

## **WCC-2016-Res-044-EN**

### **Protection, restoration and sustainable use of urban water bodies in India**

BEARING IN MIND that water is essential for life and that in an urban setting the role of water bodies becomes crucial for the functioning of urban ecosystems;

WELCOMING the call through United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of urban water bodies;

RECOGNISING that the revival of water bodies is becoming an imperative, as urban India is growing rapidly and causing serious existential threats to water bodies;

AWARE that a significant number of water bodies located in six major cities of India – Delhi, Chennai, Bangaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai – are either encroached on, polluted, dried up or facing severe threat;

NOTING that water bodies in cities are not only sources of surface water but essential for maintaining already stressed water tables to provide water for millions of people, for supporting ecosystem services and providing habitat to birds, including migratory birds, and other species;

ALSO NOTING that, as an example, in Delhi during the last four decades, of 1,012 water bodies, 349 have dried up, 165 have been encroached on and others are facing existential threats, and that these trends are common to other cities;

FURTHER NOTING that although environmental and research groups have time and again raised their concerns over the loss of water bodies essential for maintaining groundwater levels, year- by-year all major cities in India are losing their water bodies;

OBSERVING that in Bengaluru, lakes also act to mitigate floods, but that as many as 2,789 lakes in that city are facing various stages of decay; and

CONCERNED that the existing water bodies across all six major cities in India are facing multi- level pressures – such as eutrophication, waste dumping, unloading of sewage water, siltation, encroachment, and toxic pollution from industrial effluents and bad management – and that these have threatened the existence of valuable and productive water bodies in the cities;

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

1. CALLS ON IUCN Members in India:
  - a. to adopt collaborative approaches at national, state and district level to address the threats faced by urban water bodies;
  - b. to collaborate for the protection and restoration of urban water bodies through scientific research, water quality monitoring and other relevant practices; and
  - c. to raise awareness of the importance of protection, restoration, and conservation of urban water bodies; and
2. URGES the Government of India (GoI):
  - a. to take all measures necessary to protect, restore and sustainably use urban water bodies, focusing especially on the water bodies located in major cities;
  - b. to give special attention to monitoring the quality of existing water bodies and enabling robust measures to mitigate threats; and
  - c. to incorporate the protection and sustainable use of urban water bodies as one of the top priorities in GoI's 100 Smart Cities Plan.

**State and agency Members of the United States** abstained during the vote on this motion for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.