

048/052 Crimes that Affect the Environment (CAE)

RECALLING United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/185 on *Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment (hereafter “CAE”)*;

ALSO RECALLING the Kyoto Declaration, adopted by the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2021, in which Heads of State and Government, Ministers and Representatives of Member States affirmed their endeavour to adopt effective measures to prevent and combat CAE;

RECALLING ALSO resolutions of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), in particular CCPCJ Resolutions 31/1 of 20 May 2022 on *Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife*, and 34/8 of 23 May 2025 on *Tackling illicit trafficking in wild fauna and flora, including timber and timber products, the illegal mining of and illicit trafficking in minerals and precious metals, the illicit trafficking in waste and other crimes that affect the environment*, and UNTOC Resolution 10/6 of 16 October 2020 on *Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*;

WELCOMING the growing body of United Nations resolutions addressing CAE, including, *inter alia*, UNTOC Resolution 12/4 of 18 October 2024 on *Enhancing measures to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, which requests UNODC to convene an open-ended intergovernmental expert group on CAE, including those in the current IUCN mission and programme;

NOTING that CAE include wildlife trafficking, illegal deforestation and logging, illegal mining, illegal fishing, air pollution, noise pollution, soil pollution, water pollution, and waste violations, as expressed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its 2024 Global Analysis of CAE;

FURTHER NOTING the current IUCN Mission and Programme on a subset of CAE including wildlife trafficking, illegal deforestation and logging, illegal mining and illegal fishing¹;

ALARMED by the industrial scale, transnational and organised nature, and severe impacts of these crimes, as expressed in multiple reports from the United Nations, INTERPOL, the World Bank, and other international and civil society organisations;

RECOGNISING ALSO that these crimes exacerbate environmental degradation, climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, which constitute some of the most pressing and serious threats for present and future generations in terms of health, governance, rule of law, national security and socio-economic development, thus hindering efforts to implement the Paris Agreement, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF);

EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN that these crimes have close links to associated crimes, including financial crime, corruption, drug and human trafficking, and labour and other human rights violations; RECOGNISING that CAE often occur in contexts of poor governance, corruption, and lack of safeguards, and can disproportionately impact Indigenous peoples and Local communities, women and vulnerable communities, and violate their labour and human rights;

AWARE that CAE are extremely pervasive, often intertwined with supply chains, and often driven by demand for agricultural commodities, seafood, timber, minerals, wildlife and wildlife products;

RECOGNISING FURTHER that CAE, because of their commonly transnational nature, necessitate an equally organised and global response through cooperation and coordination among stakeholders and the inclusion of non-traditional actors; though also RECOGNISING that significant take and trade is occurring domestically in many countries;

¹ *Crimes that affect the Environment (CAE) constitute a broad category of crimes, including but not limited to a subset of CAE (illegal deforestation, mining and land conversion; illegal wildlife exploitation, use and trafficking; and illegal fishing) that some refer to as nature crime.*

RECOGNISING the important role of civil society, Indigenous peoples and Local communities, academia, the scientific community, the private sector, whistleblowers and the media in identifying, detecting, reporting on, and raising awareness of CAE and related offences;

RECOGNISING the need for more active engagement of the private sector – particularly the finance and transport sectors – in preventing and countering CAE;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that human-rights defenders in environmental matters, such as Indigenous peoples and leaders of Local communities, rangers, whistleblowers and climate advocates, are particularly at risk;

RECOGNISING MOREOVER the unique role that IUCN can play in supporting efforts to prevent and combat certain CAE, aligning directly with its Mission and Programme, and leveraging its diverse membership of international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Indigenous peoples organisations, and national and subnational governments and its networks, as well as its specialised expert Commissions, to facilitate essential multi-stakeholder collaboration;

RECALLING IUCN's long-standing directives to address forms of CAE most directly relevant to IUCN's nature conservation Mission and Programme, beginning with the recognition of wildlife poaching and trade at the first World Conservation Congress (WCC), and subsequently expanding to illegal logging and deforestation, IUU fishing, and associated issues such as corruption, whistleblowing, and defence of Indigenous and human rights;

