

**WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS
9–15 October 2025, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**

Proposed amendments to the IUCN Statutes and IUCN Regulations

Introduction of a Membership dues waiver mechanism for IUCN Members facing exceptional financial hardship

Action Requested: The World Conservation Congress is invited to CONSIDER and ADOPT the proposed amendments to the IUCN Statutes and IUCN Regulations with regard to waiving membership dues of certain Members, submitted by the Council under Article 105 of the IUCN Statutes.

DRAFT MOTION

The IUCN World Conservation Congress,

Adopts the following amendments to the IUCN Statutes and IUCN Regulations: (*cf. Table attached hereafter as Annex 1*).

Decides that they shall become effective at the close of the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The Issue

Over the past years, there have been questions and discussions at Council regarding Members in a situation with outstanding membership dues because of circumstances affecting their country or regions such as natural disasters, armed conflicts, severe economic crisis and pandemics. All Members are required in terms of Article 12 (c) iii of the IUCN Statutes to pay their dues to retain their rights and ultimately their membership. IUCN's Statutes do not expressly foresee waiving such an obligation, even in particular circumstances. To the contrary, the non-respect of such obligation triggers the same consequences for all Members, namely the suspension of their rights or rescission, according to Article 13 (a) and (b) of the IUCN Statutes.

The 2021 IUCN World Conservation Congress mandated the 2021–2025 Council to “continue the work achieved by the 2016–2020 Council on [...] the issue of the value of membership and Members facing difficult financial situations and not being able to pay their dues” (RES_152_WCC_2020).

Pursuant to this mandate and in an effort to recognise and mitigate the adverse effects of failure to pay that can affect the Members and IUCN, the Council, at its 113th meeting, has come to a broad consensus and proposed a way to introduce in the IUCN Statutes and Regulations a mechanism whereby IUCN Members can ask for a waiver of all or part of their membership dues in the event of an exceptional financial hardship beyond the control of that Member (force majeure), preventing them from paying their dues¹.

¹ A comparable mechanism to that proposed by the Council has already been adopted and is implemented by the United Nations (UN). A Member State in arrears in the payment of its dues can show that conditions beyond its control contributed to this inability to pay, pursuant to the conditions set forth under Article 19 of the UN Charter.

Council's Proposal

The Council proposes to amend Article 13 (b) of the IUCN Statutes, to introduce an Article 13*bis* in the IUCN Statutes and an Article 25*bis* in the IUCN Regulations, to allow Members to request a membership dues waiver, pursuant to the conditions below:

The waiver for "force majeure": Upon proposal of the Council, the World Congress would be able to accept or reject a request of membership dues waivers if a Member is unable to pay its membership dues because of a force majeure (*Art. 13bis (a) of the Statutes*). These reasons shall be limited to natural disasters, armed conflicts, severe economic crisis and pandemics². Said events must have had a direct impact on the ability of the Member to pay its membership dues.

Council's assessment of the Member's request: Council would assess the seriousness of the situation and its impact on the Member's ability to pay its membership dues. Council would set a deadline for the Members to submit a waiver request in time for it to be assessed and, if deemed justified, submitted to the World Congress or an electronic ballot in between sessions of the World Congress. It is explicitly stated that the Council must assess the financial implications of granting waivers before making a proposal to the Congress. While a single waiver may have minimal impact, multiple waivers could significantly affect IUCN's finances.

After the assessment, Council would submit to Congress a list of Members proposed for the waiver, along with a brief explanation of why each waiver should be granted and the implications on IUCN finances as outlined in *Regulation 25bis (f)*.

The wording includes explicitly the possibility for Members to appeal to the World Congress if their dues waiver request is denied by the Council (*Article 13bis (d) of the Statutes*).

Waiver frequency and duration: Waivers can cover up to two years of arrears if the Member has paid dues uninterruptedly for the previous five years preceding the first year of the arrear caused by force majeure. Recently admitted Members must pay at least two years of dues before being entitled to apply for a dues waiver. (*Regulation 25(d)*).

A waiver can be request only once for the same force majeure event.

Vote and impact on membership rights: The vote of IUCN Members can take place during a session of the World Congress or in between sessions of the Congress through an electronic ballot (*Regulation 25(h)*).

If a dues waiver is granted, Members' rights are reinstated provided no dues exceeding one year of arrears remain (*Article 13 bis (b) of the Statutes*). If one or more years of arrears remain, or if the waiver is not granted, the rights in connection with voting, elections and motions of the Member concerned would remain suspended in conformity with Article 13 (a) of the Statutes or be *ipso facto* rescinded in conformity with Article 13 (b) of the Statutes depending on the total amount of outstanding arrears.

