development – IFAD), water conservation (UN Water), health (World Health Organization – WHO), industrialization (United Nations Industrial Development Organization – UNIDO), sustainable development (World Bank, International Monetary Fund – IMF), among others to:
 - a. develop an inclusive framework to create awareness of and appreciation for: the central role played by protected areas in achieving the goals of these organizations; the threats caused by these and other sectors to effective protected area management; the implications of these threats to the organizations' ability to deliver on their mandates; and the actions needed to address them at the appropriate levels;
 - b. engage stakeholders within their respective jurisdictions and mandates in advancing the importance of protected areas in providing ecosystem services necessary for meeting their specific goals;
 - c. build connections and relationships with stakeholders whose sectors negatively impact on biodiversity and protected areas, identify barriers that prevent them from adopting environmentally sustainable practices, and work with them to formulate appropriate mechanisms for removing those barriers;

- d. establish tools and processes to help these organizations and their partners, including those in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, health and industry, to enhance the ability of protected areas to provide ecosystem goods and services for their own benefit and for the good of society;
- e. devise capacity-building strategies and financing mechanisms for broadening and strengthening sustainable relationships between society and nature, and for promoting protected areas as natural solutions to many environmental and human welfare challenges; and
- f. create mechanisms for seeking efficiencies in implementing partnerships, maximizing opportunities to leverage resources, and sharing lessons learned, best practices and tools.