

Building Madagascar's capacity to counter the threat from invasive species

RECALLING Recommendation 5.151 *Safeguarding Madagascar's unique and highly threatened natural heritage* (Jeju, 2012);

EMPHASISING that Madagascar's extraordinary concentration of endemic animal and plant species makes the country a global conservation priority;

THANKFUL for the enormous efforts of the government of Madagascar and non-governmental organisations to conserve the country's biodiversity despite limited resources;

ALARMED that invasive alien species (IAS) are a major and growing threat to Madagascar's biodiversity;

NOTING that IAS of concern include the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and the Asian common toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*) which, in 1975 and around 2010 respectively, were both accidentally introduced to Toamasina, Madagascar, and now both number well over seven million individuals;

FEARING that the eradication of both species is likely unachievable due to technical and/or economic constraints, and that control or mitigation methods to reduce environmental and economic impacts will be expensive and will need to be applied in perpetuity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that such costs seriously challenge Madagascar's limited financial resources;

NOTING that these costs could have been avoided through adequate preventive actions or through rapid action to remove these IAS soon after their arrival in the country;

ENCOURAGED that decisive steps are being taken to control the Asian common toad and to eradicate the invasive house crow (*Corvus splendens*) from Madagascar;

RECOGNISING the existing Malagasy phytosanitary, veterinary, human health, and international trade legislation and procedures that aim to reduce the import of non-native animals, animal and human diseases, and agricultural pests;

NOTING that Madagascar's growing connections with international trading partners and limited biosecurity and capacity will increase its vulnerability to IAS; and

RECALLING that Resolution 5.021 *Implementing the provisions on invasive alien species of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020*, (Jeju, 2012) called for development of strong national programmes to counter growing threats to biodiversity and human livelihoods from IAS;

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

1. REQUESTS that:

- a. the IUCN Environmental Law Centre and the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) support the Malagasy Government to strengthen existing legislation to further protect against IAS;
- b. the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and other experts provide critical data and advice to key decision makers on Madagascar's priority IAS (current and potential), pathways of introduction, and sensitive or susceptible sites, in order to inform policy and procedures; and
- c. SSC and donors help raise funds to build capacity within Madagascar to develop and implement a country-wide programme to counter IAS; and

2. CALLS ON the government of Madagascar to establish a country-wide programme to counter the growing threat from IAS, with the following suggested components:

- a. a lead government agency (lead agency) specifically tasked and legally empowered to tackle invasive species and biosecurity issues;
- b. improvement of existing legislation to regulate the import (accidental and intentional) of IAS into Madagascar, including a framework for the management of IAS that includes, when possible, their control and eradication;
- c. a cross-sectoral national invasive species committee comprised of government, private sector and non-governmental organisation members to support the lead agency;

- d. a country-wide invasive species reporting and learning network that links to regional networks such as the Western Indian Ocean Network on Invasive Species (WIONIS);
- e. a national database of IAS species in Madagascar;
- f. a national invasive species strategy with clear objectives; and
- g. a rapid-response capability within the lead agency to implement measures to remove newly detected IAS without delay.