

041 Developing a policy on geoengineering

RECOGNISING the urgency of the climate crisis, the continuing rise in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and the need to peak global emissions as soon as possible according to the best available science in order to limit warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

CONVINCED that greater ambition will be needed to reduce the emissions of GHGs into the atmosphere in addition to the currently pledged commitments in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs);

RECOGNISING ALSO that deliberate, large-scale interventions in the Earth's natural systems to counteract climate change or mitigate its effects (geoengineering), including both Carbon Dioxide Removal and Solar Radiation Modification, may be proposed by government or non-government actors;

RECOGNISING that the development and deployment of safe, sustainable, durable, proven, and energy-efficient carbon dioxide removal methods may be necessary to keep the 1.5°C limit within reach, while securing environmental integrity and biodiversity conservation, with a special focus on nature-based solutions;

EMPHASISING that conclusive evidence for the effects of most geoengineering techniques is still lacking, and further STRESSING the necessity, in line with the precautionary approach, of assessing their associated risks for the environment and biodiversity, as well as their associated social, economic and cultural impacts;

CONCERNED that geoengineering interventions could have significant and potentially irreversible impacts on, and consequences for, biodiversity, geodiversity, ecological functioning and ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, as well as on human health;

NOTING WITH CONCERN the growth of outdoor solar and marine geoengineering research, and the risk that these could lead to undesirable technology development and lock-in;

ACKNOWLEDGING the growing calls for non-use agreements with regard to Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) techniques and the lack of consistent, rigorous, science-based policy or regulatory frameworks that consider the ethical, social and environmental risks and impacts of potential geoengineering interventions;

RECALLING the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP Decisions X/33, para 8(w), XI/20, and XVI/22 para 6, and the legal instruments and statements unanimously adopted by London Protocol Parties to only allow scientific research under very specific conditions, and to deter from all other activities;

FURTHER CONCERNED that geoengineering interventions could be proposed and employed as a means of, or otherwise have the effect of, lowering or delaying ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or be employed to deliberately or inadvertently support the continued use of fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gas emissions;

NOTING that geoengineering is currently being addressed under many international fora, including CBD, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the London Convention/London Protocol, IOC/UNESCO, and others;

STRESSING the need, while considering the topic of geoengineering, to ensure full respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples, as well as those of Local communities, and all other human rights;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and the IUCN Council to develop a draft IUCN policy on geoengineering for consideration and approval by Members well before the World Conservation

Congress in 2029, using an inclusive and participatory approach, avoiding conflicts of interest and guided by the precautionary principle, human rights obligations, and relevant decisions of the CBD, UNCLOS, the London Convention/Protocol and other relevant international fora as appropriate, and ensuring that the draft policy discourages geoengineering as any form of offset against continued extraction and use of fossil fuels;

2. INVITES IUCN Members to contribute to and support the draft policy development process; and

3. URGES all governments to adhere to the precautionary principle, the pro natura principle and the principle of progressivity as appropriate, and to the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD on geoengineering and the legal mechanisms and statements adopted by the London Protocol Parties on this matter, and, in the interim, cautions against the deployment, by State and non-State actors, of geoengineering technologies other than those that are scientifically validated and environmentally and socially sound.