

**Role of children and youth in nature conservation**

ACKNOWLEDGING the need for children and youth to be aware of environmental issues, to care about and understand them, and to take action;

AFFIRMING that children and youth, an important part of society, can and should be able to contribute to solving critical environmental issues;

RECOGNISING the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which outlines the rights of children and youth to have their voices heard regarding decisions which will impact their lives and freedom of expression, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts, and education;

RECOGNISING the central role that academic institutions, such as primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities and scientific facilities play in raising this awareness and engaging children and youth around environmental issues;

COMMENDING the work carried out by the IUCN institutions in the area of nature conservation through environmental education;

RECALLING Resolutions 5.008 *Increasing youth engagement and intergenerational partnership across and through the Union* (Jeju, 2012) and 6.084 *Environmental education and how to naturalise the spaces in educational centres for healthy development and a better childhood connection with nature* (Hawai'i, 2016), as well as student protests such as Youth Strike 4 Climate that show the social and political influence of youth;

RECALLING that the Tunza Youth Statement, emerging from the 2013 UNEP Tunza International Youth Conference, suggested that “government should introduce Education for Sustainable Development in formal education curriculums”;

ALSO RECALLING Resolution 6.085 *Connecting people with nature globally* (Hawai'i 2016), which recognised the potential of technology in engaging youth to learn about and connect with nature as well as sharing experiences with each other; and

CONSIDERING that children and youth in urban areas may have fewer opportunities to engage in nature-based (outdoor) activities, that online and offline resources and practical experience on community based approaches can be an efficient way for children to learn about nature, and that existing and new technologies can provide innovative and captivating ways to engage children and young people and to prepare urban children and youth to care about nature and experiences in nature;

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

1. ENCOURAGES State Members, or levels of government with responsibility for education, as appropriate, to draft and enact legislation or adopt other relevant effective measures to:

a. incorporate environmental education into the formal curriculum, with both online and offline components, and with the participation of responsible parties; and

b. incorporate child and youth engagement into policy making, recognising their respective rights, valuing young professionals, and respecting different forms of child and youth-initiated actions, such as petitions and strikes; and

2. Requests all Members, and all levels of government responsible for education, to increase their commitment to education of children and young people in environmental matters, including by:

a. facilitating the participation of educational establishments and academic institutions, including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, in global networks and ‘twinning’ relationships designed to connect children and youth in different parts of the world as a means to improving education and awareness around all aspects of the environment, biodiversity and climate change issues, through work and study exchange;

b. developing public information specifically designed for and oriented towards children and youth, including through websites and other online and offline platforms;

c. integrating online and offline activities and promoting innovative technologies that encourage education on nature, biodiversity, climate change and environmental issues;

d. incorporating education and formal and non-formal urban and peripheral green areas into cities as spaces to increase people's contact with nature and as a strategy to promote knowledge of biodiversity and the physical and mental health of city dwellers, particularly children and youth; and

e. developing community-based approaches to encourage the participation of children and youth, vulnerable groups and women, including through family-based nature activities.