WCC-2020-Res-030-EN
Enhancing the resilience of coastal areas in the face of climate change, biodiversity crisis and rapid coastal development

TAKING NOTE of the findings of the Special Reports on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C and related emission paths (Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C) and on the Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of coastal marine biodiversity and ecosystems and their role for Climate Change resilience from the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);

CONSIDERING the rapid littoralisation observed worldwide, as an effect of drivers such as demographic growth, urban sprawl, maritime trade, port installations, and industrialisation, generating pressures that affect coastal ecosystems;

NOTING the changes in risk and vulnerability resulting from factors including climate change, environmental degradation and the concentration of human population and infrastructure in some areas exposed to marine hazards;

RECALLING the irreversible loss of natural infrastructure (sand dunes, beaches, coral reefs, coastal forests and mangroves, tidal and salt marshes, etc.) may be caused by land use transformation and exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change;

RECOGNISING the contribution of natural green infrastructure to risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience building;

ALSO NOTING the disparity between funds invested in post-storm coastal defences between traditional grey infrastructure and natural green infrastructure;

ALSO RECOGNISING the proven efficiency, in most cases, reversibility and limited costs of nature-based solutions, ecological engineering and restoration, and the value of hybrid solutions associating green to grey;

NOTING recent orientations towards hybrid solutions and infrastructures integrating ecological services;

FURTHER NOTING that coastal infrastructure projects developed worldwide are not consistently framed by environmental and social safeguards, impact assessments and eligibility criteria;

RECALLING the necessity to increase effective coastal protected area networks to reduce the impacts of rapid development on coastal ecosystems;

WELCOMING the implementation of Resolution 5.028 *Conservation of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and its threatened waterbirds, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea* (Jeju, 2012), including the call for establishment of a global coastal forum by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS – Resolution 12.25, 2017), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Resolution XIII.20, 2018) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD – Decision 14/30, 2018) facilitating establishment of coastal wetland site networks, development of guidance on conservation management of working coastal wetlands and restoration of coastal wetlands; and

APPRECIATING the contributions of the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) Coastal Specialist Group;

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

1. RECOMMENDS that the Director General and Commissions:

a. increase their efforts to promote coastal resilience by providing tools for anticipatory coastal planning and nature-based adaptation, risk reduction and resilience building;

b. collaborate with interested donors and governments to strengthen the impact assessments and safeguards applied to coastal projects; and

c. support the establishment of a global coastal forum to facilitate establishment of coastal site networks, including World Heritage and Ramsar sites, and development of guidance on conservation management of working coastal wetlands and on restoration of coastal ecosystems;

2. RECOMMENDS that coastal planners and managers, as appropriate:

a. conduct prospective studies to support adaptive planning to climate change and early decision-making, taking into account the precautionary approach, and ensure long-term monitoring of the footprint of maritime activities and coastal dynamics, for example by developing dedicated observation structures on the marine environment available to local players;

b. adopt no-regret climate change adaptation as a basic principle of coastal resilience, recognising the effectivity and efficiency of anticipated decisions to reducing community vulnerability to hazards;

c. implement set-back strategies by promoting, for example, the use of land intervention on the coast, to reduce risks and enable ecosystem restoration and nature-based adaptation;

d. develop approaches to ascribe value to protected areas and natural infrastructure as key assets in land-use and climate change adaptation policies; and

e. preserve the resilience of coastal zones by relying on planning strategies and urban planning documents;

3. RECOMMENDS that development banks, donors and other financial institutions:

a. identify and apply appropriate safeguards to projects considering the specificity of coastal areas;

b. where appropriate and applicable, apply specific evaluation criteria to coastal projects in order to promote nature-based, reversible and hybrid solutions while taking into account the precautionary approach;

c. where appropriate, undertake impact evaluations on all projects, especially in the case of grey infrastructure projects, regardless of scale, comparing potential green or hybrid alternatives; and

d. where appropriate, for insurance organisations to adapt their grid of criteria and scales to better take into account the benefits of nature-based solutions; and

4. RECOMMENDS that Marine Protected Area (MPA) managers:

a. incorporate resilience into management plans and management effectiveness evaluation processes; and

b. participate in increasing the extent of MPA networks in fast-changing coastal areas in order to maintain green areas and enhance the long-term resilience of coastal ecosystems.