

WCC-2012-Res-064-EN

Acknowledging Quebec's advancement of conservation of the Boreal region

HAVING RECOGNIZED in Resolution 3.101 *Advancing boreal forest conservation* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004), the critical importance of the world's remaining intact boreal forest regions, and in that resolution having urged governments to take steps to conserve those forest regions under their jurisdiction;

RECALLING that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has noted that the fundamental requirement for the conservation of biological diversity is the in-situ conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings, and has recognized the close and traditional dependence of many indigenous local communities embodying traditional lifestyles on biological resources;

RECALLING that the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) has recognized that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment;

AKNOWLEDGING that on May 9, 2011 the Government of Quebec, represented by Prime Minister Jean Charest, and a "Partners Table" including leaders from aboriginal communities, environmental organizations, industry and local government, signed together a "Declaration of the Partners" regarding the Plan Nord, a sustainable development initiative applying to the northern two-thirds of the province of Quebec, an area covering 1.2 million square kilometres;

ACKNOWLEDGING WITH SATISFACTION that this Declaration recognizes that:

- a. the development of the territory that the Plan Nord covers must be socially responsible, sustainable and environmentally sound;
- b. the Plan Nord must support development that fosters the preservation of the quality of the environment, safeguards biodiversity and the traditional, ancestral way of life of the First Nations and the Inuit and allows for collective social and economic enrichment;
- c. the Plan Nord must abide by the agreements already concluded with the First Nations and the Inuit living in the territory and their ancestral rights and that its implementation must be sufficiently flexible to allow for a case-by-case examination of each development project, take into account current and future negotiations, and adapt to changes in such negotiations, in particular in respect of governance;
- d. the Plan Nord must complement the approaches that the Government of Quebec has already adopted in respect of the aboriginal representatives concerned to deal with questions that require immediate action and that nation-to-nation discussions must be maintained between the Government of Quebec and the aboriginal nations throughout the implementation of the Plan Nord;
- e. the territory encompassed by the Plan Nord contains some of the world's most extensive intact ecosystems, which provide an array of ecological goods and services that it is important to maintain; and
- f. mechanisms must be adopted to ensure the continuity of the commitment to devote 50% of the territory that the Plan Nord covers to non-industrial purposes, environmental protection and safeguarding biodiversity;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING WITH SATISFACTION that:

- a. the Government of Quebec has committed to initiate Ecological Planning by 2013 on the whole of the Plan Nord territory with a participation framework for consulting with the territory's stakeholders and aboriginal peoples to achieve these goals;
- b. the Government of Quebec has committed to create Protected Areas on 20% of the Territory of the Plan Nord by 2020 as an interim target, which will thereby devote 17% of the territory of the Province of Quebec to conservation by that date; and
- c. the Government of Quebec intends to develop the ecological and environmental knowledge needed to assess various conservation practices to ensure the protection of the environment and the territory;

RECOGNIZING that Plan Nord will make a significant contribution towards Canada's commitments to the Aichi Targets of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* including Strategic goal B, Target 5, and particularly to Target 11 of goal C which sets global conservation targets for 2020, whereby 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 landscape and seascapes; and

NOTING the importance of the commitment that at all stages of the planning and realization of the projects put forward under the Plan Nord, the protection of the environment and northern ecosystems, which are especially sensitive to climate change and disturbances stemming from human intervention, will be at the forefront of decision making;

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

1. WELCOMES the policies and commitments of the Plan Nord because of their commitment to conservation and sustainable economic development;
2. AFFIRMS that the policies and commitments of the Plan Nord befit a sustainable development model that, if implemented in full, will allow natural resources to be developed in a spirit of respect for the environment, thereby creating an exemplary sustainable development project that integrates energy, mining, forest, bio-food, tourism, transportation development, wildlife management, environmental protection, the preservation of biodiversity, and that will foster development for the benefit of the communities concerned in a spirit of respect for cultures and identities;
3. FURTHER AFFIRMS that the aspirational goal of maintaining 50% of the northern territory of Quebec free from industrial development, if operationalized correctly, has the ability to be a guiding light to the globe as we combat the enormous global challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change;
4. AFFIRMS that Plan Nord is a globally significant sustainable development initiative, if implemented in a manner that safeguards the integrity of the environment and respects the indigenous peoples' human rights in accordance with the principles of UNDRIP;
5. FURTHER AFFIRMS that the proposal to dedicate 600,000 square kilometres to non-industrial purposes, protecting the environment and safeguarding biodiversity, is an outstanding and historic conservation policy that will positively reverberate around the world;

6. AFFIRMS that the ecological planning at the heart of Plan Nord is a critically important strategic commitment that will provide a sound long-term foundation for conservation;
7. AFFIRMS that the conservation components of Plan Nord will make an outstanding contribution to climate change adaptation responses in the boreal zone; and
8. CONGRATULATES the Government of Quebec for its vision and commitments to conservation and aboriginal rights.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.