

117 Strengthening the prevention of risks associated with invasive alien forest bio-aggressors

RECALLING that invasive alien species (IAS) are recognised as one of the main causes of global biodiversity erosion, with major consequences on the functioning of ecosystems and economic costs estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars each year;

RECALLING that Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls for measures to be put in place to prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species;

NOTING that, unlike plants or vertebrates, bio-aggressors which include bacteria, viruses, fungi and oomycetes, nematodes, and insects are currently poorly integrated into global, national and local strategies dealing with invasive alien species and are a key component of the One Health concept;

ALARMED also by the increase in unknown introductions and the induced risks of invasion of bio-aggressors in all regions of the planet;

ALARMED by the proven ecological and economic consequences on forests of certain exotic bio-aggressors that can be amplified by climate change;

HIGHLIGHTING the difficulty in detecting and identifying these organisms and the significant gaps in knowledge about their biology and ecology; and

STRESSING also the importance of anticipating the risks of invasion because of the great difficulty in limiting the progression and impact of bio-aggressors in a forest once the first outbreaks are observed;

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

1. CALLS on States to:

a. integrate forest bio-aggressors into IAS control strategies;

b. mainstream prevention by:

i. drastically limiting the introduction of plants with high potential for invasive bio-aggressors;

ii. developing a strategy for identifying introduction pathways and potentially invasive species, including through sentinel plantations (in exporting countries); and

iii. strengthening cooperation on knowledge sharing, particularly on taxonomy;

c. scale up early detection and surveillance of bio-aggressors by strengthening:

i. research on monitoring the biodiversity of complex ecosystems, including methods for detecting and combating invasive species;

ii. research on the diversity, biogeography and ecology of bio-aggressors and their antagonists;

iii. training of foresters;

iv. border controls focused on easily usable detection tools; and

v. product traceability; and

d. strengthen public information on the risks of importing all plant products; and

2. CALLS on stakeholders to avoid management practices that may promote the establishment and dispersal of bio-aggressors by:

- a. promoting natural regeneration as much as possible;
- b. limiting monoculture and relying on species mixing and genetic diversity; and
- c. promoting good practices such as cleaning tools and machines.