

017 For a protection of glaciers and post-glacial ecosystems

RECALLING that the 270,000 glaciers and the polar ice caps cover 10% of the Earth's land surface, play a crucial role in regulating the climate, global sea level and the water cycle in many regions, and are home to a specific biodiversity, profoundly influencing the way the planet functions and the distribution of ecosystems, species and human activities;

NOTING that glacial retreat is leading to the emergence of vast post-glacial ecosystems (terrestrial, freshwater and marine), which, without replacing the unique role of glaciers, are becoming refuges for biodiversity, freshwater reservoirs and carbon sinks in cold regions;

NOTING that glaciers are part of the planet's geodiversity, have exceptional value and should therefore be properly protected and managed at the relevant levels;

CONCERNED about the unprecedented acceleration in the melting of glaciers due to the intensification of anthropogenic climate change, and about scientific projections that this phenomenon will continue at exceptional levels;

CONCERNED about the destruction or direct degradation of certain glaciers and post-glacial ecosystems by anthropogenic activities (mining, power generation, leisure activities, etc.), which are damaging their evolution and ecological functions;

RECALLING that the glaciers and post-glacial ecosystems are mainly located on land belonging to public bodies or local communities, and recommending that their rights, beliefs and traditions be taken into account;

DEPLORING the fact that these ecosystems are largely ignored by national nature protection policies and that most of their surface area is located outside protected areas;

RECOGNISING that the importance and protection of these ecosystems are recognised by the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and that certain national laws since 2010 have contributed to the recognition and protection of these ecosystems; and

WELCOMING initiatives such as the One Planet - Polar Summit (2023) and the United Nations General Assembly resolution declaring 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation and proclaiming the period from 2025 to 2034 as the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences;

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

1. CALLS ON States to honour their climate commitments by accelerating actions without delay to mitigate anthropogenic climate change and contain it within the limits described in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on the climate;

2. CALLS ON States and Members to:

a. anticipate and prevent the consequences of climate change by strengthening or putting in place effective and innovative in-situ protection measures for glacial and post-glacial ecosystems and by respecting and involving local communities; and

b. minimise and, where possible, avoid human activities that directly threaten the integrity, evolution and functioning of glaciers and post-glacial ecosystems, while taking into account the need to limit natural risks;

3. INVITES the States and Members to strengthen the legal protection of glacial and post-glacial ecosystems at international, regional and national levels;

4. ENCOURAGES the States and Members to support the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Activities for Glaciers' Preservation; and

5. INVITES the Members and Commissions to collectively develop long-term monitoring of glacial and post-glacial ecosystems and to support knowledge sharing in order to raise global awareness, in particular by mobilising and educating citizens and younger generations.