

Maximising return on conservation investments and sustainable development: eradicating invasive alien species (IAS) to conserve island biodiversity and benefit society

RECOGNISING that islands are key to the livelihoods, economies, well-being and cultural identities of 600 million people; support a disproportionate amount of global biodiversity, including ~20% of plant and animal species, and an even greater proportion of threatened biodiversity including 36% of species classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; and are the site of 75% of bird, mammal, amphibian and reptile extinctions since 1500;

RECOGNISING that invasive alien species (IAS), particularly mammals, have been the major driver of island species extinctions, and remain a serious threat to extant island species and human communities;

NOTING that more than 1,200 non-native mammal eradications have been implemented globally, with an average success rate exceeding 85% in support of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Biodiversity Targets 9 and 12, and up to 12 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

FURTHER NOTING that a dramatic increase in the scope, scale and pace of eradications of IAS from islands is needed to prevent extinctions and to protect island communities, aligning with the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 and the CBD Programme of Work on Islands;

ALSO NOTING that biosecurity guidance and measures to protect islands from IAS are available to island communities, and must be more developed and widely adopted;

WELCOMING the recent publication of a global analysis of the most important islands worldwide for eradicating IAS to benefit native biodiversity, accounting for technical and socio-political feasibility of potential eradications (Holmes *et al.* 2019); and

RECALLING relevant Resolutions and Recommendations on IAS;

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

1. CALLS ON the Director General and Commissions to:

a. request Members, governments and relevant Rio Conventions (CBD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification - UNCCD) to incorporate policies related to the post-2020 targets and the 2020–2030 International Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, that promote the increased scale, scope and pace of IAS eradications from islands worldwide;

b. promote and support transfer of knowledge products that inform prioritisation of efforts, including the Threatened Island Biodiversity Database, IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and Global Invasive Species Database, and to track returns on investments to biodiversity, people and communities, and sustainable development; and

c. support an alliance committed to coordinating engagement of science, policy, funding, communication and on-the-ground action toward IAS eradication, with the application of traditional ecosystem knowledge and the efforts of civil society, governments, funders, NGOs, and various experts, including indigenous people and local communities;

2. APPEALS to governments, non-governmental organisations and private businesses to increase the scale, scope and pace of IAS control and eradications on islands by investing in innovative techniques, methods, technologies and strategies;

3. REQUESTS governments, island nations and nations with islands to prioritise IAS, pathways of introduction, and sites to enable effective biosecurity measures to protect islands from invasion or reinvasion of IAS; and

4. CALLS ON governments and private sector donor communities to give greater priority to supporting island IAS prevention, control and eradication, and protecting the investment through enhanced biosecurity measures.