

8.015 Primary and old-growth forests at the next World Conservation Congress

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 5.060 *Strengthening the role of IUCN in saving the world's primary forests* (Jeju, 2012) and Resolution 7.127 *Strengthening the protection of primary and old-growth forests in Europe and facilitating their restoration where possible* (Marseille, 2020), and IUCN's Policy Statement on Primary Forests Including Intact Forest Landscapes;

RECALLING ALSO Resolution 7.108 *Deforestation and agricultural commodity supply chains* (Marseille, 2020), which IUCN has yet to implement;

RECOGNISING the critical importance of retaining ecosystems with high ecosystem integrity and areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, and the irreplaceability of primary forests and other primary ecosystems;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the unbridled loss of primary forests and the underlying legal and illegal drivers of deforestation;

EMPHASISING the need to operationalise multilateral policy decisions that address the climate and biodiversity crises in a synergistic manner, in accordance with Decision 16/22 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Decision 1/CMA.5 paragraphs 33 and 163 of the Paris Agreement;

ALSO RECALLING CBD Decisions 14/5 and 14/30, Goal A and Targets 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 21, 22 and 23 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), in particular KMGBF Target 1, in which Parties committed to "bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030 ...";

FURTHER RECALLING the emphasis on retaining areas of high ecological integrity and recovering and reconnecting degraded ecosystems in the Preamble of the Paris Agreement, Paris Agreement Article 5, and Decision 1/CMA.3 paragraph 38, Decision 1/CP.26 paragraph 21, 1/CP.25 paragraph 15, respectively of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

NOTING the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group III: Mitigation of Climate Change", which states, at section 7.4.2, that "Avoiding the conversion of carbon-rich primary peatlands, coastal wetlands and forests is particularly important as most carbon lost from those ecosystems are irrecoverable through restoration by the 2050 timeline of achieving net zero carbon emissions...";

RECALLING ALSO the crucial work of the Global Environment Facility, via its Strategy on Forests, its Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program for GEF-8 and its project "Strengthening Conservation of Primary Forests through Partnership Enhancement and Coordination of Support";

NOTING ALSO that the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 calls for halting both deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, as does Decision 1/CMA.5 paragraphs 33 and 34, the latter which notes the need for enhanced support in this regard;

FURTHER NOTING the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, which commits signatories to halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation by 2030 and to facilitating the alignment of financial flows with international goals to reverse forest loss and degradation; and

FURTHER RECALLING that primary forests are often the territories of Indigenous Peoples, that their rights, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, must be recognised, and that they should receive much greater direct financial assistance;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. CALLS on the Director General, working with Commissions, to:

a. prepare a report documenting current IUCN activities related to primary forests, including forest crime;

b. identify activities and potential funding sources for new activities focused on primary forest for its next quadrennial work programme; and

c. support primary forest protection as a priority in international policies and conservation finance through a reliance on IUCN's primary forest policy and associated guidance, including updated information on primary forests as climate and biodiversity solutions;

3. REQUESTS that IUCN include a thematic focus and symposium on primary forests and other primary ecosystems at the next World Conservation Congress, to further raise awareness of the importance of primary ecosystems and ecosystem integrity, and the contributions of such ecosystems to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises, and their significance for and critical role of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous and traditional territories, and local communities; and

3. REQUESTS that IUCN and its Members:

a. advocate for and act to conserve, protect, steward, buffer and recover (if feasible), primary and old-growth forests in all biomes; and

b. ensure that primary-forest conservation, protection and stewardship is a priority in international policies, programmes and conservation finance while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.