

## **WCC-2012-Res-056-EN**

### **Enhancing connectivity conservation through international networking of best practice management**

NOTING that Resolution 4.062 *Enhancing Ecological Networks and Connectivity Conservation Areas* adopted by the 4<sup>th</sup> IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008) called for enhanced ecological networks and connectivity conservation areas;

RECALLING the urgency underpinning this resolution that most biodiversity is today affected by human activities, and that according to the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* "... over the past 50 years humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history", as a result of which more than 60% of ecosystem services are degraded;

ALSO RECALLING that healthy ecosystems provide a multitude of ecological services to humanity and that as such they represent its "life insurance" and the world's largest development agency;

APPLAUDING the Ecosystem Approach developed within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

RECOGNIZING the indispensable contribution of protected areas, which today cover 12% of emerged land areas, to the conservation of life on Earth;

FURTHER RECALLING that Aichi Target 11 of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* states that "By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes" which, if achieved, will significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity;

NOTING however despite the revised 17% target, that there is a limit to the area which can be set aside, and that those areas reserved have geographically fixed, legally defined boundaries;

RECOGNIZING that the majority of the world's biodiversity is found outside protected areas and that the latter will not be able to fulfil their protective role without taking into account the biodiversity found within a larger area;

HIGHLIGHTING the vital role that ecological networks and other connectivity conservation areas play in the conservation of biodiversity in the face of alterations caused by changes to climate, through, for example, improving the resilience of ecosystems and the dispersion of species, as highlighted by Aichi Target 11;

ENCOURAGED by initiatives for the implementation of networks of protected areas, and initiatives aimed at establishing ecological networks such as the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) and the Natura 2000 network in Europe; Yellowstone to Yukon and boreal conservation efforts in North America, including the Canadian Boreal Initiative; Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and 2012 National Wildlife Corridors of Australia; the Terai Arc in Nepal and India; the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor; the Vilacamba-Amboró in South America, and many others;

RECALLING Recommendation 1.38 *Ecological Networks and Corridors of Natural and Semi-Natural Areas* adopted by the 1st IUCN World Conservation Congress (Montreal, 1996);

FURTHER RECALLING the CBD *Programme of Work* target that, by 2015, “all protected area systems are integrated into the wider landscape and seascape, and relevant sectors, by applying the ecosystem approach and taking into account ecological connectivity and the concept, where appropriate, of ecological networks”;

NOTING that connectivity conservation and ecological networks are a strategic part of landscape and seascape integration of protected areas;

RECOGNIZING that infrastructure built by humans can be a major obstacle to ecological connectivity;

CONVINCED that the loss of connectivity in wildlife corridors leads to ecosystems becoming less resilient and to irreparable losses that have an effect on human welfare and safety;

RECOGNIZING the critical importance of people in connectivity conservation areas, their values, rights, needs and aspirations, and the need for them to be part of an integrated approach to connectivity conservation areas as part of ecological networks and to enable them to share in the benefits of protecting connectivity;

NOTING the urgency of action required to help retain these natural, interconnected lands and seas due to the pressures of global change, and in particular, the growth in the world's population from 6.7 billion in 2008 to 9.2 billion people by 2050;

ALSO NOTING that the new carbon economy provides an opportunity for carbon storage and carbon sequestration in ecological networks including protected areas and connectivity conservation areas, and in particular, in high biodiversity conservation value sites;

RECOGNIZING the value of terrestrial connectivity conservation areas for the future supply of reliable quantities of high-quality water; and

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that connectivity conservation corridors including ecological networks require active management and that the exchange of best practice management information through informal and formal networks helps build continuous improvement;

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

1. REQUESTS States to consolidate and continue to establish national ecological networks and connectivity conservation areas to strengthen the protection of biodiversity, including, as appropriate, biological corridors and buffer zones around protected areas;
2. CALLS ON States to continue to strengthen the integration of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in terrestrial and marine planning, including conservation planning and especially actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
3. REQUESTS the Director General, in close collaboration with IUCN's Commissions, Council, Members and partners, to ensure that IUCN plays an active role in facilitating the effective management of ecological networks and connectivity conservation areas by:
  - a. actively assisting the development and operation of a new network for the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) called the International Connectivity Conservation Network (ICCN) whose principal role is to share best practice corridor management information, in association with the relevant parts of the Secretariat and the IUCN Commissions;

- b. further supporting and facilitating the exchange of best practice connectivity conservation management information through an international network of connectivity conservation managers and stakeholders; and
- c. supporting and facilitating the dissemination of information and provision of guidance on the legal aspects of connectivity conservation, both as an essential component of best practices in the establishment and maintenance of connectivity conservation areas, and as an essential element of their effective management.