

009 Protection of biomes and ecosystems threatened by native vegetation conversion

CONSIDERING that biomes such as the Brazilian Cerrado, the Pampas, Humid Chaco, Orinoquia, Pantanal and the African Miombo are among the most biodiverse, and play a crucial role in providing essential ecosystem services, including climate regulation, water supply, and food security, yet face alarming rates of native vegetation conversion and deforestation;

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 7.009 *Protecting and restoring endangered grassland and savannah ecosystems* and Resolution 7.049 *Mainstreaming the Cerrado in international cooperation and global environmental funds* (both adopted in Marseilles, 2020);

RECOGNISING that, while there is progress in protecting forest ecosystems through legal instruments (e.g. the European Union Regulation on Deforestation-free Products), but under their current scope they do not explicitly ensure protection of important formations such as savannas, grasslands and other non-forest areas, which are currently not sufficiently being addressed under national or regional laws, undermining their effectiveness in preventing environmental and social impacts associated with global commodity chains;

HIGHLIGHTING that the conversion of native vegetation in these ecosystems has critical implications for biodiversity, human rights, and the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and small-scale farmers, who are often affected by land grabbing, violence and socio-economic exclusion;

WARNING that delays in the implementation of existing legislative frameworks to protect forests, and that gaps in addressing impacts on other ecosystems such as grasslands or savannahs, could weaken global efforts to mitigate climate change and protect biodiversity; and

REITERATING the urgent need for an integrated approach that considers both forests, and other ecosystems with threatened native vegetation, in traceability and compliance mechanisms for supply chains, to avoid externalising negative environmental and social impacts to vulnerable regions;

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

1. URGES the Director General, in coordination with IUCN regional offices, to work with strategic partners to protect grasslands, savannas and other types of native vegetation from conversion for commodity production – including ecosystems such as the Cerrado, the Pampas, Humid Chaco, Orinoquia, Pantanal and the Miombo – by developing specific guidelines for traceability and risk categorisation that address the unique characteristics of supply chains associated with these biomes;

2. ENCOURAGES the governments of affected exporting countries to:

a. establish national policies that align the production and export of commodities with strict sustainability and [national] human rights criteria, including monitoring systems and other provisions to address market leakage and

b. strengthen land and environmental governance to protect local communities from negative impacts;

c. Take a landscape scale approach to manage commodity production, through land-use planning, addressing underlying drivers of landscape conversion and degradation, and facilitating public-private collaboration towards sustainable production.

3. CALLS FOR international environmental funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility, and the GBFF to prioritize [take duly into account the need to fund] conservation and sustainable use strategies in non-forest ecosystems, including: incentives for small-scale producers to maintain native vegetation; and initiatives for ecological restoration and climate change mitigation and adaptation; and

4. DEMANDS more effective communication between governments, civil society, and the private sector to promote:

a. valuation of ecosystems as providers of essential services and sustainable economic resources;
and

b. recognition of the rights and crucial roles of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities in the protection and sustainable management of their territories.

5. ENCOURAGES the governments of importing countries to keep progressing in protecting ecosystems through legal instruments, with a scope including not only forest but also non-forest areas.

6. [URGES the Director General and IUCN commissions to advocate for better consideration and management of commodity-driven biodiversity impacts by the private-sector, through the use of private sector disclosure and sustainability frameworks.]

7. [ENCOURAGES commodity companies to:

a. Meaningfully implement actions through private-sector disclosure and sustainability frameworks;

b. Make supply chain investments in sustainable commodity production and adopt relevant supply chain codes of conduct

c. Improve traceability to ensure they are not contributing to conversion and degradation]