

WCC-2012-Res-087-EN

Energy and conservation

NOTING that 2012 is the UN International Year of Sustainable Energy for All and that the significant role of IUCN in designing global policy has been recognized through the appointment of IUCN's Director General as a member of the UN Secretary General's High Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All;

MINDFUL of the fundamental importance of access to affordable energy to alleviate poverty and achieve safe livelihoods;

NOTING that energy future affects all people, women and men, youth and elderly, and that women and children are, in many cases, the ones who stand to benefit the most from the introduction of sustainable and renewable energy services;

RECOGNIZING that over 1.3 billion people are without access to electricity and 2.7 billion rely on biomass for cooking¹, with severe health consequences;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that renewable energy² has a critical role in the transition to a green economy²;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the current share of fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) in the global energy mix is 81% and is responsible for 65% of all greenhouse gas emissions globally¹, and that through the combined effects of improved standards of living and population growth global energy demand is projected to increase by 40% between 2009 and 2035¹;

CONVINCED that one of the most important contributions to reaching energy-related goals to mitigate climate change, reducing pollution and public health hazards, and addressing energy poverty, comes from more efficient use of energy, with pricing regimes that reflect the true environmental costs of different sources of energy;

ACKNOWLEDGING that even in scenarios that include effective energy efficiency measures, all energy sources including fossil fuels are likely to be part of the global energy mix for the foreseeable future;

CONCERNED that due to declining conventional supplies that become increasingly difficult to access, a growing share of fossil fuels is projected to come from unconventional sources (e.g. oil sands and shale gas) with potentially significant but as yet unquantified ecosystem impacts, therefore the need for a precautionary approach is important;

NOTING that in order to have a 50% chance of meeting the goal to limit the increase in the average global temperature to two degrees Celsius (Cancun Agreements, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP16³), (a goal which is unlikely to be reached and would already lead to severe environmental, economic and social consequences), the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix must at least double from its share of 13% in 2009 to 27% by 2035, even with effective energy efficiency measures¹;

¹ IEA (2011) *World Energy Outlook 2011*. International Energy Agency

² "Renewable energy that is derived from natural processes that are replenished constantly (...) Included in the definition is energy generated from solar, wind, biofuels, geothermal, hydropower, and ocean resources". IEA. (2011). *Renewables Information 2011*. International Energy Agency.

³ <http://cancun.unfccc.int/>

SUPPORTIVE of the more than 100 countries with renewable energy policies in place⁴, and recognizing that the implementation of such policies, alongside energy efficiency measures and nature-based solutions for mitigation and adaptation, is imperative to avoid dangerous climate change and its effects;

MINDFUL that all energy sources – including renewable energy – and associated production and transmission infrastructure have potential negative environmental and social impacts, and therefore impact assessments and careful planning to avoid, minimize and manage these impacts are essential;

CONCERNED that current discourses on existing and new energy sources and technologies that are regarded as ‘clean’ and/or renewable typically focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions without fully accounting for biodiversity and livelihood impacts;

FURTHER CONCERNED that energy security is inextricably linked to food and water security that must be addressed together but are often treated as separate issues,

RECALLING IUCN Recommendation 12 *Energy and Conservation* adopted by the 12th IUCN General Assembly (Kinshasa, 1975) which recommends “that governments foster large-scale public understanding and balanced discussion of the wide range of energy choices available, public awareness of natural limits to man’s use of energy, and public readiness to engage in ways of life compatible with these principles”;

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 15/9 *Renewable Energy* adopted by the 15th IUCN General Assembly (Christchurch, 1981) that highlights “the harnessing of some renewable forms of energy may not be benign in the effects on the natural environment ... and urges national and international agencies to ensure that the environmental impact of any energy developments are assessed before decisions are taken to proceed and, when such decisions are taken, that these developments take account of the need to ensure that their design and implementation give adequate attention to ecological processes, living resources and landscape”;

RECALLING that the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004) adopted Resolution 3.059 *IUCN’s energy-related work relevant to biodiversity conservation*, which builds on Resolution 2.17 *Climate and energy* adopted by the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000), and asks IUCN to advance “ecologically-sound energy systems for sustainable development, as a necessary and core part of the biodiversity conservation objectives of the Union”, and that the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008) adopted Resolution 4.081 *Equitable access to energy* which requests IUCN Members to inform national and sub-national policy and investment decisions for increasing access to energy, as well as Resolutions 4.082 on *Sustainable biomass-based energy* and 4.083 on *Industrial agrofuel production* particularly highlighting negative impacts on biodiversity and food security;

