

Strengthening great ape conservation across countries, in and outside of protected areas, involving local actors

ACKNOWLEDGING that the seven species of great apes, our closest relatives, native to 21 countries in Africa and two countries in Southeast Asia, are all ranked as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, that all are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and that gorillas and chimpanzees are included in Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS);

RECOGNISING their intrinsic value and their role as flagship, umbrella and keystone species for biodiversity conservation;

CONCERNED by the 70% decline of the great ape populations since 1980 and by the numerous threats, varying in each country in their nature, extent and magnitude, but all caused by habitat loss and fragmentation due to industrial agriculture, mining, logging and major infrastructure projects, human-wildlife conflict, poaching for bushmeat, illegal live animal trade and diseases;

RECOGNISING that wild great apes living in their natural habitats can provide significant benefits to national economies of the range states, and to indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and that their principal habitat – tropical forest – is one of the most important reservoirs of biodiversity and plays a major role in mitigating global climate change;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the role of the Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group (SSC PSG) and the existence of the United Nations Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP);

CONSIDERING that Aichi Biodiversity Target 12 under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) aims to prevent by 2020 the extinction of known threatened species, and to improve and maintain their conservation status, particularly of those experiencing the greatest declines;

RECALLING that the New York Declaration on Forests (2014) and the Amsterdam Declarations on deforestation and palm oil (2015) engaged states and private companies to support, by 2020, a fully sustainable production chain by stopping illegal deforestation and forest loss associated with agricultural production such as that for palm oil and paper; and

RECOGNISING that, except for the mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei* ssp. *beringei*), conservation efforts for great apes have failed to prevent continuing declines, and that, as such, the 2020 commitments have yet to be achieved;

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

1. CALLS FOR the creation, by 2022, of Pan-African and Southeast Asian networks based on local non-governmental organisations, IPLCs and local researchers, similar to the Alliance for the Conservation of Great Apes in Central Africa (A-GSAC);
2. REQUESTS that these networks protect great apes in and outside of protected areas, develop long-term surveys of great ape populations (monitoring their size and viability), and contribute to local development;
3. CALLS ON all countries and the private sector, including lending banks, to avoid initiating/financing/supporting/promoting agricultural, mining, forestry and infrastructure projects that impact great ape habitat and to establish and implement policies against trade of products deriving from deforestation;
4. REQUESTS states with wild or captive great apes, states that are involved in the transit of meat or live apes, and states that are the final destination of meat or live apes, to take immediate measures, including appropriate domestic regulations, to stop all illegal trade and to prohibit the capture of wild great apes;
5. CALLS ON the great ape range states and the international community to ensure that the governance of great ape conservation involves local actors and that they be technically and financially supported in their conservation actions through an increase of public and private funds and through the development of innovative financing systems; and
6. ASKS FOR collaboration between the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), CMS, SSC PSG, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to organise, in

2021, a high-level meeting, back-to-back with the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5), to aid all range states to implement, by 2022, an international action plan for great ape conservation, together with the aforementioned network of local actors.