

Ecological connectivity conservation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: from local to international levels

ALARMED that fragmentation, habitat loss and climate change gravely threaten persistence of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, as detailed in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;

AWARE that plants and animals move as part of life strategies, and that gene flow between different populations is necessary for long-term species persistence;

FURTHER AWARE that successful conservation requires interconnected ecological networks comprised of large-scale systems of core habitats (Protected Areas, Other Effective Conservation Mechanisms (OECMs) and other natural areas) connected by ecological corridors across intact and human-modified terrestrial, freshwater, intertidal, and marine environments, regardless of political borders, to sustain the ecological processes between plants, animals, and non-living components;

RECALLING over 20 related IUCN Resolutions adopted since 1996, including Resolution 6.087 *Awareness of connectivity conservation definition and guidelines* (Hawai'i, 2016);

ALSO RECALLING that Resolutions 6.051 *Ecological connectivity on the north coast of the Alboran Sea* and 6.096 *Safeguarding space for nature and securing our future: developing a post-2020 strategy* (both adopted in Hawai'i, 2016), as well as Resolutions 12.07 (Rev.COP13) *The Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species* and 12.26 (Rev.COP13) *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species* adopted by the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS COP13, India, 2020);

HIGHLIGHTING that CMS Resolution 12.26 (Rev.COP13) defined ecological connectivity as the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth;

OBSERVING the commitment under Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 towards achieving well-connected systems of protected areas, and adoption of Decisions 14/1 *Updated assessment of progress towards selected Aichi Biodiversity Targets and options to accelerate progress* and 14/8 *Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures* adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP14, Egypt, 2018);

FURTHER NOTING ecological connectivity as part of the current draft of a new international legally-binding instrument for marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

ACKNOWLEDGING that since its entry into force in 1983, CMS has been providing the primary specialised intergovernmental framework for international cooperative efforts on issues of connectivity conservation;

AWARE of the proliferation of connectivity conservation plans, including for indigenous, urban and working lands, that would benefit from globally consistent guidance for their creation, implementation and reporting;

RECOGNISING the importance of careful design and management of interconnected ecological networks to ensure they support conservation goals and do not contribute to biodiversity loss through the spread of non-native and invasive species;

FURTHER RECOGNISING publication of IUCN 'Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity through Ecological Networks and Corridors'; and

CONVINCED that these Guidelines and enhanced collaboration will deliver connectivity conservation solutions that reinforce current commitments and elevate the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be progressive, inspirational, measurable and effective;

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

1. CALLS ON the Director General to clearly integrate connectivity conservation into the IUCN Programme 2021–2024, including formal/informal cooperation, enabling policies/mechanisms, and public/private sector engagement for funding and implementation;
2. RECOMMENDS that the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) engages across the Union and works with existing and new partners to advance connectivity conservation by:

- a. exploring how to document connectivity issues between terrestrial, freshwater, intertidal and marine environments;
 - b. promoting information exchange and data collection for assessing, monitoring, and measuring ecological connectivity, and to enhance implementation of area-based and species-based commitments;
 - c. developing the evidence base, identifying and developing case studies and providing best practices and practical guidance to inform policies, laws, plans and operational instruments that support ecological connectivity and species range-shift due to climate change, while mitigating or preventing the unintended spread of invasive species;
 - d. providing technical and scientific expertise to identify key drivers, species, areas, ecosystems and processes, especially in indigenous areas, urban areas and working lands; and
 - e. supporting conservation efforts to maintain and restore connectivity;
3. CALLS ON Members to recognise the role of connectivity conservation in underpinning the planet's life-support systems and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the three objectives of the CBD, and relevant goals of other treaties and agreements, to promote and support the inclusion of connectivity conservation and international cooperation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and in other relevant initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030;
4. FURTHER CALLS ON Members to promote use of the IUCN 'Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity through Ecological Networks and Corridors';
5. INVITES Parties to the CBD, CMS, the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and other treaties/agreements, to use these Guidelines and build synergies for establishing and implementing area-based and species-based targets of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and
6. RECOMMENDS that Parties to the CBD include appropriate goals, targets and indicators on connectivity conservation, including an indicator for migratory species, in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and ensure that connectivity conservation is effectively addressed there via appropriate tools – for example, green infrastructure, international cooperation, and other implementation mechanisms.