

## **WCC-2012-Res-060-EN**

### **Strengthening the role of IUCN in saving the world's primary forests**

RECALLING IUCN Resolutions 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 2.39, 3.071, 3.101, 4.068, 4.075, 4.076, 4.078, 4.083, and 4.134, referenced in full in Annex I of this Resolution;

NOTING with concern that Earth continues to face an extinction crisis, and that primary forests, particularly tropical primary forests, contain half or more of the planet's terrestrial biodiversity;

RECOGNIZING that intact primary forests provide ecosystem services at local, regional and global scales, including protection of water quality and quantity, maintenance of significant carbon stocks and ongoing sequestration of carbon to mitigate climate change, regulation of local climate variability, maintenance of wild relatives of crops, pollinators, soil formation and retention, and other services vital for food security;

ACKNOWLEDGING that while precise definitions of "primary forest" vary, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations defines primary forest as "Naturally regenerated forest of native species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed";

NOTING that some 50% of the world's natural forest cover has been lost, with particular high and continuing rates of loss in tropical forests, and that only around 36% of Earth's remaining forests are primary forests;

BEARING IN MIND the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)/IUCN *Guidelines for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in tropical timber production forests*;

RECALLING the United Nation's *Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests* and its first Global Objective, to "reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide";

FURTHER RECALLING that both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) include reducing deforestation and conserving natural forests among their objectives, and have requested input for improving synergies between the two conventions to achieve both climate change and biodiversity objectives;

RECOGNIZING that the direct drivers of primary forest degradation and loss have been well documented, and include conversion for agriculture and livestock; direct and indirect impacts of the expansion of infrastructure, mining, and human settlement; and legally-authorized as well as illegal logging;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the indirect drivers of primary forest degradation and loss are complex and vary from place to place, but frequently include, *inter alia*, insecure and inequitable land tenure, inadequate or absent forest land-use planning, deficiencies in the rule of law and law enforcement, weak institutional capacities, perverse subsidies and economic incentives;

NOTING also that logging in primary tropical forests often acts as the cutting-edge agent of forest degradation and as a precursor to uncontrolled expansion of agriculture, infrastructure and human settlement, frequently resulting in massive losses of biodiversity and carbon, the destruction of local livelihoods, and increased forest and land fires;

REAFFIRMING the central role of protected areas, including indigenous and community conserved areas, in an overall strategy to slow the loss of primary forests; and

CONVINCED that legitimate human needs and aspirations worldwide can be met without destroying the world's remaining primary forests, particularly if efforts are significantly increased to optimize use of existing purpose planted trees on previously cleared land and restore degraded lands for agricultural and timber and fibre production;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and Council to establish a mechanism involving representatives of Council, the Secretariat, IUCN Commissions and Members to examine, make recommendations and report to Council and Members, by the end of 2013, on:
  - a. opportunities to strengthen relevant IUCN global programmes and build synergies between them, as well as the Commissions, with a view to saving the world's remaining primary forests;
  - b. options and opportunities to meet global demand for wood and agricultural commodities from lands other than primary forests;
  - c. measures that IUCN can take or promote to help ensure that purpose planted trees (plantations) for wood, fibre, or biofuel and biofibre feedstocks or other agricultural products do not further encroach on remaining primary forests, and their carbon and biodiversity benefits;
  - d. the current state of the science and practice of logging in tropical forests, the extent to which current best practices are in fact compatible with the maintenance of primary forest as primary forest, and recommendations for IUCN in accordance with the findings and conclusions of this inquiry; and
  - e. options and strategies for emphasizing the protection of primary forests in the evolving international REDD+ regime, as well as national REDD+ strategies, in ways that provide appropriate financial and other incentives, respect the rights and livelihoods of indigenous and other local communities dependent on primary forests, and maximize biodiversity and carbon sequestration benefits;
2. ALSO REQUESTS the Director General and Council, in carrying out the tasks in paragraph 1, to review and build on relevant IUCN Resolutions, literature on the drivers of deforestation and other related topics, and to consult as appropriate with IUCN Members and Commissions, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests<sup>1</sup>, relevant multilateral and bilateral development agencies, centres of scientific, technical and policy expertise, the private sector, NGOs, representatives of indigenous and local communities, and other stakeholders and institutions as they may deem necessary;
3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General to convey recommendations to Council and the Membership on ways to strengthen the IUCN Programme and approach to primary forests, both for the current Programme and for future Programmes, and also to conduct outreach to relevant international processes and bodies such as CBD, UNFCCC, REDD+ Partnership, ITTO, etc.; and

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<sup>1</sup> Including: Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), CBD, FAO, Global Environment Facility (GEF), ITTO, IUCN, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Forum on Forests, UNFCCC, World Agroforestry Centre and The World Bank

4. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General to develop a work plan and procedures for carrying out this Resolution, based on IUCN rules, procedures and best practices for similar exercises, in consultation with Council.

**ANNEX I**  
**Past IUCN Resolutions Relevant to this Resolution's Objectives**

- 1.20 *Biological Diversity and Forests*
- 1.21 *Forest Concessions*
- 1.22 *Voluntary Independent Certification of Forest Management and Marketing Claims*
- 2.39 *Corruption in the Forest Sector*
- 3.071 *International cooperation on forest management*
- 3.101 *Advancing boreal forest conservation*
- 4.068 *Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD)*
- 4.075 *Climate change mitigation targets and actions for biodiversity conservation*
- 4.076 *Biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation in national policies and strategies*
- 4.078 *Appeal for action to address global environmental change*
- 4.083 *Industrial agrofuel production*
- 4.134 *Responding to deforestation and land degradation related to climate change and desertification*