RECALLING the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP10 Decision X/33 *Biodiversity and climate change* which urged Parties, other governments, and relevant international and other organizations to *inter alia*: in planning and implementing effective climate change mitigation and adaptation activities, including renewable energies, take into account impacts on biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services and avoid the conversion or degradation of areas important for biodiversity through: (i) considering traditional knowledge, including the full involvement of indigenous and local communities; (ii) building on a scientifically credible knowledge base; (iii) considering components of biodiversity important

⁴ REN21 (2012). Renewables 2012: Global Status Report. Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century.

for its conservation and sustainable use; (iv) applying the ecosystem approach; and (v) developing ecosystem and species vulnerability assessments; and

REALIZING that there are increasing investments in renewable and unconventional fossil fuel energy production, and that governments are implementing new renewable energy mandates and policies, there is a need for IUCN to advise governments and the business sector to take into account impacts on biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services, and in an integrated manner along with considerations for food and water security, sustainable natural resource use and livelihoods;

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

1. CALLS ON governments and the business sector to:
 - a. recognize that all energy sources – including renewable energy – and associated production and transmission infrastructure have potentially negative environmental and social impacts, and therefore assessments and careful planning to avoid, minimize and manage these impacts, in particular to biodiversity and livelihoods, are essential;
 - b. recognize that deciding between energy sources must take into consideration the inextricable linkages between energy, food and water security;
 - c. adopt a precautionary approach for the development of unconventional fossil fuel sources;
 - d. adopt ecosystem-based approaches – as defined and urged by the CBD – for any energy development, including renewable energies, to ensure their long-term viability and resilience; and
 - e. collaborate on rapidly scaling up decentralized energy solutions that provide universal access to clean energy alternatives, and to involve and empower women and youth in the design and implementation of sustainable energy systems;
2. Specifically URGES governments to:
 - a. ensure policies uphold commitments to international conventions and agreements;
 - b. ensure energy policy coherence with biodiversity, livelihood, food and water security and energy access policies, by energy ministries coordinating with other relevant ministries including those responsible for environment and planning;
 - c. undertake strategic Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) to understand how multiple energy policies and developments affect landscapes and seascapes, particularly with respect to impacts on biodiversity and livelihoods; and
 - d. remove subsidies for energy options that constitute high environmental and social risks and promote opportunities for effective and efficient renewable options;
3. Specifically URGES the business sector to:
 - a. direct investments to projects that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also favour biodiversity conservation, including sustaining and restoring ecosystems, and improve access to energy; and

- b. undertake relevant integrated SEIA, including full life-cycle assessments of direct and indirect impacts, and incorporate these into project planning and execution, and use industry best practices when designing, constructing, operating and decommissioning energy developments;
4. CALLS ON IUCN Members and Commissions (in particular the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) and the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)) to:
- a. work with the energy sector to avoid and effectively manage the environmental and social impacts of energy options, and to help the sector and the companies therein to understand, avoid, minimize and manage the associated risks and opportunities for biodiversity conservation, livelihoods and improving access to energy; and
 - b. identify ways that nature can provide solutions to the energy challenge, within ecological limits; and
5. CALLS ON the Director General to, with regard to the relevant areas of the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016*:
- a. build on the achievements of the thematic programme area *Naturally Energizing the Future* under the *IUCN Programme 2009–2012* when implementing the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016*;
 - b. advise governments and the business sector about the risks and opportunities for biodiversity conservation, livelihoods and improving access to energy in relation to all energy sources;
 - c. develop principles and guidelines for the business sector to integrate biodiversity considerations at the assessment and design phases of energy projects, particularly large-scale energy projects, but also multiple small-scale energy projects; and
 - d. promote nature-based solutions to access to energy, energy efficiency, renewable energy and the application of ecosystem-based approaches (as defined by the CBD) for sustainable energy development to all concerned stakeholders – especially with regard to all renewable energy sources, which are based on natural processes and therefore depend on the long-term viability and resilience of ecosystems.

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.