

Halting biodiversity loss in the insular Caribbean

WELCOMING recent reports concerning the biodiversity crisis, such as the:

- Fourth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4, 2014);
- WWF Living Planet Report (2018);
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019);
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* (2018);
- Caribbean Regional Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Climate Resilience (2018); and
- The paper *Haiti's biodiversity threatened by nearly complete loss of primary forest* published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) of the United States of America (2018);

RECOGNISING that islands of the Caribbean harbour an important part of the unique biodiversity of the planet;

RECALLING that the insular Caribbean is considered among the five most important biodiversity hotspots, globally;

FURTHER RECALLING that a significant number of Key Biodiversity Areas (434) are in the insular Caribbean;

CONCERNED about the high and increasing number of threatened species included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and national red lists;

RECOGNISING that the main driver of threats to biodiversity in the region is the destruction and/or fragmentation of habitats;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that invasive species in the region are increasing and expanding;

ALSO RECOGNISING that the impacts of the global climate crisis are added to existing pressures on biodiversity;

AWARE that the components of biodiversity are essential for the proper functioning of ecosystems and their provision of environmental services;

NOTING that well-managed protected areas represent the most cost-effective way of adapting to climate change;

ALSO NOTING that the economy of the Caribbean, as well as its freshwater and food security, depend on the basis of its biodiversity resources;

RECALLING that Caribbean countries and territories are signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), in particular the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (also known as the Cartagena Convention), as the main regional legal instrument implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, through which they commit to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and

FURTHER RECALLING the commitment of the region to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. REQUESTS states, as well as regional and international organisations responsible for environmental and economic sustainability issues, to strengthen actions to halt biodiversity loss in the insular Caribbean by:

- a. strictly enforcing the application of national regulations and MEAs especially the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region and its protocols;
- b. mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in planning mechanisms at local, regional and national levels;
- c. recognising the importance of the well-being of ecosystems in natural protected areas, and their importance for ecosystem services and adaptation to climate change;
- d. strengthening environmental impact assessment mechanisms;

e. incorporating conservation mechanisms into working lands and urban areas to increase protection at landscape scale; and

f. increasing national commitments and budgets for biodiversity management;

2. ENCOURAGES:

a. countries to ratify the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region and its Protocol, in particular the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol, if they haven't already done so;

b. the strengthening of the various ongoing efforts of the Cartagena Convention and its SPAW Protocol; and

c. stakeholders, including institutions, NGOs, and companies, to engage with and support the various SPAW programmes and working groups; and

3. ENCOURAGES all stakeholders, including governments, national and local institutions, to:

a. form a Caribbean Coalition for Biodiversity, which will focus on fields not under the jurisdiction of the Cartagena Convention and in close cooperation with it, with support from any organisation that adheres to the mission and goals of the Coalition;

b. strengthen and promote the development of young scientists within the Caribbean islands, inter-island cooperation, and the development of awareness-raising actions, particularly participatory science approaches; and

c. support the IUCN Caribbean Regional Committee and the implementation of the IUCN Programme 2021–2024 at regional, national and local levels.