

105 Recognise and support community stewardship of natural resources through dedicated funding

RECOGNISING that functioning ecosystems are essential for maintaining life on Earth and that Indigenous Peoples and many rural, local and tribal communities have successfully stewarded these ecosystems for generations through their place-based knowledge and practices;

RECALLING that lands and waters conserved by Indigenous Peoples and by 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 or by local communities [and other context-relevant community-based stewardship entities];

ACKNOWLEDGING that Indigenous Peoples and local communities often face economic pressures and development challenges that may compromise their ability to continue their place-based stewardship practices;

NOTING that current global funding for biodiversity conservation is estimated at only US\$ 124–143 billion per year against required annual funding of US\$ 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 GBFF;

RECOGNISING 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* (Hawaii, 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. REQUESTS the Director General to facilitate and advise IUCN State Members to establish a dedicated Community Stewardship Fund designed to provide direct, long-term, and culturally appropriate financial support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities to sustain and expand their place-based stewardship actions for continued biodiversity and ecosystem services[, including funds for community governance, conflict resolution, inclusive decision-making processes, and for inclusive digital infrastructure and ethical communication practices];

~~[1. REQUESTS the Director General to facilitate and advise IUCN State Members to establish a dedicated Community Stewardship Fund designed to provide financial support to communities to sustain and expand their place-based stewardship actions for continued biodiversity and ecosystem services;]~~

2. URGES IUCN State Members to ~~[recognise]~~ [and enable community-based stewardship practices in accordance with national laws and governance systems] [legally protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities [and other context-relevant community-based stewardship entities], in accordance with their legal systems, to continue their place-based practices, and develop national policies and programmes that support and incentivise community-based natural resource management;

[URGES IUCN State Members to enable Indigenous Peoples and local communities to continue their place-based practices, and develop national policies and programmes that support and incentivise community-based natural resource management]

3. REQUESTS IUCN Members to document and share:

a. evidence of successful and undermined community stewardship practices, to ensure mainstreaming of the Fund in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and to provide technical support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities [and other context-relevant community-based stewardship entities];

b. collaborative national and multinational projects that respect the self-determination and governance systems of Indigenous Peoples and local communities [and other context-relevant community-based stewardship entities] in community based-conservation with particular regard to other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs);

c. the role of Indigenous Peoples and community-led enterprises in delivering conservation and sustainable development outcomes; in supporting business incubation, market access, and resilience to illegal competition can help communities reduce dependency on philanthropy.

4. CALLS UPON IUCN Members to ensure effective support and recognition of place-based governance systems for natural resource management through use of the fund and ensure full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making of Indigenous Peoples and local communities [and other context-relevant community-based stewardship entities], and co-create participatory frameworks to monitor socio-ecological outcomes;

5. CALLS ON the financial sector, bilateral and multilateral donors to allocate dedicated funding streams, to support the development of tailored credit, insurance and other financial products including blended finance approaches that are accessible to Indigenous Peoples, and local communities through their relevant local governance structures; and

6. CALLS FOR the establishment of a working group comprising representatives from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, IUCN Commissions, and relevant experts to oversee the participatory development and implementation of the Community Stewardship Fund, ensure transparency, accountability [and non-extractive financing] and ensure that funding mechanisms align with community needs and values.