

WCC-2016-Res-033-EN

Recognising cultural and spiritual significance of nature in protected and conserved areas

RECOGNISING that effective and equitable approaches to the design, governance and management of protected or conserved areas need to be grounded not only in science but also in cultures, religions, worldviews and co-existing customary practices relating to nature;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that worldwide, government-designated protected areas overlap with Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) and Sacred Natural Sites and have distinct cultural and spiritual significance to communities living in and adjacent to the sites;

WELCOMING IUCN's affirmation of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to integrate culture and religion into protected areas and recognise the responsibilities and duties of site custodians;

RECALLING Resolution 4.038 *Recognition and conservation of sacred natural sites in protected areas* (Barcelona, 2008), which urges managers and bodies responsible for protected areas to recognise the cultural & spiritual values of sacred natural sites within these areas, as well as Recommendation 4.127 *Indigenous peoples' rights in the management of protected areas fully or partially in the territories of indigenous peoples* (Barcelona, 2008), which advocates governance of Indigenous Conservation Territories;

FURTHER RECALLING Resolution 5.099 *IUCN Policy on Conservation and Human Rights for Sustainable Development* (Jeju, 2012) and Recommendation 5.147 *Sacred Natural Sites – Support for custodian protocols and customary laws in the face of global threats and challenges* (Jeju, 2012), which promote custodian protocols and customary laws for sacred natural sites as valid and effective cultural means of management and governance of protected and conserved areas;

RECALLING recommendation V.13 of the 2003 IUCN World Parks Congress (Durban) "to promote and adopt laws and policies that foster multicultural values and approaches to protected area systems" and "ensure that protected area systems, protected area designation, objective setting, management planning, zoning and training of managers [...] give balanced attention to the full spectrum of material, cultural and spiritual values"; and

NOTING that the reports of Streams 6 and 7 of the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress (Sydney) include 20 recommendations for enhancing the diversity, quality and vitality of governance, including devolution to local and cultural governance bodies, and 14 recommendations for respecting indigenous and traditional knowledge and culture;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General, the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) through the joint CEESP/WCPA Theme on Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA) and relevant partners, to:

a. develop and disseminate best practice guidelines and training modules for stakeholders that design, govern and manage protected and conserved areas, on the recognition and integration of the cultural and spiritual significance of nature; and

b. encourage institutions, protected area authorities and States to promote recognition and integration of the cultural and spiritual significance of nature in the governance and management of protected and conserved areas; and

2. CALLS ON IUCN Members and other actors to:

a. promote and implement guidance and training for protected and conserved area managers to build capacity and improve recognition of the role of cultural and spiritual significance of nature in the design, governance and management of protected and conserved areas; and

b. promote and adopt policies and strategies that (i) foster multicultural values and approaches to protected and conserved areas, (ii) foster full and effective participation and consent of indigenous peoples, local communities, site custodians, faith groups and the public, and (iii) emphasise rights-based approaches to conservation.