

WCC-2012-Res-070-EN

Río de la Plata Basin wetlands regional initiative

OBSERVING that the Río de la Plata Basin, with a surface area of over 3,200,000 km² is the second largest drainage basin in South America and the fourth largest in the world; that it covers the whole of Paraguay as well as considerable parts of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay, including within its central plain the most extensive corridor of fluvial wetlands on the planet, as well as some of the most densely inhabited mega-cities in South America and in the world;

CONSIDERING that the ecosystems in the region, and its wetlands in particular, are significant examples of the abundance, variety and quality of natural resources, which facilitate the production of a large number of environmental goods and services of great economic and ecological importance;

CONCERNED that the natural resources of the Río de la Plata Basin and the associated goods and services are threatened by factors such as the fragmentation of natural ecosystems, the expansion of agricultural borders, large-scale livestock rearing, major infrastructure projects, urban development and pollution, which not only affect the wetlands and biodiversity but also the local communities that depend on these resources, not to mention food safety and the global climate;

RECOGNIZING that unsustainable production is affecting the traditional production models in the region, increasing the impact of drought and flooding, and reducing the capacity for adaptation to climate change, which has a negative impact on the welfare of local populations, creating conditions that give rise to migration to large cities and increasing poverty;

AWARE of the need:

- a. for the economic and social benefits of natural resources and associated ecological goods and services to be recognized by the stakeholders involved in the development of environmental and social policies;
- b. to promote initiatives that improve existing knowledge, its systematization and application to sustainable production practices and management, which both contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of the region, and improve the quality of life of the local communities that depend on these resources;
- c. to support examples of sustainable ecosystem best practices, including the participation of the private sector, producers, social organizations, communities and local governments, in coordination with all sectors; and
- d. to develop the skills of the stakeholders and authorities responsible for the management of natural resources in the Río de la Plata Basin;

RECALLING Recommendation 2.85 *Conservation of the Middle and Lower Paraná River* adopted at the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000); Recommendation 3.097 *Conservation of the Wetland Corridor of the Fluvial Littoral, Argentina* adopted at the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004); Recommendation 4.029 *Conservation and sustainable use of fish in the Río de la Plata Basin* and Resolution 4.004 *Strengthening IUCN's institutional presence in South America* approved at the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008);

RECOGNIZING the important precedents of regional progress, such as the Poconé Accord (2005), the Paraguay-Paraná System Alliance Initiative, the IUCN-Río de la Plata Basin Initiative (2009), the Ramsar Convention Río de la Plata Basin Regional Initiative (2009), the ClimPlata initiative for the management of risks and adaptation to climate change and variability in the Río de la Plata Basin (2010), and the Ecosystem Alliance initiative (2011–2015) – coordinated by the Netherlands National Committee of IUCN Members, Both Ends and Wetlands International – focused on the Río de la Plata Basin, with activities in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay; and

BEARING IN MIND that it is necessary to consolidate a regional approach for the Río de la Plata Basin in the light of new global challenges, which include climate change, water scarcity, the advancing of the agricultural frontier and in particular soya bean cultivation, deforestation, infrastructure projects, urban development and pollution from agricultural products;

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

CALLS ON the Director General to:

- a. support the governments, IUCN Members in the region and the IUCN Commissions in order to maintain the integrity of the wetland ecosystems in the Río de la Plata Basin, strengthen the capacities of civil society, contribute to food and water safety and to promote the sustainable economic development of the region, through management with an ecosystem approach; and
- b. to analyze the possibilities for strengthening the institutional presence of IUCN in the Southern Cone of South America, and to consider opportunities for facilitating resources to develop and implement a strategic plan with a regional approach in the Río de la Plata Basin, aimed at influencing public policies and strengthening processes involving communities, grassroots organizations, NGOs, local and national governments, and academic and scientific institutions in terms of better organization, the improvement of skills and the drawing up of agreements.

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.