To guarantee that the rescission process and waiver process are consistent with each other, any vote related to dues waivers will take place at the same time.

Process

To ensure coherence between the proposed amendments to the IUCN Statutes and Regulations, they are submitted together for discussion and decision of the World Congress. If adopted, the amendments shall become effective at the close of the session of the World Congress.

² To interpret the concept of force majeure and the situations of force majeure described in the Regulations, the Council will rely on established sources and principles of international law, as well as resolutions and other instruments adopted by IUCN and specialised UN bodies (e.g. the "WHO Pandemic Agreement" defining "pandemics" set by the World Health Organization).

Existing provisions of the IUCN Statutes	Proposed amendments (with track changes)	New text as amended (all track changes 'accepted')
Suspension, Rescission, Expulsion and Withdrawal	Suspension, Rescission, Expulsion and withdrawal	Suspension, Rescission, Expulsion and withdrawal
Article 13 of the Statutes	Article 13 of the Statutes	Article 13 of the Statutes
(a) The rights of a Member in connection with elections, voting and motions shall <i>ipso facto</i> be suspended when the dues of that Member are one year in arrears. If the dues of a Member are two years in arrears, the matter shall be referred to the World Congress which may rescind all the remaining rights of the Member concerned. Such rescission shall be on such terms as the World Congress may determine. (b) If, one year after the decision of the World Congress to rescind the remaining rights of a Member, the Member in question has not paid its arrears owed up until such rescission, that Member shall be deemed to have withdrawn from IUCN. (c) Should any Member act persistently in a manner seriously inconsistent with the objectives of IUCN, the suspension or expulsion of that Member may be proposed to the Council: [...]	(a) The rights of a Member in connection with elections, voting and motions shall <i>ipso facto</i> be suspended when the dues of that Member are one year in arrears. <u>(b)</u> If the dues of a Member are two years in arrears <u>and subject to the application of Article 13bis</u>, the matter shall be referred to the World Congress which may rescind all the remaining rights of the Member concerned. Such rescission shall be on such terms as the World Congress may determine. <u>In between sessions of the World Congress, the matter shall be referred to an electronic ballot in conformity with Article 94.</u> (b)<u>(c)</u> If, one year after the decision of the World Congress to rescind the remaining rights of a Member, the Member in question has not paid its arrears owed up until such rescission, that Member shall be deemed to have withdrawn from IUCN. <i>(Re-number the following paragraphs accordingly)</i> <i>(Insert a new section with new Article 13bis)</i> <u>Exception to the suspension and rescission: dues waiver</u>	(a) The rights of a Member in connection with elections, voting and motions shall <i>ipso facto</i> be suspended when the dues of that Member are one year in arrears. (b) If the dues of a Member are two years in arrears and subject to the application of Article 13bis, the matter shall be referred to the World Congress which may rescind all the remaining rights of the Member concerned. Such rescission shall be on such terms as the World Congress may determine. In between sessions of the World Congress, the matter shall be referred to an electronic ballot in conformity with Article 94. (c) If, one year after the decision of the World Congress to rescind the remaining rights of a Member, the Member in question has not paid its arrears owed up until such rescission, that Member shall be deemed to have withdrawn from IUCN. [...]
		Exception to the suspension and rescission: dues waiver
		Article 13bis

Article 13bis

(a) Notwithstanding Article 13 (a) and (b), the World Congress may, upon proposal of the Council, waive partially or totally the arrears owed by a Member until such decision in case the Member was unable to pay its dues for reasons beyond the control of that Member (force majeure).

(b) If the World Congress approves the dues waiver, the rights of the Member concerned shall be reinstated effective at the close of the session of the Congress or the close of the electronic ballot, provided that no outstanding dues exceeding one year of arrears remain. If the Member concerned has remaining dues that are one or more years in arrears or if the World Congress rejects partially or entirely the dues waiver, the rights of the Member concerned would remain suspended in conformity with Article 13 (a) or be *ipso facto* rescinded in conformity with Article 13 (b) depending on the total amount of outstanding arrears.

(c) The cases of force majeure which may justify a dues waiver and the process by which a Member may request it and the Council will assess it shall be prescribed in the Regulations.

(d) A Member whose request for a dues waiver has been denied by Council may appeal to the World Congress against that decision within the deadline prescribed in the Regulations.

