

**Seascapes working for biodiversity conservation**

RECOGNISING that oceans harbour substantial biodiversity that is threatened by pollution and other anthropogenic impacts, such as climate change and unsustainable fishing practices;

NOTING that waters outside protected areas represent substantial biodiversity conservation potential in their own right, interact ecologically with protected areas, and therefore are equally important for conservation, hence emphasis on “mainstreaming biodiversity” in the 2016 UN Biodiversity Conference in Cancun;

CONCERNED that failure to address socio-economic needs in management will compromise food security and livelihoods, exacerbate resistance to conservation, and perpetuate ecological degradation;

ALSO CONCERNED that climate change creates new challenges for oceans, raising the imperative for immediate, decisive and comprehensive responses;

AWARE that fishing is reliant on ocean productivity to support livelihoods, food security, nutrition and heritage, but can have significant ecological impacts and is especially vulnerable to climate change;

MINDFUL that many fisheries lack sufficient management attention or management capacity, making it harder to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

NOTING that small-scale fisheries (SSF) have special socio-economic importance and need community-based approaches;

ALSO MINDFUL that management of many fisheries, other uses of the marine environment, and protected areas are not well coordinated for supporting a holistic and integrated management approach accounting for all impacts on biodiversity and human needs;

EQUALLY MINDFUL that well-managed sustainable fishing practices, with regulations adapted to the possibilities of each area and with the necessary scientific knowledge and control, allow, as has been demonstrated, the sustainability of fishery resources and the environment in which they develop, while simultaneously benefiting coastal communities;

WELCOMING the highlighting of sustainable use in development of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the recognition that other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) can promote biodiversity conservation;

ALSO WELCOMING the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 as a response to the need for knowledge and scientific capacity for biodiversity conservation; and

NOTING that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 recognises the importance of ocean ecosystems, and that other SDGs highlight the socio-economic needs to be met through ocean conservation;

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

1. ENCOURAGES the establishment of a Working Seascapes Initiative under the auspices of the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) Fisheries Expert Group to support technical analysis, stakeholder engagement, convening of practitioners, capacity building and information sharing to achieve the objectives set out below;

2. SUPPORTS collaboration among IUCN Members and components, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other stakeholders and governance bodies in development and implementation of the recommendations of the Working Seascapes Initiative; and

3. ENCOURAGES states to support targets and strategies for ocean conservation in the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework that:

a. recognise fishing as a substantial impact on marine biodiversity, affecting large numbers of people and facing important governance challenges, while also emphasising its contribution to supporting livelihoods, food security, nutrition and heritage;

b. seek innovative scientific, technological and governance approaches to balance trade-offs among fishing and other uses of the marine environment, and to benefit biodiversity conservation;

- c. recognise sustainable use as a key element in biodiversity conservation, such that human use supports both environmental and socio-economic needs;
- d. strengthen capacity for implementation, enforcement, monitoring and reporting on targets;
- e. define clear principles for achieving climate resilience in marine ecosystems and human communities;  
and
- f. result in comprehensive biodiversity conservation plans that are consistent with the SDGs, aligned with relevant policy instruments, and cover all of the world ocean by 2030.