WCC-2016-Res-017-EN
Actions to avert the extinction of the vaquita porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*)

NOTING that the IUCN Red List classifies vaquita, a porpoise endemic to Mexico, as Critically Endangered;

RECALLING Resolution 19.61 *By-Catch of Non-Target Species* (Buenos Aires, 1994) expressing concern that bycatch rates threaten the vaquita's survival;

RECALLING Resolution 4.025 *Avoiding extinction of the Vaquita Porpoise* Phocoena sinus (Barcelona, 2008) urging establishment of a gillnet exclusion zone covering Mexico's vaquita refuge, promotion of vaquita-safe fishing and adequate monitoring and surveillance;

CONCERNED that the 7th meeting of the International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA) (2016) found the vaquita in imminent danger of extinction with an abundance estimate of *around 60 individuals* and recommended that Mexico permanently ban gillnet fishing throughout the vaquita's range and use all available tools to stop illegal fishing and trade in totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*);

THANKING the President of Mexico for expanding the vaquita protected area, establishing a two- year gillnet ban, increasing inspections and surveillance, and compensating fishing communities;

ALARMED that the 6th meeting of CIRVA (2015) estimated an annual rate of decline of 31% from 2011 to 2014 and recommended that Mexico make the gillnet ban permanent;

RECOGNISING the concern of the International Whaling Commission and its Scientific Committee's endorsement of the CIRVA recommendations at its 66th meeting;

NOTING that the Expedition Vaquita 2015 survey in late 2015 preliminarily concluded that it will take at least 40 years to rebuild the population to 2008 levels;

CONCERNED that the demand for and illegal trade in totoaba drives fishing activities that kill vaquitas;

RECOGNISING the effects on fishing communities from the elimination of gillnets;

NOTING that the Official Mexican Standard (NOM-002-SAG/PESC-2013) provides for a 3-year period to remove shrimp gillnets and transition to vaquita-safe shrimp trawls;

CONCERNED that illegal fishing continues; and

FURTHER CONCERNED that research on vaquita-safe fishing has been lacking;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and the Species Survival Commission to provide, as far as possible, technical and scientific help to Mexico in order to prevent the vaquita's extinction;

2. URGES the Mexican Government to:

a. make permanent the gillnet ban throughout the entire vaquita range;

b. expedite implementation of the Official Mexican Standard NOM-002-SAG/PESC-2013 and the use of small shrimp trawls as an alternative to gillnets throughout the Upper Gulf of California shrimp fishery;

c. increase funding for, and expedite research on, additional technologies and techniques for catching finfish to facilitate and hasten the implementation of gillnet alternatives in these fisheries and establish an international review panel to evaluate the design and implementation of this programme; and

d. review current compensation programmes to ensure full compensation to fishermen and communities supporting vaquita-safe alternatives;

3. CALLS ON all organisations, states, sponsors, gear manufacturers and seafood importers to support the Mexican Government, provide technical and financial support for eliminating gillnets and promote economic alternatives and means of fishing that are vaquita safe; and

4. URGES all governments and competent international organisations, especially the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and INTERPOL, to assist any and all countries where totoaba products are found in markets or in transit, including Mexico, the United States and other countries, in combating the illegal international trade in totoaba products.

State and agency Members of the United States voted against this motion with Amendment 1 and abstained during the vote on this motion with Amendment 2 for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.