

Valuing and protecting inland fisheries

RECOGNISING that inland fisheries are a critical source of food security for nearly a billion people, particularly in developing countries;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that inland fisheries have an estimated economic value of US\$ 38–44 billion;

ALSO RECOGNISING the potential co-benefits among fishing communities, fish biodiversity and environmental integrity through sustainable inland fisheries;

NOTING that more than 60 million people globally are directly employed in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, and that women play a particularly large role in the secondary sector;

MINDFUL that inland fisheries are frequently degraded by other freshwater sector activities that alter the health of freshwater ecosystems;

AWARE that inland fisheries are data limited, hence underrepresented in planning;

CONCERNED that the productivity of inland fisheries is gravely threatened by habitat degradation, flow management, overharvesting, and climate change;

FURTHER CONCERNED that inland fisheries may be insufficiently addressed in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with SDG 14 (Life below Water) focused on marine fisheries, and SDG 15 (Life on Land) worded so that the value of inland fisheries may be missed in development plans;

AWARE that Aichi Biodiversity Target 6, addressing sustainable harvesting of fishes, is generally applied to marine rather than freshwater fisheries, as evidenced by the marine focus of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 'Scientific Assessment of Progress towards Aichi Target 6';

CONFIRMING the need for integrated river basin management for improving access to affordable food, such as through fisheries, as requested by Resolution 4.065 *Freshwater biodiversity conservation, protected areas, and management of transboundary waters* (Barcelona, 2008);

RECALLING that Resolution 5.106 *Safeguarding the contribution of wild living resources and ecosystems to food security* (Jeju, 2012) highlights that unsustainable use of wild living resources or ecosystems for food systems leads to a decline in biodiversity and ultimately undermines people's food security; and

REITERATING guidance contained in Resolution 2.29 *IUCN Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources* (Amman, 2000) that enhancing sustainability of wild living resources, like inland fish, requires on-going improved management;

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

1. URGES the IUCN Director General, Commissions, Members and states to:

- a. support more explicit inclusion of inland fisheries in the post-2020 biodiversity framework, especially through the post-2020 zero draft target 5 (ensure by 2030 that the harvesting, trade and use of wild species, is legal and at sustainable levels) or through the finalised equivalent of this target, and through reference to inland fisheries in SDG Targets 14.4, and 14.6 (regulate harvesting and prohibit subsidies contributing to overfishing), or in 15.1 (sustainable use of freshwater ecosystems);
- b. support assessment of inland fisheries in the SDGs, such that the national status of inland fisheries should not decline from their current state, or should be improved where the existing state is degraded;
- c. enhance the collection of data to document the status and trends of inland fisheries; and
- d. strengthen IUCN's focus on sustainable inland fisheries as part of IUCN's programmes on species, water and ecosystem management;

2. REQUESTS the Commission on Ecosystem Management Fisheries Expert Group to address equally both inland and marine fisheries; and

3. CALLS ON government agencies to:

- a. support ecosystem-based management of inland fisheries;

b. adopt recommendations made in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization 'Rome Declaration for Responsible Inland Fisheries'; and

c. consult local fishing communities at the start of planning infrastructure projects that impact their inland fisheries.