

WCC-2016-Res-036-EN
Supporting privately protected areas

ACKNOWLEDGING the valuable work and the report of the Futures of Privately Protected Areas project and its proposed concept of privately protected area, "a protected area as defined by IUCN, under private governance, i.e. individuals and groups of individuals; non-governmental organisations; corporations – both existing commercial companies and sometimes corporations set up by groups of private owners to manage groups of Privately Protected Areas; for-profit owners; research entities (e.g. universities, field stations) or religious entities";

RECALLING the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding the importance of conserving biodiversity and promoting its sustainable use;

AWARE of the need to promote the proper management and conservation of natural resources and the natural diversity and heritage in both individually and collectively owned private land;

CONSIDERING that protected area systems should include all existing conservation units in each country, including different jurisdictions (national, provincial, regional or local) and various types of governance (public, community, private and mixed);

RECOGNISING the importance of private land areas under voluntary long-term conservation and their increase in the last two decades, with their contribution to complementarity to public and community areas, their support to connectivity through the establishment of conservation corridors between them, and in many cases, by constituting strategic areas themselves;

RECOGNISING the importance of voluntary conservation of the natural diversity and heritage contained in private land as a form of motivation and recognition of individual and/or community, non-state conservation efforts;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that private landowners or land users can also protect their properties for philanthropic reasons or due to economic, recreational or scientific interests;

AWARE that the State has the primary, non-delegable responsibility to manage, implement, develop and provide resources for the protected area systems in each country, as established in the national legislation of some countries and the binding commitments made by States that are Parties to the CBD;

EMPHASISING the role played by landowners and users, NGOs and private sector leaders in the creation, implementation and management of privately protected areas, thus enriching national and local biodiversity and natural heritage conservation policies, and promoting the participation of civil society and its interaction with the public sector;

RECOGNISING the value of existing global, national and regional networks of privately protected areas and other voluntary conservation measures and their contribution to biodiversity conservation;

OBSERVING that in some countries, under the legislation currently in force, privately protected areas do not have a separate conservation category, and neither do they form part of official national, provincial, regional or local protected area systems, most of which only include public and sometimes community protected areas; and

AWARE OF the fact that some States explicitly recognise the right of initiative for the designation of private properties as protected areas, while others do not mention this possibility, but allow it implicitly;

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

1. URGES the Director General, Commissions and Members to promote and support the voluntary long-term conservation of private and communal land, in particular privately protected areas, and the contributions it makes to conservation of biodiversity and all forms of natural diversity and heritage, and to the rehabilitation, connectivity and/or restoration of ecosystem functions indispensable to humanity;

2. LIKEWISE CALLS ON the Director General and Commissions:

- a. to approach national governments, with the support of IUCN Members and the respective National Committees where these exist, in order to promote the creation of inclusive legislation and policy mechanisms for the integration of privately protected areas into national and local protected area systems;
- b. to provide them with guidance on incentives and other forms of support for the conservation of private land as well as marine areas under private use;
- c. to support countries regarding conservation actions on private land that can contribute to the implementation of provisions of relevant global and regional conventions such as the CBD, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Ramsar Convention and others;
- d. to further develop guidance on best practice in the establishment and management of privately protected areas, building on the work and experience of national, regional and global networks and organisations; and
- e. to further the study of the extent, configuration and contribution of voluntary conservation of private lands, especially of privately protected areas, particularly concerning:
 - i. subtypes of areas protected by companies, religious institutions and universities, for which less information is available than for other subtypes;
 - ii. cost-effective methods for assessing the effectiveness of such areas in conserving biodiversity, natural heritage and ecosystem services;
 - iii. their effective integration into national conservation policies and protected area systems; and
 - iv. the range of law and policy tools that may be used to support active management of private areas for purposes of connectivity in protected area systems;

3. URGES the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA):

- a. to consider providing advice to entities aiming to gain protected area status for private lands; and
- b. building on the work of the Futures of Privately Protected Areas project, to continue working, in collaboration with IUCN Members and other constituents of the Union, on the development of frameworks and guidance for the voluntary conservation of private lands, that provide inclusive and unifying approaches for IUCN while maintaining the necessary flexibility;

4. CALLS ON IUCN Members to include privately protected areas that meet the requirements of IUCN Protected Area Standards when reporting about protected area coverage and other related information, including to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and to the CBD, in collaboration and agreement with the owners of such areas;

5. ENCOURAGES IUCN State Members:

- a. to adopt policies that recognise, encourage and monitor privately protected areas as a key contribution to national and international conservation targets, and also to implement mechanisms to integrate privately protected areas into national, provincial and local protected area systems;
- b. to create or promote legal and financial incentives, including through legal reform as appropriate, for the maintenance and strengthening of privately protected areas, particularly in countries where restrictions and/or ambiguity in national legislation exist; and

c. to work alongside civil society organisations to establish in the public agenda the importance of the voluntary conservation of private land, based on the concept of subsidiarity of the private, non-governmental sector in national conservation policies; and

6. REQUESTS the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to support governments and other data providers in the inclusion of information about privately protected areas within the WDPA.