

**Importance for the conservation of nature of removing barriers to rights-based voluntary family planning**

NOTING that the United Nations estimated global human population at 7.7 billion in 2019 and forecasts that the 2050 population will be between 8.9 billion (low variant projection) and 10.6 billion (high variant projection);

MINDFUL that the 2050 medium variant projection (9.7 billion) is commonly cited, but is only one possibility;

CONCERNED that physical, educational, social, cultural and other barriers to rights-based voluntary family planning prevent access to and use of contraception;

NOTING that barriers exist in all countries and are often greatest in rural areas, where conservation takes place;

NOTING that 232 million women in low- and middle-income countries are not using modern contraception despite wanting to delay or avoid pregnancy and that global estimates of unintended pregnancy suggest hundreds of millions of women would have fewer children and/or begin motherhood later if they faced no barriers to contraception;

AWARE that future population size is greatly influenced by reproductive healthcare provision provided now, and that removing barriers to rights-based voluntary family planning now would have significant impacts on long-term population size and therefore reduce some pressures on the environment;

AWARE that unintended pregnancy can restrict ability to engage in natural-resource management and conservation action as well as limiting education and income-generating potential;

RECALLING the 1994 agreement at the International Conference on Population and Development on links between population, sustainable development and the need for universal access to reproductive health services, based on the right to decide for one's self whether and when to have children;

NOTING target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies, and programmes"; and

AWARE that the impacts of human population growth on biodiversity are stated in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by 64 of the 69 countries with the greatest barriers to family planning;

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

1. REQUESTS that an inter-Commission Task Force be formed by the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), the Species Survival Commission (SSC), and other interested Commissions, supported by the Margaret Pyke Trust, to assist IUCN to develop guidance on how and why removing barriers to rights-based voluntary family planning can strengthen conservation outcomes in addition to promoting the health, well-being and empowerment of women and girls;
2. CALLS ON State Members to consider including the importance of rights-based voluntary family planning in their NBSAPs and other national planning documents that draw attention to the impact of human population growth on ecosystems and ecosystem services;
3. URGES Members to consider:
  - a. internal training and awareness programmes on how improved reproductive health benefits women's and girls' health and empowerment, reduces pressures on ecosystems and ecosystem services, and enhances sustainable development, and how such issues can be included in project planning; and
  - b. partnerships with health organisations to pilot or plan a population, health and environment (PHE) programme (a conservation model integrating sustainable and alternative conservation livelihood actions with reproductive health improvements, benefiting human and ecosystem health), this being a critical project model in areas where removing barriers to rights-based voluntary family planning can improve conservation outcomes; and
4. REQUESTS Members, donors, academics and others to encourage the implementation of PHE programmes and to ensure integrated funding streams and multi-sector collaboration.