

## **105 Recognising and supporting community stewardship of natural resources through dedicated funding**

RECOGNISING that functioning ecosystems are essential for maintaining life on Earth and that Indigenous peoples and Local communities have successfully stewarded these ecosystems for generations through traditional and local knowledge and practices;

RECALLING that lands and waters conserved by Indigenous peoples and Local communities contain an estimated 80% of the planet's biodiversity, and that at least 32% of global land and related inland waters are owned or governed by Indigenous peoples and Local communities;

ACKNOWLEDGING that Indigenous peoples and Local communities often face economic pressures and development challenges that may compromise their ability to continue their traditional and local stewardship practices;

NOTING that in 2019, global funding for biodiversity conservation was estimated at only USD 124–143 billion per year against required annual funding of USD 722–967 billion, and that a significant portion of this funding gap affects areas historically managed by Indigenous peoples and Local communities;

CONCERNED that the lack of sustainable financing mechanisms for community-based conservation threatens both biodiversity and the cultural practices that have helped preserve it, while welcoming existing mechanisms, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund;

RECOGNISING ALSO that rewarding and supporting community stewardship practices can be a cost-effective, resilient and just approach to respond to the impacts of climate change, while simultaneously supporting sustainable livelihoods and local food systems; and

RECALLING IUCN Resolution 6.030 *Recognising and respecting the territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs) overlapped by protected areas* (Hawai'i, 2016) and Resolution 19.23 *The Importance of Community-based Approaches* (Buenos Aires, 1994);

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

1. ENCOURAGES the Director General to:

a. facilitate and advise IUCN Members to consider establishing a dedicated Community Stewardship Fund designed to provide accessible, long-term financial support to Indigenous peoples and Local communities, to sustain and expand their stewardship actions and other self-defined priorities for continued biodiversity and ecosystem services where appropriate; and

b. as appropriate, establish a working group, comprising representatives from Indigenous peoples and Local communities, IUCN Commissions and relevant experts, to develop mechanisms and guidelines for the development and implementation of the Community Stewardship Fund, ensuring transparency, accountability and ensuring that funding mechanisms align with community needs and values.

2. ENCOURAGES that at least 10% of this Community Stewardship Fund is dedicated to youth-led and other vulnerable groups and for inter-generational stewardship initiatives;

3. URGES IUCN Members to enable Indigenous peoples and Local communities to continue their traditional and local practices, and develop national policies and programmes that support and incentivise community-based natural resource management;

4. REQUESTS IUCN Members to document and share:

a. evidence of successful and undermined community stewardship practices, to ensure mainstreaming of these practices in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and to provide technical support to Indigenous peoples and Local communities; and

b. collaborative national and multinational projects that respect the self-determination and governance systems of Indigenous peoples and Local communities, according to national legislation, in community-based conservation with particular regard to other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs);

5. CALLS UPON IUCN Members to ensure effective support and recognition of traditional and local governance systems for natural resource management, including through use of the proposed Community Stewardship Fund, and ensure full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and co-create participatory frameworks to monitor socio-ecological outcomes; and

6. ENCOURAGES the financial sector, bilateral, multilateral donors, and national mechanisms, to allocate dedicated funding streams that are accessible to Indigenous Peoples and local communities through their relevant local governance structures.