

048 Crimes that affect the environment

RECOGNISING nature crime – criminal forms of logging, mining, fishing, wildlife trade and land conversion – as a subset of crimes that affect the environment (CAE), which is broader in scope and includes pollution crimes and the illegal trade of waste and prohibited chemicals;

RECOGNISING ALSO that crimes that affect the environment pose a significant threat to conservation efforts globally, adversely impacting biodiversity, human and animal health, national security, and socio-economic development;

RECOGNISING FURTHER that crimes that affect the environment are one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss and undermines efforts to tackle environmental challenges and the ability to achieve overarching international commitments on climate, biodiversity and sustainable development including meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF);

AWARE that crimes that affect the environment are extremely pervasive, often intertwined with legal supply chains, and often driven by demand for products primarily produced in the developing countries but consumed primarily in the developed world;

DEEPLY ALARMED that crimes that affect the environment are among the world's largest illicit economies, representing a significant facet of transnational organised crime, with close links to associated crimes, including financial crime, corruption, and labor and human rights violations;

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the role of corruption in perpetuating crimes that affect the environment and its impact in undermining the ability to achieve the SDGs, particularly those related to environmental sustainability, justice, and governance;

RECOGNISING ALSO that crimes that affect the environment are often organised and transnational in nature, necessitating an equally organised and global response through cooperation and coordination among stakeholders and the inclusion of non-traditional actors;

RECOGNISING MOREOVER the unique role that IUCN can play in combating crimes that affect the environment, aligning directly with its mission and leveraging its diverse membership of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Intergovernmental Organizations (IOs), and governments, and specialized expert Commissions to facilitate essential multi-stakeholder collaboration;

RECALLING IUCN's long-standing directives to address environmental and conservation crimes, beginning with the recognition of wildlife poaching and trade at the first World Conservation Congress (WCC), and subsequently expanding to issues such as corruption, trafficking, whistleblowing, deforestation, and fisheries;

FURTHER RECALLING notable IUCN resolutions, including Resolution 6.070 (Hawai'i, 2016), which promotes collaboration among relevant actors to provide legal and policy expertise to combat environmental crimes; Resolution 6.076 (Hawai'i, 2016), which calls for the strengthening of environmental criminal laws; and Resolution 038 (Marseille, 2020), which advocates treating organized crime impacting the environment as a serious crime;

STRESSING all the other Marseilles Congress environmental crime resolutions requiring implementation by IUCN;

RECOGNIZING the active involvement of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) Coalition's Environmental Crime and Corruption Working Group, as well as the engagement of numerous IUCN Members in initiatives and coalitions addressing crimes that affect the environment, which highlights the strong interest of a significant portion of IUCN Members in this critical issue;

ACKNOWLEDGING the contribution of multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Basel Convention

on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal ("the Basel Convention") in supporting States in their efforts to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment;

ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING the valuable contributions of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the World Bank (WB), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and other relevant international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates, in supporting States in their efforts to effectively prevent and combat transnational organized crimes that affect the environment, and underscoring in this regard the crucial importance of enhancing inter-agency cooperation and coordination on the matter, as appropriate;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), as legal instruments to prevent and combat organized and transnational forms of crimes that affect the environment, and for strengthening international cooperation in this regard;

MINDFUL of that, while the above-mentioned agreements constitute relevant and important tools and instruments, no dedicated international legal framework currently exists to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment;

WELCOMING the growing body of United Nations resolutions addressing CAE, including, inter alia, General Assembly resolution 76/185 of 16 December 2021, and resolutions 10/6 of 16 October 2020 and 12/4 of 18 October 2024 of the UNTOC Conference of the Parties; which requests UNODC to convene an open-ended intergovernmental expert group on crimes that affect the environment, including nature crimes;

RECOGNISING ALSO the harm caused by crimes that affect the environment to Indigenous peoples and Local communities, and FURTHER RECOGNISING their critical roles in preventing and addressing these crimes;

DEEPLY CONCERNED ALSO by the growing threats faced by environmental defenders and whistleblowers; and HIGHLIGHTING the urgent need to protect those who advocate for the environment including rangers;

STRESSING the importance of IUCN and CEC, CEESP and WCEL implementing Resolution 115 (Marseille, 2020) on environmental defenders and whistleblowers;

RECOGNISING the role of the private sector and the need for its active engagement in effecting transformative change to prevent and counter environmental crime as reflected in Resolution 54 (Marseille, 2020) on the private sector and wildlife trafficking, and with particular emphasis on collaborative engagement with the finance and transport sectors.

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to:
 - a. prioritize crimes that affect the environment in engagement with relevant intergovernmental fora;
 - b. appoint a staff focal point to lead on implementation of this motion and to work closely with Members, Commissions, and the IUCN Council; and
 - c. when fundraising to implement this motion, prioritize assistance to and work by Members and Commissions.
2. INVITES the Director General and the IUCN Council to:

- a. convene a Task Force to develop an IUCN Strategy on Crimes that Affect the Environment, to include in particular:
 - Prioritization of actions to prevent and reduce crimes that affect the environment and uphold the rule of law;
 - Modern crime science and behaviour change science;
 - Prioritization of engagement with relevant intergovernmental fora, UNTOC and its open-ended intergovernmental expert group on crimes that affect the environment, as well as UNCAC;
 - Actions to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment in ongoing IUCN engagement with other multilateral fora, including CITES, CMS, UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), UNCLOS, and the UN General Assembly (UNGA);
 - Input from and engagement with all relevant IUCN Commissions;
 - Consultation with Members (Governments, NGOs, and IPOs) and relevant initiatives and alliances including ICCWC and its members;
 - Inclusion of efforts to protect environmental and human rights defenders and whistleblowers; and
 - Assistance to Members to implement this motion and prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment;
 - b. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General to ensure IUCN is engaged with and represented at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) grounding the conversation in the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment advocating the interlinkages between crimes that affect the environment, corruption, illicit financial flows and human rights, and promoting the protection of environmental human rights defenders and whistleblowers;
3. CALLS UPON the Director General and the Commissions to report by the end of 2025 on the status of their implementation of Marseilles resolutions addressing some aspect of nature including resolutions 40, 54, 108 and 115;
 4. REQUESTS relevant IUCN Commissions to include implementation of this motion and prior resolutions in their mandates;
 5. ENCOURAGES IUCN Members to:
 - a. collaborate and strengthen partnerships and join relevant initiatives that prioritise the prevention of crimes that affect the environment; and
 - b. prioritize the prevention of crimes that affect the environment, at the national level and through relevant treaties and other intergovernmental fora.
 6. URGES Governments to prioritise preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment, at the national level, including through modern crime and behaviour change science, and through relevant treaties and other intergovernmental fora, including but not limited to UNCAC, UNTOC, CITES, and CMS.