

Preventing conflicts of interest related to chemicals and plant protection products

WISHING to maintain public confidence in the authorities providing advice or helping to make decisions on the production, launching and dissemination of chemical or plant protection products that can be harmful to public health or animals, and the environment, in particular soil, water, flora, fauna, pollinating insects and other living organisms;

NOTING that these authorities do not always have resources or independent scientific data, or because of conflicts of interest between experts and companies or sectors manufacturing, marketing or using these products;

OBSERVING that funding policies give priority to applied research at the expense of basic research, thus increasing the risk of conflicts of interest within the scientific community that is asked to provide expertise;

NOTING that numerous treaties, in particular the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), include provisions on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest and have led to the establishment of rules and procedures in this area;

NOTING however, that the mechanisms designed for this purpose in national and international law lack coherence and still do not include sufficient laws to prevent or manage conflicts of interest;

CONVINCED of the need to generalise and reinforce legal arrangements aimed at preventing and managing conflicts of interest that could affect the independence of experts in the field of environmental conservation and health; and

IN THE SPIRIT that led the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) to support the establishment of a Global Pact for the Environment, aimed at giving a binding legal value to the principles of international environmental law;

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

1. CALLS ON IUCN Members to ensure that national laws and regional and international conventions contain measures to prevent and manage conflicts of interest regarding experts' advice on decision making with respect to the manufacture, launching and dissemination of chemical or plant protection products that may be harmful to the environment or to health; and
2. CALLS ON the WCEL to provide technical advice on this matter to the membership.