

135 Recognition of the International Marine Protected Areas Congress as the global marine protected area community for effective marine biodiversity conservation

NOTING that the ocean covers 71% of the Earth's surface;

DEEPLY MINDFUL that to halt the loss of biodiversity and support its recovery requires transformative changes across the economic, policy and societal sectors, in order to handle the most impacting direct drivers of change in nature, such as changes in sea use, overexploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasion of alien species, according to the 2019 Global Assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 7.125 *Setting area-based conservation targets based on evidence of what nature and people need to thrive* (Marseille, 2020), which "calls on all components of IUCN to recognise the evolving science, the majority of which supports that protecting, conserving and restoring at least half or more of the planet is likely necessary to reverse biodiversity loss, address climate change and as a foundation for sustainably managing the whole planet";

RECOGNISING that the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the importance of conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including Target 3 calling to ensure and enable that, by 2030, at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognising indigenous and traditional territories where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognising and respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and Local communities, including over their traditional territories;

RECOGNISING the value of regional Marine Protected Areas (MPA) knowledge platforms and networks (e.g. RAMP AO, ROPME initiatives) to ensure regional complementarity and inclusion;

WELCOMING that the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), adopted in 2023, calls for an effective implementation of measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs), through international cooperation, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology;

CONSIDERING that national MPA agencies, jointly with IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), have been organising, every four years since 2005, an International MPA Congress (IMPAC), gathering a global community of MPA managers and practitioners;

ALSO CONSIDERING that the five first IMPAC congresses were a tremendous success with high attendance rates and an increasing number of participants and representatives from various States and public and private organisations, MPA managers and their scientific and institutional partners, advocates and donors, taking place in Geelong, Australia (2005), Washington, D.C., United States of America (2009), Marseille, France (2013), and La Serena, Chile (2017); the most recent, IMPAC 5, in Vancouver, Canada (2023), gathered more than 3,500 participants from 123 countries;

WELCOMING that, since IMPAC 3 in Marseille, the IMPAC congresses have hosted a high-level segment, where high-level representatives of political, scientific, philanthropy and NGOs representatives are gathering technical and scientific outcomes of the congress, and agree on a joint declaration to support the MPA networks global agenda. IMPAC 5 in Vancouver, Canada, organised a Leadership Forum, with similar objectives; and

ALSO WELCOMING that IMPAC6 will be hosted in Senegal, in 2027, for the first time in Africa, on the edge of achieving the 2030 global engagements for effective marine conservation and protection, including the high seas;

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

1. CALLS ON all components of IUCN to recognise that the International Marine Protected Areas Congresses (IMPAC) foster technical and scientific exchanges among a global community of marine protected area managers and practitioners, in order to share joint efforts and strengthen best practices in the implementation and management of connected MPA networks, for the effective conservation of marine biodiversity, and the natural and cultural heritage of the ocean;

2. CALLS ON all components of IUCN to recognise that IMPAC congresses contribute to building political momentum for the MPA global agenda, making IMPAC a highly relevant platform to promote effectively managed and connected MPAs and MPA networks as a key instrument for ocean sustainability, and to engage the global community towards a transformative change for a healthy ocean;

3. REQUESTS the Director General to:

a. promote connected MPA networks, effectively conserved and ecologically representative, developed with a coherent governance and management measures, in a continuum from the coast to the offshore, the adjacent zones and the high seas;

b. provide support to the IMPAC International Steering Committee (ISC) and the MPA agency of the hosting country for organising every IMPAC congress;

c. consider IMPAC in the planning of all IUCN global events and congresses as a leading and highly relevant global platform on MPAs; and

d. draft the terms of reference of the congress, including the roles, responsibilities and selection process of the host country, in collaboration with WCPA and IMPAC ISC; and

4. REQUESTS all Members to support the achievement of the actions described above.