

WCC-2016-Res-039-EN

Protected areas as natural solutions to climate change

RECOGNISING that protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures (conserved areas) play a critical role in addressing climate change, both through mitigation by sequestration and storage of carbon in terrestrial and marine vegetation, soils and peat and through providing ecosystem services for adaptation to existing and projected climate change in terms of food and water security, livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and provision of genetic material for crop and livestock breeding and new medicines;

NOTING that IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas have played a leading role in identifying and promoting these benefits, including through co-publishing the first global report on the role of protected areas in addressing climate change in 2009, and fostering establishment of the Protected Areas Climate Change Specialist Group in 2015;

CONSIDERING that many IUCN State Members are already building protected areas into their climate adaptation strategies;

AWARE that in 2012, Canada, Mexico and the USA jointly released the framework document 'North American Protected Areas as Natural Solutions for Climate Change', and that new players, such as WWF and further partners from Latin American, are adding to this initiative;

AWARE that in August 2015, competent authorities of 18 Latin American countries signed the Declaration on Protected Areas and Climate Change during the Council meeting of REDPARQUES, the Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on Protected Areas; and

NOTING that this message was repeated at the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December 2015, for the first time bringing protected areas directly into negotiations about controlling climate change;

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

1. AFFIRMS the role of protected and conserved areas as natural tools to address the negative effects of climate change, through mitigation strategies as well as adaptation;
2. NOTES key elements of the REDPARQUES declaration, including the call for the international community to: "Recognize national and regional efforts of countries to improve the contribution of protected areas and other effective conservation measures to the national strategies to address the adverse effects of climate change and accomplish existing goals; Increase the attention given to protected areas and other effective conservation measures as an adequate response to the effects of climate change; Respond to the need for greater scientific, technical, technological and financial assistance to achieve a more effective management of protected areas under climate change criteria...";
3. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General to work in close cooperation with all IUCN's Commissions, Members, global thematic programs, and partners to operationalise the 'Promise of Sydney' recommendations concerning climate change;
4. URGES State Members to consider making public statements on the importance of protected areas as tools for the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, in line with the REDPARQUES declaration;
5. ALSO URGES State Members to incorporate appropriate actions in their national Action Plans submitted for the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, under the Convention on Biological Diversity; and
6. CALLS ON all State Members and other players to integrate protected area networks into climate change adaptation strategies, whilst keeping protected area management in line with the IUCN definition of a protected area.