

## 097 - Safeguarding indigenous lands, territories and resources from unsustainable developments

RECOGNISING that protected areas are one of the most important tools for biodiversity conservation and that unprotected forests and other unprotected ecosystems may be lost or severely degraded if current deforestation and degradation rates continue;

STRESSING the importance of the ecological services provided by ecosystems;

REMINDED that indigenous peoples' lands and territories coincide with areas that hold 80% of the planet's biodiversity and are therefore fundamental contributors to the maintenance of such ecological services;

NOTING that a major challenge in ensuring such contributions remains in the fact that tenure rights of indigenous peoples over their lands and territories remain unclear or lack legal recognition in vast areas of the world;

MINDFUL OF IUCN's endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through Resolutions 4.052 *Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Barcelona, 2008) and 5.097 *Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Jeju, 2012);

RECALLING the provisions of UNDRIP, in particular Articles 23, 29 and 8, which respectively declare that "*Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development*", "*Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources*", and that States have the responsibility to prevent and redress "*Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources*";

NOTING the many examples in which indigenous peoples' land/sea use planning approaches, such as 'Indigenous Life Plans' and others, apply notions of indigenous self-development and include indigenous-designated protected areas, sacred natural sites, indigenous and community conserved territories and areas or other forms of protection of lands and seas;

NOTING that territories and resources which have been traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used by indigenous peoples are sometimes considered by governments as undeveloped or underdeveloped, and may be therefore exposed to external pressures for unsustainable developments, particularly from commercial exploitation, that do not consider the full rights, needs, and cultural contexts of indigenous peoples; and

CONCERNED that imposing changes to the use of lands and territories which have been traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used by indigenous peoples may have negative impacts including on food security, biodiversity, climate and the preservation of culture;

**The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:**

1. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General to:

a. consider assembling a working group coordinated by the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) to consult with research teams, indigenous peoples' organisations, civil society organisations, governments and development industries to assess the extent of and approaches to respecting indigenous peoples' rights to decision making around their lands, territories and resources, as well as provide recommendations on expanding efforts for strengthening tenure rights, reducing environmental degradation and enhancing conservation; and

b. draw on the expertise of IUCN Commissions, Members and Secretariat, under the One Programme Statement, to promote the establishment of adequate approaches, including fair and equitable access to information and meaningful participation by indigenous communities in decision-making processes, to avoid negative impacts especially from externally driven unsustainable developments as well as other forms of land and ecosystem degradation;

2. RECOMMENDS that governments work with indigenous peoples to create, institute and enforce legal and management regimes, as appropriate and necessary, that recognise indigenous peoples' rights, protect indigenous lands, territories and resources, and at the same time reduce the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems; and

3. ENCOURAGES governments to enhance accountability and improve governance in order to avoid interventions that negatively impact on the rights of indigenous peoples regarding the development of their lands, territories and resources.

