

Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict

NOTING that military conflict can contribute to destroying megafauna and their habitats, pushing species to extinction, reducing biodiversity and damaging the environment, and also generates the loss of geodiversity, geological heritage and places of geological interest that are also part of the environment;

FURTHER NOTING that conflicts over natural resources underpin and prolong many armed conflicts, and through unsustainable methods of extraction cause further environmental harm;

AWARE that the uncontrolled circulation of arms can exacerbate environmental damage in conflict situations, for instance, by driving unsustainable hunting of wildlife;

RECOGNISING the links between the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including poaching and illegal trafficking of wildlife and natural heritage (fossils, minerals, meteorites), and the proliferation and trafficking of arms as one of the major factors fuelling and exacerbating conflicts, as stressed in United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2136 (2014);

CONSCIOUS that long-term peace and security depends on a productive environment able to deliver the ecosystem services needed to sustain human well-being and for the fulfilment of human rights; and

RECALLING Resolution 19.41 *Armed Conflict and the Environment* (Buenos Aires, 1994);

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

1. CALLS ON the Director General to strongly encourage the United Nations Security Council to address the issue of wildlife trafficking and environmental protection in mandates for UN peacekeeping operations, as appropriate;
2. CALLS ON the global community to recognise the importance of environmental protection before, during and after armed conflicts in order to protect biodiversity and to foster peace and security;
3. CALLS ON the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) Specialist Group on Peace, Security and Conflict to develop model legislation and/or principles in line with the work undertaken by the International Law Commission, and where appropriate to help State Members protect the environment in relation to armed conflict;
4. URGES Members to engage with the work of the International Law Commission on the protection of the environment in relation to illegal armed conflicts to ensure that the Commission's principles adequately and appropriately address issues associated with sustaining ecosystems and preventing biodiversity loss;
5. URGES State Members to use the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and the Arms Trade Treaty to address the uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons, and their use in poaching and wildlife crime in regions affected by armed conflicts; and
6. CALLS ON Members to conduct scientific research to improve understanding of the impacts of armed conflicts on the environment and broader socio-ecological systems.