

WCC-2012-Res-100-EN

Incorporation of the Rights of Nature as the organizational focal point in IUCN's decision making

NOTING that countries are increasingly incorporating the Rights of Nature or of Mother Earth into their regulatory frameworks as a new paradigm for societies that recognize the right of nature and its constituent elements to exist and continually regenerate themselves;

RECOGNIZING that Ecuador is the first country in the world to incorporate the Rights of Nature into its Constitution as part of the legal, political and economic instrument of the State, which establishes in Article 71 "Nature or *Pacha Mama* [Mother Earth], where life is reproduced and exists, has the right for that existence to be respected entirely and for its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes to be maintained and regenerated";

RECALLING that the Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 2010, resulted in a *Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth*, announced and supported by indigenous peoples and social movements, who, as representatives of an active civil society call on their governments and the United Nations to include this topic in key debates such as those on climate change and biodiversity;

NOTING that global economies, especially those of developed countries, maintain production and consumption patterns that do not consider the limits of our planet, and that this has led not only to the incalculable loss of cultural diversity and any associated knowledge, but also to biodiversity loss, deterioration of ecosystems, environmental pollution, a decline in the quality and quantity of available water and a worsening of the problems related to global warming;

ALSO NOTING that, in addition to seriously impacting the environment, the current production and consumption model has shown itself to be inadequate when it comes to combating poverty and improving the quality of life of most of the world's population;

CONSIDERING that in order to maintain the current production and consumption levels, many countries have increased their ecological footprint through the use of resources and lands beyond their borders, whilst other countries, especially those whose economies are based on the extraction of natural resources or the production of goods to meet foreign demand – often sumptuary – are sacrificing their natural heritage in order to do so, and that this has highlighted the differences and gaps between rich and poor countries;

NOTING that the quality of life of current and future generations depends not only on the health of nature, its constituent elements, functions and ecosystem services, but also on their capacity to regenerate;

ALARMED at the central importance given to economic growth in countries' policies and decision-making processes to economic growth, with little respect for the cycles and characteristics of nature, and, from an ethical point of view, without any promotion of humanity's shared responsibility in relation to the natural heritage; and

CONCERNED because the welfare of human beings is basically measured in terms of the level of a country's income or economic growth, without considering indicators that reveal how sustainable their economy actually is;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. RECOMMENDS to the Director General to initiate a process that considers the Rights of Nature as a fundamental and absolute key element for planning, action and assessment at all levels and in all areas of intervention including in all decisions taken with regard to IUCN's plans, programmes and projects as well as in IUCN policy on rights;
2. URGES the Director General to initiate a dialogue for designing and implementing a strategy for dissemination, communication and advocacy concerning the Rights of Nature;
3. URGES IUCN Members to contribute to this effort by bringing forward their national experiences concerning the Rights of Nature as part of the process of developing a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Nature that contributes to a new philosophy of human well-being; and
4. INVITES the Director General and IUCN Members to promote the development of a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Nature, as a first step towards reconciliation between human beings and the Earth as the basis of our lives, as well as the foundations of a new civilizing pact.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.