084 Developing a circular and sustainable bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture

RECOGNISING that circularity is an attribute to bioeconomy and that sustainable and resilient food systems must be based on ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-resilient practices, that ecological processes and biodiversity can help food and agriculture systems adapt to climate impacts while maintaining or enhancing ecosystem integrity, and that models align closely with circularity, sustainability and resilience in bioeconomy strategies; including but not limited to agroforestry and intercropping, restorative aquaculture, soil conservation and composting systems;

RECOGNISING ALSO that bioeconomy covers all biomass production and transformation activities, whether forestry, agriculture or aquaculture, and represents new opportunities for farming and forestry operations;

AWARE that circular and sustainable bioeconomy with adequate safeguards for ecosystems integrity can contribute to more efficient, resilient, equitable and sustainable agri-food systems by ensuring greater food security, mitigating climate change, preserving biodiversity, addressing land degradation and ensuring soil conservation, stimulating economic growth, promoting innovation, optimising consumption of resources and reducing production of waste;

RECALLING that circular and sustainable bioeconomy can protect the livelihoods of rural territories, particularly in least developed countries, and provide employment opportunities for women and girls, young people, Indigenous peoples and Local communities.

RECALLING the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF);

RECOGNISING the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the field of bioeconomy and RECALLING that, according to FAO, bioeconomy is based on the production, use, conservation and regeneration of biological resources, including related knowledge, science, technology and innovations, to deliver sustainable solutions (information, products, processes and services) in all economic sectors and to enable the transition to a sustainable economy; and

NOTING that bioeconomy is growing significantly, with strategies being implemented in 23 countries and three regions, but highlighting that clarity and consistency is needed on the approach for the benefit of nature and people;

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

1. CALLS ON the Director General to support the dissemination and implementation of a circular and sustainable bioeconomy for food and agriculture in its projects and programmes for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems;

2. ENCOURAGES States and IUCN Members to implement national policies, strategies and action plans for a circular and sustainable bioeconomy, promoting inclusive stakeholder participation;

3. INVITES States and IUCN Members to consider sobriety, sustainability and circularity, which encompass recycling and optimising the use of biological resources throughout their life cycle;

4. ALSO INVITES States and IUCN Members to implement a circular and sustainable bioeconomy and gives high priority to food security, nutrition and ecosystem protection, taking into account all potential risks and effects of bioeconomy to biodiversity through sustainable and resilient production systems, while identifying and addressing the financial, logistic and market barriers faced by small producers in adopting biodiversity-friendly and circular practices;

4.b INVITES the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-resilient practices into sustainable and circular bioeconomy strategies, particularly in agriculture, aquaculture and forestry, to enhance biodiversity conservation, food security and community resilience in the face of climate change;

5. ENCOURAGES States and IUCN Members to develop a sustainable and circular bioeconomy with adequate safeguards that is not only based on the research of new technologies, but also Indigenous knowledge, science and practices and on the development of innovative Nature-based Solutions such as agroecology; and

6. FURTHER INVITES States and IUCN Members to pursue research and to develop a circular and sustainable bioeconomy and relies on transparent, comparable, measurable, and science-based criteria and methodologies. The ability to demonstrate and trace the benefits of sustainability is important for social licence and public trust, to monetise environmental attributes in bioeconomy markets, as well as to measure and publicly disclose where appropriate the impact of bioeconomy on food security targets and biodiversity.