

125 Identifying Key Geoheritage Areas for safeguarding geoheritage sites of global significance and moving towards a holistic nature conservation

RECALLING Resolution 7.074 *Geoheritage and protected areas* (Marseille, 2020), which requested the Director General and the World Commission on Protected Areas to support the development of a detailed study envisaging the establishment of a future IUCN initiative on Key Geoheritage Areas (KGA) to protect geoheritage sites of global significance and promote more integrated approaches to nature conservation;

RECOGNISING that many geoheritage sites preserve unique and fragile records of the memory of the Earth and, in addition to this strictly geological value, also play a key role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, through atmospheric and oceanic processes, geological processes, flood regulation and water quality management (e.g. hydrological cycle, atmospheric chemistry, erosion control, soil filtration);

FURTHER RECOGNISING that these geoheritage sites may also provide essential conditions for biodiversity and human activities, including soil processes, habitat provision, land and water for human use, and burial and storage functions (e.g. waste storage, oil and gas deposits, carbon capture and water storage);

KNOWING that geoheritage sites of global significance benefit society spiritually and culturally, including through geotourism, fostering cultural and historical connections, inspiring art, encouraging social development, and informing us about Earth's history (e.g. evolution, extinctions and past environments);

ACKNOWLEDGING that KGAs will play a key role in preventing the loss or degradation of geodiversity, which, in turn, will help address biodiversity loss, as geodiversity provides the fundamental framework supporting biodiversity; and

BEARING IN MIND that KGAs can support Indigenous peoples and Local communities by providing opportunities to share in the benefits of the recognition and reasoned uses of geoheritage, such as employment, economic investment, societal mobilisation, civic pride and enhanced scientific and educational understanding;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and Commissions to work with KGA partners to identify, protect and promote KGAs;
2. INVITES Commissions, Members and other institutions, as appropriate, to work with KGA partners to identify, document and manage KGAs through:
 - a. applying the KGA Guidelines to select geoheritage sites of global significance;
 - b. monitoring the condition, threats and conservation measures at KGAs to keep documentation up to date; and
 - c. creating an effective platform for sharing knowledge among stakeholders, practitioners, researchers, scientists and others; and
3. INVITES governments to:
 - a. use KGAs to support the identification of geoheritage sites of global significance for establishing new and expanding existing protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures;
 - b. use KGAs to raise awareness of how geodiversity elements and processes play a crucial role in underpinning biodiversity conservation and the conservation of protected areas, while also providing additional ecosystem services;

- c. recognise and provide opportunities for Indigenous and Local communities living in and around KGAs to participate in their safeguarding, planning and governance, as appropriate; and
- d. invest in the identification, documentation and management of KGAs.