

054 - Operationalising the rights of nature through their implementation in territories

CONSIDERING the growing number of governments worldwide committed to reversing the current trend of natural habitat degradation and biodiversity loss – and that of geodiversity – by recognising and asserting the inherent rights of nature;

RECALLING that several States and territories have already recognised, with different legal forms, the rights of nature, be it in their Constitution (like Ecuador) or in their national legislation, (like Bolivia, Spain, New Zealand, and Uganda);

WELCOMING the most recent progress made by the international community in this field, in particular the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022, which recognises explicitly “the rights of nature and the rights of Mother Earth”, as fundamental levers for the successful implementation of conservation;

CONSIDERING that protected areas are one of the most effective tools for preserving biodiversity and geodiversity against growing anthropogenic pressures whilst ensuring the resilience and adaptive capacity of ecosystems;

CONVINCED that the operationalisation of the rights of nature, particularly in protected areas and sites included in the IUCN Green List, can promote sustainable reconciliation between humanity and nature, revive civic awareness, and help reduce the vulnerability of territories to the effects of climate change;

RECALLING the principles of the Ethical Manifesto of the French Committee of IUCN, based on the World Charter for Nature, the Earth Charter, and the Biosphere Ethics Initiative, which calls for a rethinking of our relationships with the living beings and with the Earth;

ALIGNING with previous IUCN Resolutions, in particular Resolution 5.100 *Incorporation of the Rights of Nature as the organizational focal point in IUCN's decision making* (Jeju, 2012);

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

1. ASKS States to:

a. recognise the rights of nature officially in their diversity of legal and cultural approaches, and to promote their concrete implementation in territories, particularly within protected areas and sites on the IUCN Green List; and

b. guarantee spaces for environmental democracy, enabling civil society – including the guardians of the rights of nature – to participate actively in decision-making processes in order to defend fundamental ecological interests;

2. INVITES national, local and sub-national governments to:

a. plan human activities in coherence with the rights of nature, ensuring respect for ecological limits and promoting ecosystem regeneration; and

b. fully involve Indigenous peoples and Local communities, recognising their essential role as stewards of the living world and holders of ecological knowledge;

3. ASKS IUCN to:

a. continue legal reflections on the regimes for recognising natural entities as subjects of law, and promote innovative frameworks aligned with the principles of the rights of nature;

b. launch experiments in a network of pilot sites, particularly within protected areas, in order to observe the effects of recognising the rights of nature; and

c. encourage the documentation and promotion of inspiring local and international initiatives where the rights of nature are already recognised or are in the process of being recognised; and

4. ASKS the World Commission on Protected Areas and the World Commission on Environmental Law to:

a. coordinate a rigorous assessment of the impact of these experiments on biodiversity conservation, the living conditions of local communities and the associated forms of governance; and

b. develop a replicable toolkit, based on lessons learned from these experiences, to support actors in the practical implementation of the rights of nature in various contexts.