

**Declaration of priority for the conservation of tropical dry forests in South America**

RECOGNISING that Tropical Dry Forests (TDFs) are extremely fragile and vulnerable to the current contexts of transformation and to scenarios of the intensification of droughts and fire, and that they are home to unique organisms adapted to conditions of water stress, important in the strategies of adaptation to climate change;

OBSERVING that the knowledge on biodiversity and ecological functioning of TDFs is insufficient and that over 97% of the current plant cover in this ecosystem are in danger of extinction on a global level as a result of different threats due to land-use changes and climate change;

CONSIDERING that 54% of all the world's TDFs are found in the Americas, particularly in South America, and that only 5% of these forests are legally protected;

HIGHLIGHTING the fact that in countries such as Colombia and Ecuador, only 8% and 2% respectively of the original TDFs remain, and that there are still large sectors such as the Chiquitano Dry Forest, the Cerrado and the Gran Chaco (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay), where the deforestation rates are increasing and alarming;

CONSIDERING the importance of conserving the Chaco, since it is the only ecoregion outside the Amazon region that still contains uncontacted people living in voluntary isolation, from the indigenous Ayoreo people, between Bolivia and Paraguay;

INDICATING that the recent studies based on the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems indicate that in the Americas TDFs are in danger of collapsing, and that in the dry period of 2019 over two million hectares were burnt, above all in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay;

AWARE that 66% of the freshwater reservoirs in the Americas are associated with TDFs, and that over 100 million people depend on these ecosystems, with them being sources of food security for indigenous peoples and communities;

RECALLING that most of the past IUCN Resolutions linked to the conservation of forests and forest landscapes (for example Resolution 016 *Tropical Forests* (Ashkhabad, 1978), Recommendation 029 *Tropical Forest Alteration and Species Extinctions* (Perth, 1990) and Resolution 061 *IUCN Strategy for tropical forest ecosystems of Amazonia and Congo Basins and South East Asia basins* (Jeju, 2012)) focus on temperate forest or rainforest ecosystems; and

FURTHER RECALLING that IUCN has Resolutions that highlight the value of the protection of primary forests (Resolution 045 *Protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes* (Hawai'i, 2016)), and the danger of deforestation and soil degradation related to deforestation and climate change (Recommendation 134 *Responding to deforestation and land degradation related to climate change and desertification* (Barcelona, 2008));

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

ASKS the Director General to:

a. call on all States, and in particular those in South America to:

i. make efforts to assess the conservation status of TDF ecosystems, involving indigenous peoples and local communities and following the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems protocols;

ii. determine the biological and economic value of the ecosystem functions of these forests in socioeconomic development and adaptation to climate change strategies;

iii. establish as a priority the increase in the amount of TDF land protected by various legal mechanisms; and

iv. promote economic and social incentive processes and mechanisms to safeguard TDFs in sustainable agricultural production schemes;

b. urge the United Nations international organisations and programmes, especially the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), to

take into account the fragile condition and state of deterioration of TDFs in South America and establish and/or promote joint agendas that include actions for the conservation, effective management, restoration and sustainable use of these ecosystems involving indigenous peoples and local communities; and

c. call on the IUCN Regional Office for South America (IUCN-Sur) and the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) to promote a regional strategy, through one or more events, with the participation of the Members, specialists in ecology and the effective management of TDFs, and indigenous peoples and local communities, aimed at exerting an influence on States, the private sector and civil society in order to help support the conservation of these ecosystems.