

WCC-2016-Res-029-EN

Incorporating urban dimensions of conservation into the work of IUCN

CONSIDERING that IUCN and the global conservation community generally have tended to focus attention on areas relatively remote from cities;

CONCERNED that giving higher priority to those areas where human impact on nature has been least, may risk overlooking the many reasons why urban places, people, and institutions are also crucial to IUCN's success;

MINDFUL that the world is urbanising fast, and that as urban influences spread ever outwards, previously remote areas will be affected;

RECOGNISING that the majority of the world's population is urban and that urban people are critical for nature conservation, nationally and globally, that cities are where most wealth is concentrated, and most media are based, and that conservation depends on support from urban voters, consumers, donors, and communicators – yet people living in cities have diminishing contact with nature;

NOTING that urban conservation actors include national, sub-national, and local authorities, and a range of non-governmental organisations, academic and scientific bodies, and community groups;

AWARE that nature is essential to people's physical and mental health, development, and well-being, that natural areas in and around cities help give residents a sense of place, offer opportunities to learn about nature and sustainability, provide a wide range of ecosystem services, contribute to carbon sequestration, and bolster resilience to climate change and natural disasters, and that many natural and semi-natural areas in and around cities are rich in biodiversity and geoheritage and can include protected areas in any of IUCN's six categories;

NOTING the dependency of urban populations on goods and services, such as drinking water, energy, food and flood protection, provided by rural ecosystems;

FURTHER NOTING that urban natural areas can enhance tourist attractions of cities and boost income from tourism;

RECOGNISING that access to nature in urban areas can be important in addressing environmental justice and sustainability issues;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that cities can have major negative impacts on surrounding ecosystems, for example, air and water pollution, deforestation for fuelwood, and harvesting of wildlife for human consumption, that urban ports, airports, and gardens are entry points for invasive alien species, and that urban sprawl is often a major threat to nature;

ALSO RECOGNISING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDG 11 to make human settlements, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and

NOTING that Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development will be held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, and will act on the development of a new Urban Agenda;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to:
 - a. direct all Secretariat groups to review their programmes to ensure that urban dimensions of conservation are appropriately reflected in their priorities; and
 - b. appoint a focal point at senior level in the Secretariat to coordinate urban conservation matters;

2. STRONGLY REQUESTS the Director General and Commissions to:

- a. convey to leading organisations and experts concerned with urban dimensions of conservation the importance of participating in IUCN Membership and Commissions;
- b. contribute expertise on this theme to intergovernmental organisations;
- c. encourage the promotion of cooperation among conservation agencies and museums, zoos, botanical gardens, and similar institutions in urban areas to introduce urban people to their region's natural heritage through public programming, community engagement and citizen science; and
- d. seek to develop collaborative programmes with other bodies to raise awareness of the importance of urban protected areas; and

3. CALLS ON Council to:

- a. lead a strong IUCN-wide initiative to promote awareness of the crucial role that nature performs in urban places;
- b. encourage actions that reinforce the role of nature in the planning and management of urban areas, and the role of urban areas in planning and managing conservation programmes; and
- c. establish an 'IUCN Urban Alliance', chaired by a member of Council and composed of Members and units of Commissions and the Secretariat concerned with urban dimensions of conservation, and charge it with assisting Members, Council, the Director General, Commissions and National and Regional Committees in carrying out the purposes of this Resolution.