

## **116 Strengthening gibbon conservation through collaboration and synergy**

ACKNOWLEDGING that 20 gibbon species, from 11 Asian countries, are classified as either Endangered or Critically Endangered, with one as Vulnerable, and all are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

RECOGNISING their intrinsic value, and their role as flagship, umbrella and keystone species, their cultural significance, and importance as forest guardians;

CONCERNED by a 70% decline in gibbon populations since 1980, due to habitat loss from agriculture, logging, large-scale development and infrastructure projects, negative human-wildlife interactions, poaching, illegal trade and diseases;

RECOGNISING ALSO their value to national economies and Indigenous peoples and Local communities (IPLCs) through eco-friendly livelihoods and conservation, while their tropical forest habitats are vital for biodiversity, climate mitigation and ecosystem services;

ACKNOWLEDGING the Global Gibbon Network (GGN) as a platform for collaboration and science-based conservation, as emphasised in the GGN and IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Joint Statement at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15);

HIGHLIGHTING the need to prevent extinctions, protect genetic diversity and manage human-wildlife interactions in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and the 30x30 commitment;

UNDERLINING that gibbon survival and rainforest resilience rely on effective conservation policies, as well as conservation projects, sustainable development and science-based solutions to environmental challenges;

NOTING the need for transboundary cooperation to enhance ecological connectivity and coordination between protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and to share solutions and promote participatory conservation policies;

RECOGNISING FURTHER that despite conservation efforts, most gibbon populations continue to decline, except for the Hainan gibbon (*Nomascus hainanus*), whose growth reflects successful collaboration among academics, non-governmental organisations and the Chinese Government; and

RECALLING the *Hainan Gibbon Case Study* presented at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, demonstrating the success of this conservation model and its potential for application to other species;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General, IUCN Commissions and Members to promote the safeguarding of Asia's natural heritage by securing core populations of gibbons in protected and conserved areas and ensuring that priority populations of the most range-restricted species be considered for World Heritage Site designation, to secure gibbon habitat in line with the KMGBF;
2. CALLS ON range States to prohibit private holding of gibbons for entertainment or tourism (except in zoos), promote rewilding following best practice, and foster to this effect collaboration among government, non-governmental organisations, academics, communities, the private sector, GGN and the Species Survival Commission;
3. URGES all States and the private sector to avoid executing projects harming gibbon habitat, and to establish policies against trade in deforestation-linked products;
4. CALLS ON range States and the international community to engage local actors in conservation, increase public and private funding, and develop innovative financing for gibbon conservation;

5. ENCOURAGES the global community, particularly range States, to base gibbon conservation on data-driven action plans, to protect and restore gibbon habitats and contribute to local development, conduct long-term gibbon population monitoring, and support the implementation of the KMGBF relevant to gibbons; and

6. PROMOTES international collaboration in developing and sharing best practice, including gibbon disease prevention and gibbon-friendly ecotourism, to enhance conservation knowledge and efforts.