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- (b) If the World Congress approves the dues waiver, the rights of the Member concerned shall be reinstated effective at the close of the session of the Congress or the close of the electronic ballot, provided that no outstanding dues exceeding one year of arrears remain. If the Member concerned has remaining dues that are one or more years in arrears or if the World Congress rejects partially or entirely the dues waiver, the rights of the Member concerned would remain suspended in conformity with Article 13 (a) or be *ipso facto* rescinded in conformity with Article 13 (b) depending on the total amount of outstanding arrears.
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Existing provisions of the IUCN Regulations	Proposed amendments (with track changes)	New text as amended (all track changes 'accepted')
	<u><i>(insert new Regulation 25bis)</i></u>	Regulation 25bis
	<u>Regulation 25bis</u>	
	<u>(a) A Member having at least one year of arrears and a force majeure situation as referred to in paragraph (b), may request a membership dues waiver as prescribed in Article 13bis of the Statutes, within the deadline determined by the Council. The request shall be duly substantiated and include the reasons why a given force majeure situation described in Regulation 25bis (b) directly impacted the ability of the Member concerned to pay its membership dues and why it could not recover from this exceptional financial hardship.</u>	(a) A Member having at least one year of arrears and a force majeure situation as referred to in paragraph (b), may request a membership dues waiver as prescribed in Article 13bis of the Statutes, within the deadline determined by the Council. The request shall be duly substantiated and include the reasons why a given force majeure situation described in Regulation 25bis (b) directly impacted the ability of the Member concerned to pay its membership dues and why it could not recover from this exceptional financial hardship.
	<u>(b) The force majeure conditions that may justify granting a dues waiver shall typically be disasters, armed conflicts, severe economic crisis, pandemic and[, except for the cases of Category A Members,] international sanctions.</u>	(b) The force majeure conditions that may justify granting a dues waiver shall typically be disasters, armed conflicts, severe economic crisis, pandemic and[, except for the cases of Category A Members,] international sanctions.
	<u>(c) The Council will assess each request in the light of the seriousness of the situation and its impact on the ability of that Member to pay its dues. Before proposing any dues waiver to the World Congress, it will take into consideration the impact on IUCN's finances of all waivers considered.</u>	(c) The Council will assess each request in the light of the seriousness of the situation and its impact on the ability of that Member to pay its dues. Before proposing any dues waiver to the World Congress, it will take into consideration the impact on IUCN's finances of all waivers considered.
	<u>(d) A waiver may be granted for up to two years of arrears resulting from the same force majeure event, provided that the Member requesting the waiver has paid its membership dues uninterruptedly during the</u>	(d) A waiver may be granted for up to two years of arrears resulting from the same force majeure event, provided that the Member requesting the waiver has paid its membership dues uninterruptedly during the five years preceding the first year of the arrear caused by force majeure, or since its

five years preceding the first year of the arrear caused by force majeure, or since its admission to IUCN if it has been a Member for less than five years.

(e) Council will decide within a reasonable time whether to reject the request of the Member or, if it is satisfied that the inability to pay is due to extreme financial hardship and conditions beyond the control of the Member, whether to propose to the World Congress that the dues be waived in conformity with Article 13*bis* of the Statutes. In both cases, the Director General will notify the Member about the decision of Council.

(f) Any proposal from the Council to the World Congress shall be accompanied by information on the impact of the proposed waiver(s) on IUCN's finances.

(g) An appeal may be made in accordance with Article 13*bis* of the Statutes within one month of the notification by the Director General of the Council's decision to reject the dues waiver. The appeal shall be duly substantiated and include the reasons why the Council would have made an error in rejecting the dues waiver.

(h) In between sessions of the World Congress, any decision on waiving membership dues requiring a decision of the Congress shall be referred to an electronic ballot in conformity with Article 94 at the same time as the electronic ballot on rescission.

admission to IUCN if it has been a Member for less than five years.

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(f) Any proposal from the Council to the World Congress shall be accompanied by information on the impact of the proposed waiver(s) on IUCN's finances.

(g) An appeal may be made in accordance with Article 13*bis* of the Statutes within one month of the notification by the Director General of the Council's decision to reject the dues waiver. The appeal shall be duly substantiated and include the reasons why the Council would have made an error in rejecting the dues waiver.

(h) In between sessions of the World Congress, any decision on waiving membership dues requiring a decision of the Congress shall be referred to an electronic ballot in conformity with Article 94 at the same time as the electronic ballot on rescission.