

045 Reducing the impacts of forest biomass energy on climate and biodiversity

ALARMED that woody biomass used in industrial-scale energy production is sourced from biodiverse, ecologically-sensitive, and climate critical forests, including from primary forests and with tree species classified as threatened with extinction on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™;

RECOGNISING that some countries have deemed forest bioenergy to be “renewable” or “carbon neutral” and are increasingly subsidising and relying on it to meet their climate goals;

ALSO ALARMED that the supply of woody biomass for energy is expected to treble by 2030 and that, in 2022, the global trade in wood pellets reached nearly 50 million tons;

FURTHER ALARMED that logging of natural forests for forest bioenergy worsens climate change, exacerbates biodiversity loss, and harms human communities;

CONCERNED by the impact of bioenergy on our planet's forest ecosystems, which remove and store globally significant amounts of carbon and which, along with deep and rapid cuts in fossil fuel emissions, are essential to protect and restore, in order to avert climate disaster;

RECOGNISING the rights of Indigenous peoples and Local communities over lands, territories, and resources for their cultures, survival and livelihoods, and recognising their dependence on forest products;

NOTING that the first global stocktake of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change emphasised the Paris Agreement goals of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems and Target 18 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which calls for countries to reduce incentives harmful to biodiversity;

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 4.082 *Sustainable biomass-based energy* (Barcelona, 2008) and Resolution 5.088 *Responsible renewable energy sources* (Jeju, 2012) and the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) Biofuels Task Force's 2014 global assessment of the impacts of biofuels, which expressed concern about the impact of industrial biofuel on forests, food insecurity, water scarcity, climate change, and biodiversity loss; and

FURTHER RECALLING that IUCN Resolution 6.045 *Protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes* (Hawai'i, 2016) recognised the critical role that primary forests play in climate mitigation and maintaining biodiversity;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to:

- a. ensure that IUCN Commissions, programmes, and policies do not promote the use of industrial-scale forest bioenergy, whether intentionally or unintentionally; and
- b. urge policymakers and businesses to apply rigorous safeguards to the bioenergy sector;

2. REQUESTS the World Commission on Protected Areas to:

- a. analyse the impacts of biomass sourcing on protected areas; and
- b. update protected area management guidelines to discourage biomass sourcing in protected areas, except for subsistence use by Local communities;

3. REQUESTS the Species Survival Commission to analyse the impacts of bioenergy harvesting on species and incorporate such threats in Red List assessments;

4. REQUESTS the Commission on Ecosystem Management to promote application of rigorous biodiversity safeguards for industrial-scale forest biomass;

5. REQUESTS the Climate Crisis Commission to investigate and report on the current and projected role of forest biomass in energy production and the threats to biodiversity and climate;
6. ENCOURAGES States to recognise that industrial-scale forest bioenergy threatens global biodiversity and the climate;
7. RECOMMENDS that States not rely on industrial-scale forest bioenergy to meet clean energy targets and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement and not subsidise its use; and
8. URGES Parties to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and Paris Agreement to regard such use and subsidies as harmful to biodiversity and the climate.