

093 Recognise and strengthen the fundamental role of plant and fungal taxonomy and associated herbaria for the conservation of biodiversity, particularly in Global South countries

RECALLING the essential role of taxonomic research in identifying, delimiting, cataloguing and conserving biodiversity, particularly in tropical regions and ecosystems that harbour high species richness and endemism;

ACKNOWLEDGING that taxonomy is the foundation of The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, enabling accurate species identification, inferencing distribution ranges, providing ecological data, quantifying the impact of climate change, allowing population assessments and understanding of extinction risks;

RECOGNISING that herbaria and fungaria serve as critical repositories of plant and fungi specimens and their attributes, providing invaluable resources for scientific research, environmental monitoring, genetic management and rescue, and conservation planning;

CONSIDERING that tropical Global South countries, despite holding most of the world's plant and fungi diversity, often lack sufficient resources and infrastructure for taxonomic research and specimen collection and preservation;

NOTING that colonial-era explorations have led to specimens from these biodiverse regions being mainly housed in Global North herbaria, creating disparities in conservation capacities;

EMPHASISING the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 15 (Life on Land), which aims to halt biodiversity loss and ensure sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems;

ALSO RECALLING that Aichi Target 12, which aimed to protect and improve the conservation status of threatened species by 2020, was not achieved – particularly for tropical plants and fungi – as reflected in the IUCN Red List assessments; and

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 7.109 *Increasing funding for biodiversity in developing countries* (Marseille, 2020), which emphasises the need for increased funding to support biodiversity conservation, capacity-building and sustainable resource management, particularly in tropical regions rich in biodiversity yet highly threatened;

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

1. ENCOURAGES IUCN Members with a mandate related to herbaria and fungal taxonomy, to:

- a. prioritise continued long-term investments in tropical Global South herbaria and fungaria, including funding for the staffing, training, modernisation, digitisation and promotion of these institutions;
- b. promote conservation science rooted in taxonomy, including ecological, biological and genetic research on tropical plants and fungi, to enable more targeted and effective conservation actions; and
- c. foster partnerships between Global North and Global South institutions to advance taxonomic research, build capacity and ensure equitable access to specimen data, supporting conservation efforts on a global scale; and

2. CALLS on all States to:

- a. emphasise that the science of taxonomy, in all its dimensions, provides the essential foundation for understanding and conserving tropical plants and fungi, which are at the heart of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems;
- b. underscore the critical role of herbaria and fungaria as repositories of irreplaceable specimens and taxonomic knowledge essential to conservation science, especially in tropical regions where plant and fungus diversity is highest and most at risk; and

c. recognise the importance of plant and fungus taxonomy in national biodiversity strategies, integrating herbaria and fungaria as central components in conservation plans.