

Mainstreaming the Cerrado in international cooperation and global environmental funds

RECALLING that in more than 30 countries around the world semi-forest or non-forest ecosystems cover about 25% of the Earth's land area and are of key importance for the sustainable livelihoods of present and future generations;

OBSERVING that, in a context of international scrutiny, important efforts are being made to conserve tropical forests, yet the destruction of the savannahs advances with increasing leaps, and that the lack of funding and attention to achieving the Cerrado's conservation needs to be addressed;

NOTING that the Cerrado is poorly protected (8.26%), far from meeting the Aichi Target, and has already lost about 50% of its native vegetation cover through land-use changes, mainly for livestock and agriculture;

CONSIDERING the weak environmental governance and increased focus on the Amazon biome and other forest systems in international market compliance mechanisms and supply-chain regulations;

HIGHLIGHTING that substantial investments are needed to address drivers of biodiversity losses and land-use changes, to promote sustainable rehabilitation of degraded areas and restoration of native vegetation, and to create the enabling environment for sustainable practices;

KNOWING that it is imperative to cover glaring gaps in the international policy and financial models for savannahs to maintain the functions of non-forest tropical ecosystems that are vital in environmental, economic and social terms;

RECOGNISING that the Cerrado – extending over 2 million square kilometers across Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia – is the second largest integral biome in Latin America, the most biodiverse savannah on the planet, and provides key ecosystem services such as water provision, climate regulation and food production;

BEARING IN MIND the key contributions of local communities, including traditional and indigenous peoples, in addition to other forms of environmental and social protection, to the maintenance of these vital ecosystem functions; and

STRESSING that there is still no dedicated financial mechanism to support conservation and restoration strategies for the Cerrado, only different funding arrangements that need to be negotiated for each phase to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and which are hard to access for local stakeholders;

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

ASKS the Director General to:

- a. recommend to the governments of Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay that they take immediate action to increase the representation of the Cerrado in their protected area networks and promote strategies and mechanisms of land-use planning that safeguard the ecological integrity of the biome in the long term;
- b. call on the European Commission and European Union (EU) Member States to include semi-forest or non-forest ecosystems in the scope of the 'EU Communication (2019) on stepping up EU Action to protect and restore the world's forests', mostly to:
 - i. assess additional demand-side regulatory and non-regulatory measures to ensure deforestation-free supply chains, associated with commodity imports in the EU;
 - ii. help partner countries to implement sustainable forest and non-forest-based value chains and promote sustainable bio-economies; and
 - iii. develop and implement incentive mechanisms for smallholder farmers to maintain and enhance ecosystem services and products provided by sustainable management and agriculture;
- c. mobilise the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to:
 - i. allocate regular support for sustainable land-use practices in the Cerrado biome in their national projects;
 - ii. strengthen financing mechanisms, such as the Small Grants Program (SGP) funding, to broadly reach Community Based Organisations (CBO) in the Cerrado; and

- iii. promote sustainable mechanisms to catalyse regeneration of ecosystems, and to create positive incentives for investments in sustainable management and sustainable forest and non-forest-based value chains to further leverage and increase funding;
- d. encourage the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and the Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), as well as other public and private donors, to:
 - i. increase their support for the Cerrado hotspot; and
 - ii. boost positive incentives for investments in sustainable management and sustainable forest and non-forest-based value chains; and
- e. implement a more effective communication strategy and institutional approaches among international conservation community networks to:
 - i. recognise the high conservation value of the Cerrado's biodiversity endemism, and the importance of its high adaptive capacity to extreme events such as fire, drought, floods, in the global climate change scenario;
 - ii. acknowledge local communities and indigenous peoples' rights and capability to use non-forest timber products, maintaining their territories and areas in a well-conserved condition; and
 - iii. encourage the development of markets for sustainable natural products to value the ecosystem as a provider of income and cultural heritage.