

## **WCC-2016-Res-045-EN**

### **Protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes**

RECOGNISING the critical role that primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, play in maintaining biodiversity, providing ecosystem goods and services on which human society depends, and contributing to national development and advancement of the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

NOTING that these forests are also vital for the protection of indigenous cultures and livelihoods and nurturing people living in poor, marginalised communities;

NOTING that primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, are irreplaceable in terms of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services including clean water;

FURTHER NOTING that intact forest landscapes in tropical, temperate and boreal biomes contain globally significant carbon stocks, and that primary forests have significantly more carbon than degraded and fragmented forests;

HIGHLIGHTING that the Paris Agreement reached at the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21) recognised the importance of ensuring ecosystem integrity and the role of forests in sequestering and storing carbon;

ACKNOWLEDGING the varying definitions of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, in the literature, international conventions and domestic legislation;

NOTING with concern that the loss, degradation and fragmentation of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, continues at very high rates in tropical, temperate and boreal forests;

FURTHER NOTING that it is significantly more cost-effective to protect primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, than to restore them once they have been degraded or fragmented, and that full ecosystem restoration is often not possible; and

RECALLING Resolution 5.060 *Strengthening the role of IUCN in saving the world's primary forests* (Jeju, 2012), WELCOMING the work carried out to date by the IUCN Primary Forest Task Team assembled to identify a strategy for implementing Resolution 5.060, and LOOKING FORWARD to the Team's continued work through 2016 and beyond;

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

1. REQUESTS that the Director General ensures that the conservation of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, is an integral component of the implementation of the IUCN Programme 2017-2020;
2. REQUESTS that the Director General continue the work of the IUCN Primary Forest Task Team in support of Resolution 5.060, including the following additional objectives:
  - a. developing a draft policy statement to be approved by Council on the importance of the conservation of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, taking fully into account conceptual and operational issues with defining these terms so that they are broadly applicable to all forest types, including consideration of how their conservation can contribute to IUCN's nature-based solutions;
  - b. examining mechanisms, opportunities for, and barriers to the protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes;
  - c. encouraging Commissions to address primary forest conservation in their work programmes;
  - d. identifying the distinct importance and benefits of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, for Commissions and their members to provide clarity on why these terms are included in this Resolution and to raise awareness of their critical importance and benefits; and

- e. engaging with Commissions to provide guidance to their members on how to operationally identify and monitor primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, in a manner that is globally consistent and ecologically relevant in all global forest ecosystems; and
3. ENCOURAGES States, the private sector and international financial institutions to:
- a. avoid loss and degradation of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes;
  - b. promote conservation of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, in their development planning, Nationally Determined Contributions, and implementation of the CBD and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);
  - c. increase efforts to establish large, connected primary forest protected areas, while at all times fully implementing rights-based approaches; and
  - d. meaningfully engage and support indigenous peoples and local communities in their efforts to conserve primary forests, including intact forest landscapes.