

Building and strengthening wildlife economies in Eastern and Southern Africa

RECOGNISING that there are many successful examples from the Eastern and Southern African region of sustainable wildlife-based land uses that have helped to achieve national conservation targets and objectives while providing benefits to people;

NOTING the growing interest across the region to promote sustainable wildlife economies for the benefit of both people and biodiversity;

CONCERNED that many areas in the region, which currently support extensive wildlife economies, and which are on communal, state or privately held lands, are under threat of conversion to other land uses if they cannot compete with other viable land uses;

UNDERSTANDING that land under wildlife use requires reliable revenue streams to remain competitive and stave-off transformation to alternative land-use options that will be largely, if not wholly, incompatible with biodiversity conservation;

NOTING that photographic tourism – primarily in National Parks – can generate significant funding, thereby providing strong incentives for landowners and managers to maintain wildlife on their land;

RECOGNISING that the sustainable use of wild resources could be a vital factor in maintaining wildlife strongholds throughout Eastern and Southern Africa;

MINDFUL that there is an ever-increasing need and a decreasing window in time in which to find or develop potential alternative and more sustainable funding mechanisms to retain communal and privately held lands under some form of wildlife-based land use; and

WELCOMING that the 2019 Africa Wildlife Economy Summit in Victoria Falls raised the profile of this issue and its importance to local communities of the region, as expressed in their ‘Declaration on a New Deal for Communities, Wildlife and Natural Resources’;

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

1. CALLS ON all three pillars of IUCN in Eastern and Southern Africa to establish a One Programme Initiative, with technical support from the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, to:

a. continue to evaluate social, economic and ecological opportunities provided by wildlife-based land uses (WBLUs) for local communities, governments and the private sector;

b. investigate the barriers and limitations of current financing mechanisms for WBLUs;

c. work with investors and financial institutions to identify and pilot novel funding opportunities, including possible mechanisms for these, emphasising approaches that are sustainable and lead to self-sufficiency; and

d. share information on the above with role players from all relevant sectors;

2. REQUESTS the Secretariat in Eastern and Southern Africa to work with Members and Commissions to develop this One Programme Initiative by helping to secure the necessary technical expertise, and through joint fundraising efforts to secure the necessary resources; and

3. REQUESTS State Members in Eastern and Southern Africa to:

a. integrate WBLUs, where relevant and feasible, into national planning processes, and especially spatial planning at the landscape level; and

b. develop partnerships with financial institutions, the private sector, civil society and communities, to unlock social, economic and ecological benefits of WBLUs as viable and optimal land-use options for Eastern and Southern Africa.