

Ecological integrity in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

RECOGNISING that ecosystems are declining at an unprecedented rate globally;

RECALLING that ecological integrity or its converse, degradation of ecosystems, is included within soft law (e.g. 1992 Rio Declaration) and international agreements (e.g. the Paris Agreement on Climate Change);

RECALLING that Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have agreed on the value of ecosystem integrity to climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including adoption of relevant guidance on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the 14th Meeting of Conference of Parties to CBD (COP14, Egypt, 2018);

FURTHER RECALLING that 'ecosystem integrity' is mentioned in CBD Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 on climate-vulnerable ecosystems and recognised as a criterion of the Key Biodiversity Areas Standard, endorsed by the last IUCN Congress (Hawai'i, 2016);

NOTING that the Red List of Ecosystems provides an approach to evaluating the ecological integrity of the most vulnerable biomes and ecosystems;

FURTHER NOTING that the Parties to the CBD will adopt a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will drive action for the conservation of biodiversity for at least the next decade;

ALSO NOTING that ecosystem integrity refers to the presence of viable and ecologically functional species populations within sufficient quality and extent of habitat, and that this concept underpins biodiversity conservation as well as other environmental values including carbon storage and sequestration, and fisheries replenishment;

RECOGNISING that ecosystem integrity is critical for the livelihoods and cultural expression of many indigenous peoples, many of whom depend on intact ecosystems;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the important role that livelihoods and local communities may play in maintaining or restoring ecological integrity;

AWARE of clear evidence that highly intact ecosystems are Earth's remaining strongholds for species with declining populations in parts of their range where development and resource extraction pressures are high, and are increasingly valuable in a time of climate change due to their higher levels of resilience, and provide enhanced services for human well-being; and

FURTHER AWARE that Earth's ecological integrity depends on intact ecosystems and connectivity between them, and therefore intactness, connectivity and species migration require increased international cooperation and must be addressed through any new global biodiversity framework;

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

1. CALLS UPON IUCN Members, Governments, NGOs, indigenous peoples and intergovernmental organisations, to work with CBD Party governments and other stakeholders to ensure that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the 15th Meeting of Conference of Parties to CBD (COP15, China):

a. recognises that maintaining and restoring ecological integrity is critically important and on a par with preventing the conversion of ecosystems, as a measure to address the biodiversity and climate crises, ensure resilience, and maintain other values critical to sustainable development;

b. includes an explicit, measurable target to maintain the current levels of, and where possible enhance, ecological integrity in ecosystems of all types (marine, freshwater, terrestrial), especially those of high biodiversity, by ensuring they are effectively managed, at relevant scales, potentially with biome-specific goals on integrity;

c. prioritises the critical need to secure the integrity of the last-remaining highly intact ecosystems on the planet; and

d. recognises that, where levels of ecological integrity are already reduced, they should be protected from further loss, and where possible increased via restoration; and

2. CALLS UPON the Director General of IUCN, and thereby the IUCN Secretariat, to promote the elements of paragraphs 1 a to 1 d, above, in discussions, advocacy, and advice relevant to the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework through the CBD.