

**WCC-2020-Res-014-EN**

**The importance of a cross-border approach to prioritise biodiversity conservation, adaptation to climate change and risk management in the Río de la Plata Basin**

AWARE that the Río de la Plata Basin is the second largest in South America, and measures 3,300,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with over 100 million inhabitants in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay;

OBSERVING that its three large tributaries, the River Paraná, the River Paraguay and the River Uruguay, receive water from rivers of great importance in the continent such as the rivers Pilcomayo, Bermejo, Paraguay, Iguazú, Negro, Salado, Carcarañá, Gualeguay, Arapey, etc.;

ALSO OBSERVING that these waters flow into the Río de la Plata Estuary, where there are cities with a total of over 13 million inhabitants, representing over 10% of the entire population in the macro-region;

BEARING IN MIND that this complex network of rivers, streams and wetlands constitutes the main Guaraní Aquifer recharge system, which provides drinking water to part of the abovementioned population and forms part of an important migratory route for Nearctic waders in the centre of the continent;

CONSIDERING that despite the efforts made to conserve the biodiversity in the region, these areas include extremely fragile ecosystems, and that, due to the whole range of bioclimatic landscapes and the size of the territory, the knowledge of biodiversity is incomplete;

AWARE that the upper Río de la Plata Basin displays one of the most notable fragmentations in basins worldwide, mainly due to a change in the use of land for agriculture and livestock farming, which is a driver of change in ecosystems in the Río de la Plata Basin, in addition to the consequences of the impact of climate variability and extreme events such as floods and droughts that affect large tracts of land, ecosystems and cities in the basin, increasing the vulnerability of the populations involved, also considering the high number of small dams planned;

CONCERNED about the impact in the region of extensive extractive and productive activities and the growing and alarming deforestation rate; and

RECALLING Recommendation 2.85 *Conservation of Middle and Lower Parana River* (Amman, 2000); Recommendation 3.097 *Conservation of the Wetland Corridor of the Fluvial Littoral, Argentina* (Bangkok, 2004); Resolutions 4.029 *Conservation and sustainable use of fish in the Río de la Plata Basin* and 4.004 *Strengthening IUCN's institutional presence in South America* (both adopted in Barcelona, 2008); and Resolution 5.070 *Río de la Plata Basin wetlands regional initiative* (Jeju, 2012);

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

ASKS the Director General of IUCN to:

a. call on South American States to:

i. increase their efforts to assess and conserve the Río de la Plata Basin ecosystems, weighing up the rationalisation of human resources and skills and contributing to sustainable development;

ii. limit the rapid expansion of the industrial agricultural frontier, to the detriment of the indigenous territories, including those of the Ayoreo People who live in voluntary isolation, in the best interests of the conservation of the ecological functions of the Río de la Plata Basin and its ecosystems' contributions to humans;

iii. promote policies to manage transboundary resources favouring an ecosystem-based approach, aimed at the use of transboundary waters in an equitable, reasonable and optimal manner, considering the principles of "profit sharing" and "eliminating damage in the context of joint responsibility";

iv. conserve the Paraguay-Paraná River Corridor as a global reference system based on its conditions of free flow and the connectivity of flood plains;

v. develop a comprehensive review of the dams planned in the upper Pantanal, bearing in mind their possible impact and their contribution to the network's energy efficiency;

vi. develop strategies to strengthen the capacities of civil society and governments in the management of aquatic ecosystems and their ecotones, as well as cities, in order to foster the empowerment and development of resilient communities, in a context marked by change and climate variability;

vii. design an integrated approach for the comprehensive risk management of disasters and the adaptation to climate change and to take measures aimed at promoting the conservation and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, the adaptation of cities, the reduction of risks for vulnerable populations, applying nature-based solutions with a focus on the Basin and actions aimed at vulnerable ecosystems, cities and communities; and

viii. establish as a priority the increase in protected areas in various legal forms, taking into account the participation of young people and women who are considered to be a fundamental element in the implementation of the planned measures as well as pillars of the culture of the Basin inhabitants;

b. urge the international organisations and programmes carried out by the United Nations, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to prioritise solutions that address the high fragility and deteriorated state of the ecosystems in the Río de la Plata Basin and to establish and/or promote joint agendas that include actions to strengthen the knowledge about and conservation of these ecosystems and to strengthen the communities; and to promote an interinstitutional and transboundary platform for the socio-environmental monitoring of the Basin with standardised indicators, and trustworthy reports and journals on state of integrity of the ecosystems; and

c. ask the IUCN Regional Office for South America (IUCN-Sur) and the relevant Commissions to promote regional events, with the participation of the Members and specialists to ensure greater understanding of the complex systems to support the life in and the vulnerabilities of the Basin.