

## **110 Restoring threatened species in the Arabian Peninsula and Sahelo-Saharan regions**

ACKNOWLEDGING that several species in the Arabian Peninsula and Sahelo-Saharan region, such as the Arabian oryx, scimitar-horned oryx, addax, dama gazelle, Arabian leopard, cheetah and Arabian tahr are among the most iconic species of these ecosystems and have high ecological and cultural values;

RECOGNISING the devastating impact of the interlinked biodiversity and climate crises on these regions, leading to habitat degradation, extinctions of several large species and depleted populations of many species;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the similar catastrophic effects on local community livelihoods and human health from rangeland degradation and desertification;

NOTING the challenges facing species restoration in many parts of the Arabian Peninsula, such as limited baseline data, weak integration of conservation objectives into national land-use and development policies, and insufficient enforcement of anti-poaching and habitat protection measures;

NOTING the successful conservation restoration programmes, particularly of the Arabian oryx, scimitar-horned oryx and addax, and the Arabian Leopard Conservation Initiative, demonstrating that recovery of once-extinct species is possible with long-term commitment and support;

RECALLING that species of fauna and flora in these regions have evolved over millennia to survive in hot and hyper-arid environments, providing valuable lessons on adaptation to climate change;

NOTING the importance of integrating traditional ecological knowledge alongside modern conservation approaches to enhance restoration efforts;

WELCOMING the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), especially Goal A on halting human-induced extinction and reducing the extinction risk for all wild species; and RECOGNISING its alignment with restoration efforts in the two regions;

ACKNOWLEDGING the landmark reintroductions into the wild of the Arabian oryx and scimitar-horned oryx and subsequent improvement in their conservation status on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING multiple initiatives to restore gazelles, mountain ungulates, the leopard, ostrich and other species of mammals and birds, herbaceous plants and trees, to establish large protected areas, and other conservation measures; and

RECALLING ALSO that functioning, productive and connected ecosystems are essential to the livelihoods of traditional communities across both regions;

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

1. CALLS ON governmental Members in the Arabian Peninsula and Sahelo-Sahara regions to:

a. take ambitious measures to restore species at landscape scales to benefit biodiversity, the pastoral economy and essential livelihoods; including establishing specific success metrics and timeframes for tracking progress;

b. incorporate appropriate measures into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and other national planning processes;

2. ALSO CALLS ON IUCN, the Commissions and National Committees, as well as non-governmental Members, non-governmental organisations and others to:

- a. provide expert technical support for these initiatives;
- b. develop and implement complementary conservation measures promoting restoration of desert ecosystems; and
- c. enhance regional collaboration among countries in the Arabian Peninsula and Sahelo-Saharan regions to share best practices, coordinate cross-border conservation efforts, and strengthen institutional frameworks for transboundary collaboration, including the establishment of a regional coordination platform under the guidance of relevant Arab environmental organisations;

3. REQUESTS multilateral donors, donor governments and the philanthropic community to:

- a. mobilise and invest resources at the scale needed to achieve successful outcomes in desert restoration and to support governments where needed; and
- b. invest in capacity-building programmes and research using modern conservation techniques and technologies; and support the establishment of regional conservation funds and sustainable financing mechanisms to secure the continuity of species restoration efforts beyond short-term project cycles; and

4. ENCOURAGES the development of national and regional training centres and research hubs focused on dryland species restoration and ecosystem management, in partnership with universities and conservation institutions.