

WCC-2012-Res-082-EN

Supporting the sustainability of Jeju *Haenyeo* as a unique marine ecology stewardship

CONSIDERING that for centuries the *Haenyeo* free-divers in Jeju Island, Korea, an almost exclusively female group, have pursued a profession of controlled marine harvesting in a system of collaborative economic activity and have maintained their profession;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that their skills, tools, labour songs, shamanistic belief system, practice of collective economic activity, community reinvestment, apprenticeship and mutual aid, and above all, their unparalleled knowledge of marine ecology represent a unique body of indigenous wisdom and both tangible and intangible cultural heritage and render them “traditional wisdom carriers”;

NOTING that their practices include such environmental sustainability as reseeded the ocean’s shellfish population, controlling their harvest by diving without breathing apparatus and limiting the days and hours that they dive, and dedicating specific dives each month to cleaning the seabed of refuse, rendering them a 21st century conservation model of benign human cohabitation with nature;

RECOGNIZING the uniqueness of their marine stewardship and the contribution they have made to the conservation of local marine resources for centuries though sustainable harvesting with minimal acknowledgment to date on the global stage;

CONCERNED that their population has dramatically decreased from a registered 23,081 in 1965 (21.2% of the total female population in Jeju Island) to 4,995 in 2010 (2.1% of the total female population), and that the majority (97.5%) of these divers are now over 50 years of age, indicating that inter-generational transmission has essentially diminished;

ALARMED that the coastal pollution in conjunction with the aquaculture industry has led to reduced yields and decreased economic prospects for this female workforce, and that these and other environmental and social changes brought about by modern society have negatively impacted upon the Jeju *Haenyeo* community to such a degree that this traditional culture of living sustainably in harmony with nature is imminently facing extinction;

CONSIDERING and building upon a number of related resolutions adopted at the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008) which focused on the rights and sustainability of indigenous peoples, including Resolution 4.049 *Supporting Indigenous Conservation Territories and other Indigenous Peoples’ and Community Conserved Areas*, Resolution 4.052 *Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and seeking specific actions from the Director General and other parties on Resolution 4.055 *Integrating culture and cultural diversity into IUCN’s policy and Programme*, Resolution 4.056 *Rights-based approaches to conservation*, Resolution 4.058 *Conservation and poverty reduction*, and most notably, Resolution 4.067 *Advancing island conservation and sustainable livelihoods*;

RECOGNIZING that IUCN supports the principles expressed in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme;

NOTING that Jeju Island is a unique site in the world to have received UNESCO’s designation in all of the three Natural Science categories: Biosphere Reserve, Natural World Heritage site, and Global Geopark, and that Jeju Special Self-Governing Province of Korea has an established endeavour to further achieve UNESCO’s recognition for the Jeju *Haenyeo*, as well as multiple local efforts for their role in preservation; and

ACKNOWLEDGING that the United Nations *Millennium Development Goals* include foci of environmental sustainability, gender equality and global poverty elimination, and that the UN has a primary focus on Rural Women's Empowerment, which was highlighted at the 56th Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 2012);

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

1. URGES all IUCN Members, partners and organizations of the conservation community at large to acknowledge and investigate the history, scientific importance, present condition and unique cultural value of Jeju *Haenyeo*, including in the Korean peninsula, in order to assist in the development of comprehensive plans for their preservation; and
2. REQUESTS IUCN Members and partners to endorse, support, participate in, and advocate the development of policies and practices which will help to protect and enhance the aforementioned community, at local, regional and central government levels in Korea as well as internationally.

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.