

WCC-2012-Res-046-EN
Strengthening the World Heritage Convention

RECALLING Resolution 1.67 *World Heritage Convention* adopted by the 1st IUCN World Conservation Congress (Montreal, 1996), and other relevant IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations;

WELCOMING the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention taking place in 2012, that near universal recognition of the Convention has been achieved, and that the recognition of natural heritage on the World Heritage List has grown to more than 211 natural and mixed World Heritage Sites;

RECOGNIZING the specific and unique formal mandate IUCN holds within the World Heritage Convention as the Advisory Body for natural heritage, and also IUCN's own mandates and objectives as an international conservation organization that relate to World Heritage;

COMMENDING the World Heritage Committee, the State Parties to the Convention, and UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre, for significant conservation successes over the 40 years of the operation of the Convention and recognizing the important role of IUCN and the other Advisory Bodies named in the Convention (International Council on Monuments and Sites – ICOMOS and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property – ICCROM), in these successes;

RECOGNIZING the significant contribution of World Heritage Sites to the conservation of protected areas, noting that natural and mixed World Heritage Sites, and World Heritage cultural landscapes together provide coverage of over 10% of the land and aquatic areas included within the protected areas estate globally;

CONSIDERING that the potential benefits of World Heritage extend far beyond the sites which have been listed, and that these areas and those responsible for them should play a leadership role in developing, establishing and demonstrating global standards for management of protected areas and act as “flagships” in terms of raising public awareness, capacity building and finding solutions to conservation issues;

CONSIDERING that there is a need to strengthen recognition of the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples with respect to Convention processes, in line with agreed international norms, and secure environmentally sustainable and equitable benefits from World Heritage Site designation, as part of sustaining the leadership role of the World Heritage Convention;

CONCERNED that the World Heritage Convention, notwithstanding its record of success, faces significant challenges in its credibility and effectiveness, as notably set out in the conclusions of the evaluation of the Convention's global strategy undertaken by UNESCO's external auditors in 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly of State Parties to the World Heritage Convention, especially with respect to the protection and management of listed sites as the key priority for the Convention, the achievement of a balanced and credible World Heritage List, adherence to the highest standards for the assessment of the Outstanding Universal Value of sites proposed for inclusion in the World Heritage List, and recognition by signatories to the Convention of their joint responsibility to assure the conservation of all World Heritage sites; and

CONCERNED that there continue to be significant pressures on World Heritage Sites, including from major infrastructure and extractive industries, the impacts of conflict, the loss of management capacity and a range of other threats and pressures, that have resulted in a

growing number of sites being included in the List of World Heritage in Danger, including some that have seen significant long-term deterioration of their values;

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

1. REAFFIRMS its view that the principles of the World Heritage Convention are critical to conservation and therefore calls on the Convention's signatory Parties to ensure that the Convention remains effective;
2. ENDORSES the establishment of effective and equitable governance, conservation and management of all listed World Heritage Sites as the highest priority and benchmark of success of the World Heritage Convention for the ten years to its 50th anniversary in 2022, and commits to support the Convention to develop new mechanisms, strategies and programmes of work to achieve this goal;
3. REQUESTS the World Heritage Committee and all signatory Parties to uphold the highest standards by ensuring the rigorous observation of the Convention's *Operational Guidelines*, by meeting their collective responsibility to protect and manage effectively all World Heritage Sites, by ensuring that the Convention plays a full role in the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* and the Aichi Targets, and by developing as soon as possible new processes and standards that will ensure that the Convention appropriately recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in line with accepted international norms and standards;
4. ALSO REMINDS State Parties to the Convention that there still remain gaps on the World Heritage List for new natural and mixed sites, and cultural landscapes which have the potential to be considered of Outstanding Universal Value, and that the protection of sites that would fill these gaps, their inclusion in national tentative lists, and their nomination to the World Heritage List remains a valid priority, that requires increased support and advice. This includes the specific opportunities to strengthen cooperation between States for ecosystems that require comprehensive and integrated approaches to conservation and management;
5. REQUESTS UNESCO, within available resources, to strengthen further the professional capabilities in natural heritage within the World Heritage Centre, and to cooperate with IUCN to increase IUCN's capacity to support the Convention;
6. CALLS UPON IUCN Members and Commissions to actively engage in supporting the World Heritage Convention, including by continuing to provide proactive support and advice to support IUCN's advice to the Convention on threats, conservation issues and solutions, and on the evaluation of potential candidate sites; and
7. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources, to:
 - a. maintain the effectiveness of, and develop further, IUCN's Advisory Body role on World Heritage to ensure that IUCN is able to advise, influence and guide the World Heritage Committee, to monitor and report on its implementation, and to contribute to the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020*;
 - b. regularly report to IUCN on progress and concerns regarding the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and to strengthen awareness across IUCN and within civil society of the performance and results of the World Heritage Convention, including through global and regional communication strategies;

- c. in the 10 years leading up to the Convention's 50th Anniversary, develop and support the application of international IUCN protected area standards and norms to all World Heritage Sites, to support identified measures needed to achieve their conservation, to communicate the status of World Heritage Sites and recognize World Heritage sites that meet global management standards, and to catalyze support to World Heritage Sites in Danger;
- d. establish new regional capacity and support via IUCN Regional Offices, Commissions and Members, and regional and national partners, with the purpose of strengthening IUCN's direct support to States, managers and stakeholders in World Heritage Sites to deliver both biodiversity conservation results, and ensure that World Heritage Sites contribute to the realization of benefits for communities, while respecting and supporting the rights of those communities; and
- e. maintain and develop strong and effective working relationships with UNESCO, and its World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM, and other partners, to pursue a continuing, strengthened and effective role for the World Heritage Convention as a flagship for best practice in global conservation.