FURTHER RECALLING notable IUCN resolutions, including Resolution 6.070 *Crimes against the environment* (Hawai'i, 2016), which promotes collaboration among relevant actors to provide legal and policy expertise to combat environmental crimes; Resolution 6.076 *Improving the means to fight environmental crime* (Hawai'i, 2016), which calls for the strengthening of environmental criminal laws; and Resolution 7.038 *Treating organised crime having an impact on the environment as serious crime* (Marseille, 2020), which advocates treating organised crime impacting the environment as a serious crime;

STRESSING all the other Marseille Congress environmental crime resolutions requiring implementation by IUCN, including Marseille resolution 7.115 *Protecting environmental human and peoples' rights defenders and whistleblowers*;

RECOGNISING the active involvement of numerous IUCN Members in initiatives and coalitions addressing various forms or subsets of CAE and related offences highlighting the strong interest of a number of IUCN Members in this critical issue;

RECOGNISING AND ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of the UNTOC and the UNCAC, the contribution of relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and the work of the UNODC, and other UN agencies, intergovernmental and international funds, programmes and task forces, to prevent and strengthen international cooperation to combat transnational organised crime and corruption including to address CAE;

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

WELCOMING the 15th Crime Congress to be held from 25 to 30 April 2026 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, under the overall theme "Accelerating crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: protecting people and planet and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the digital age";

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to:

a. foster a growing engagement on CAE 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, prioritise assistance to and work by Members and Commissions;

2. ALSO REQUESTS the Director General and the IUCN Council to convene a Task Force to develop an IUCN Strategy on CAE, as it pertains to the IUCN Mission and Programme, and to include in particular:

a. identification of actions to prevent and reduce CAE and uphold the rule of law;

b. deployment of modern crime science and behaviour change science;

c. active engagement with relevant international organisations and intergovernmental fora, particularly UNODC, UNTOC and its open-ended intergovernmental expert group on CAE, as well as CCPCJ and UNCAC;

d. continuation of ongoing IUCN engagement with other multilateral fora, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to prevent and combat CAE, in addition to other priorities;

e. solicitation of input from and engagement with all relevant IUCN Commissions;

f. consultation with Members (Governments, NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' Organisations) and relevant initiatives;

g. strengthening of efforts to protect and incentivise environmental defenders and whistleblowers; and

h. provision of support to Members in the implementation of this motion and their efforts to prevent and combat CAE;

3. CALLS ON the Director General and Commissions, in particular the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL), to contribute to and engage with the 15th Crime Congress;

4. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General to ensure IUCN is engaged with and represented at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), grounding the conversation in human rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, advocating the interlinkages between CAE, corruption, illicit financial flows and human rights, and promoting the protection of environmental defenders and whistleblowers;

5. CALLS UPON the Director General and the Commissions to report on the status of their implementation of Marseille resolutions addressing some aspects of CAE, such as resolutions 7.040, 7.054, 7.108 and 7.115;

6. REQUESTS relevant IUCN Commissions to include implementation of this motion and prior resolutions in their mandates and work plans;

7. ENCOURAGES IUCN Members to:

a. collaborate and strengthen partnerships and join relevant initiatives that prioritise the prevention of CAE; and

b. prioritise the prevention and combating of CAE at the national level and through relevant treaties and other intergovernmental and international fora;

8. URGES Governments to prioritise preventing and combating CAE, 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, CCPCJ, CITES and CMS;

9. REQUESTS IUCN and its relevant constituent bodies, and CALLS UPON NGOs, IGOs, and other civil society and international organisations and initiatives with relevant expertise on CAE, to provide, where appropriate and upon request, technical assistance to States in their efforts to fulfil the requirements detailed in paragraph 10 below; and

10. ENCOURAGES States to:

- a. adopt and implement effective measures to prevent and combat CAE by enhancing their implementation of the UNTOC, the UNCAC and other relevant international agreements, by strengthening legislation, international cooperation, capacity building, criminal justice responses and law enforcement efforts, and by promoting whistleblower protection and incentives;
- b. support the work of the open-ended intergovernmental expert group identified in UNTOC Resolution 12/4, and actively participate in its deliberations;
- c. take stock of the application and collective implementation of the UNTOC in addressing CAE; and identify any gaps that may exist in the international legal framework and that could be addressed under the UNTOC to prevent and combat CAE; and
- d. consider possible responses relevant to those gaps, including the possibility, feasibility and merits of any additional protocol to the UNTOC.