

124 Members are the heart of IUCN: strengthening global conservation by strengthening the institutional governance of the world's oldest, largest international conservation organisation

RECOGNISING that IUCN was created in 1948 and has since become “the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it”;

GRAVELY CONCERNED that our conservation crises, underpinned by inequitable and mass-scale human suffering, requires that IUCN is successful in achieving its mission;

UNDERSTANDING that as IUCN is a union of governmental, civil society, Indigenous Peoples' Organisations, and other affiliate Members under Swiss and international law, Members are the legal and ethical heart of IUCN;

APPRECIATING that IUCN is statutorily obligated to attain its objectives by mobilising Members, strengthening their capacity, promoting their cooperation and developing networks to support them;

GREATLY APPRECIATING the work of the Membership Support Unit, with immense gratitude to the Regional Focal Points, who work most closely with Members;

NOTING that “Members shall have the obligation ... to support and facilitate the ... governance of IUCN” (IUCN Statutes, Part III, 12.c(i));

NOTING that the Director General is “responsible for the implementation of the policy and the programme of IUCN ... and for coordinating the work of the Secretariat with all other components” (IUCN Statutes, Part IX, 79(b-c)); and

NOTING that a responsibility of the IUCN Council is to “provide oversight and guidance ... on ... the Union ... and ... the Director General” and “fulfil its fiduciary responsibilities to the Members...” (IUCN Statutes, Part IV, 37(ii-iii));

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

1. CALLS UPON the Director General and Council to:

a. acknowledge that the very existence of our world conservation crises calls for a critical inquiry into the institution and processes of our world conservation organisation, and

b. prioritise the strengthening of membership interests and engagement throughout the Union, with policies, guidance and projects co-created and co-owned by Members themselves, and from the initial stages; and

2. CALLS UPON the Council to prioritise the creation of a ‘Members are the Heart of IUCN’ Working Group, with Members selected through a nomination process open to all Members, in order to develop a guidance document directed to the Director General and Council that aims to address Member concerns and put Members at the heart of the Union’s programmes, processes, projects and priorities.