

## **WCC-2016-Res-012-EN**

### **Giraffids: reversing the decline of Africa's iconic megafauna**

NOTING that the Giraffidae family includes only two living species, restricted to the African continent: the giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), currently comprising nine savannah subspecies occurring patchily in 21 countries, and the okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*), restricted to the north-eastern rainforests of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);

HIGHLIGHTING that despite their iconic status, wide public affection, cultural and economic importance and role in the functioning of African ecosystems, giraffe and okapi are relatively poorly studied and receive limited conservation attention and funding;

ALARMED that recent surveys and reviews highlight severe range reductions, population declines and increasing fragmentation, due to habitat loss and degradation (for agricultural expansion, timber and fuelwood collection, infrastructure development and extractive activities), human encroachment and settlement, poaching, war and civil unrest;

NOTING that while previously listed as Least Concern and Near Threatened, giraffe and okapi have recently been assessed as Vulnerable and Endangered respectively in the IUCN Red List due to population declines of 35–50% over the past three decades, with some giraffe subspecies now Critically Endangered;

RECALLING the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Target 12: "The extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained";

NOTING Resolution 5.022 *Supporting regional initiatives to conserve mammal diversity in West and Central Africa* and Recommendation 5.157 *Protection of the Okapi Wildlife Reserve and communities of the Ituri Forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (Jeju, 2012);

APPLAUDING the publishing of the Okapi Conservation Strategy 2015-2025 by IUCN and ICCN; and

CONCERNED that without urgent implementation of this Strategy, similar conservation efforts focused on giraffe and wider actions to address overarching threats, overall numbers of both species will continue to fall and some giraffe subspecies may be lost forever;

### **The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:**

1. CALLS ON IUCN, donors and partners to raise global and local awareness of giraffid declines and conservation needs and funds for key actions (e.g. lobbying range states and engaging local communities);
2. CALLS ON IUCN Members, donors and partners to:
  - a. support the on-the-ground implementation of the 2015-2025 Okapi Conservation Strategy; and
  - b. undertake increased fundraising and capacity building for management and monitoring of giraffid range state protected areas, including intelligence-led law enforcement via tools such as SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool), and for specific giraffid conservation activities, including development of improved survey and monitoring methods;
3. CALLS ON all IUCN Member States, giraffid range states, the United Nations and the international community to help restore the integrity and security of threatened protected areas, in particular World Heritage sites, in the ranges of giraffe (in particular Garamba National Park in DRC, Bouba-Njidda, Benoue and Waza national parks and Faro Reserve in Cameroon, and Shambe, Boma and Badingilo National Parks in South Sudan) and okapi (in particular Virunga and Maiko national parks and Okapi Wildlife Reserve);
4. URGES all States Parties to the World Heritage Convention to uphold their commitments to the Convention and not to permit extractives activities in World Heritage sites where

giraffids are found and to ensure that all existing and future operations in areas surrounding such properties are compatible with the protection of their Outstanding Universal Value and do not threaten their integrity, in accordance with numerous World Heritage Committee decisions (e.g. 37 COM 7, para 8); and

5. CALLS ON IUCN, giraffid range states, donors, key stakeholders and partners to develop and/or support an Africa-wide Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan, as well as to raise global funds to facilitate its development and actions arising from it.