

102 The role of rangers as essential planetary health workers in particular to achieve the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

ACKNOWLEDGING the critical role of rangers, as defined by World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the International Ranger Federation (IRF), as part of a broader area-based workforce in safeguarding, conserving, effectively managing and restoring terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, preserving cultural and historical heritage and values, such as at World Heritage Sites, increasing knowledge, and upholding the rights and well-being of communities, and present and future generations;

NOTING the role of rangers as essential planetary health workers, being at the forefront of the interconnectedness between the health of natural systems and human health, and consequently key to supporting implementation of a One Health approach as called for in Resolution 7.135;

CONSIDERING that the Sustainable Development Goals, the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), especially effective implementation of the 30x30 aspirations of Target 3, and the implementation of various other multilateral environmental agreements, would be supported by an adequate, professionalised and sufficient area-based workforce, foremost rangers;

CONCERNED that rangers, as environmental defenders at the forefront of the fight against crimes that affect the environment, may work under life-threatening and resource-challenged conditions, which can have a devastating impact on their morale, safety, well-being and effectiveness in fulfilling their critical responsibilities;

RECALLING the declaration adopted at the 2024 IRF World Ranger Congress (WRC) in Hyères, France, which, among others, highlighted the progress made by the IRF since the 9th IRF WRC in Chitwan, Nepal, in 2019, and raised awareness of the challenges faced by rangers in many parts of the world, including the need for better recognition, training and equipment, while promoting their well-being and operational effectiveness;

ALSO RECALLING Recommendation 4.119 *Protection of rangers within and in areas adjacent to protected areas* (Barcelona, 2008) and Recommendation 6.103 *Establishment, recognition and regulation of the career of park ranger* (Hawai'i, 2016);

WELCOMING the IRF Ranger Code of Conduct, providing principles for behaviour, ethics and accountability for rangers, and which can be adapted for use by employers; and

FURTHER WELCOMING the Global Ranger Competences and the draft international labour standard for ranger employment and working conditions to support rangers in their work;

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

1. CALLS on the Director General and IUCN to prioritize establishment of a global collaborative initiative within one year of the conclusion of the Congress to raise the profile of and support the vital work of rangers, in consultation with WCPA, IUCN Members, IRF, ranger associations, and donors. The initiative should provide for increased support for rangers, particularly Indigenous rangers, including through the establishment of dedicated funding mechanisms;

2. ALSO CALLING on the Director General and WCPA to enhance their engagement and support for the IUCN-WCPA International Ranger Awards including securing additional funding in collaboration with partners and IUCN members;

3. REQUESTS the Director General to advocate for the ranger profession to be formally recognised by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and urges IUCN Members who are also ILO Members to help advocate for ranger recognition;

4. REQUESTS all IUCN Members to support the 2024 Hyères Ranger Declaration, including the need to improve role recognition, working conditions, skills building, workforce inclusivity, including gender equality and minority and disadvantaged groups, and professional conduct of rangers;

5. INVITES IUCN State and Government Agency Members, and other governments, to recognise the essential role of rangers, whether state, regional, communal, Indigenous or private, for implementing the KMGBF, and to reflect ranger-specific elements in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, as appropriate and subject to national circumstances;

6. CALLS on ranger employers to ensure there are sufficient ranger numbers to help achieve the 30x30 Target, and, where appropriate, to adapt and implement the IRF Ranger Code of Conduct and Global Ranger Competences to build a professional, safe, accountable and competent ranger workforce, and to improve skills and working conditions of rangers by providing adequate training and equipment, and to ensure ranger welfare through mental health and trauma support, formal assistance for families of rangers killed or injured in service, and post-employment benefits such as pensions;

7. URGES all rangers to act as role models and ambassadors for their profession, to adhere strictly to human rights principles, and to uphold applicable laws and professional standards.