

Recognising unequivocally and effectively supporting the crucial conservation role of territories of life and their custodians

AWARE that territories of life comprise the lands, waters and gifts of nature collectively governed, managed and conserved by their custodians Indigenous peoples and Local and Afro-descendant communities, settled and mobile, who have multiple and historically interactive bonds with their territories – knowledge, labour, sustenance, identity, arts, culture, economy, defence, sacrifice, responsibility and ongoing care;

AWARE that territories of life provide ecological and climate regulation functions for all and that when adequately recognised and supported, they can alone fulfil goals 1, 2 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF);

AWARE that the biological diversity of territories of life is linked to the continued livelihoods of their custodians and to the diversity of their languages, cultures and living knowledge systems, essential for sustainable use and restoration;

AWARE that territories of life are governed under diverse sociopolitical arrangements, from indigenous customary rights to traditional common property, sacred sites or collective property;

AWARE that territories of life are often affected and degraded by unsustainable development policies, aggressive extractive practices, agro-industry, urbanism, socio-economic inequality, and ecological and cultural changes;

CELEBRATING the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) 2007 and the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) 2018 and the obligations of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) under Article 8j, the Programme of Work on Protected Areas and the KMGBF;

RECOGNISING the efforts of some governments to implement the CBD Decisions and the recommendations of the IUCN World Parks Congresses regarding diversity, quality and vitality of governance, and indigenous and traditional cultures; and

BUILDING UPON the various IUCN Resolutions on Indigenous peoples and Local communities in conservation adopted previously and always implemented in a limited manner;

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

URGES the Director General to activate a working group among its Members, Commissions, Secretariat and autonomous custodian organisations to:

- a. begin a process of 'truth and reconciliation' about the historical and present dynamics that impact territories of life and their custodians and their irreplaceable role in ensuring that future generations inherit a diverse, just and habitable world;
- b. identify forms of restorative justice for custodians to maintain or resume their collective rights and responsibilities to govern and conserve their territories of life in ways appropriate to their cultures; and
- c. assist the Parties to the CBD, the Global Environment Facility and related international agencies to:
 - i. based on the free, prior and informed consent of the custodians, recognise territories of life both within and outside national systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, as a 'third way' sui generis and as spaces for sustainable self-determination;
 - ii. protect territories of life from exploitative and extractive activities (Target 14 of the KMGBF);
 - iii. support networks of custodians to facilitate and channel support (funds, but not only); and

iv. support conservation actors in each region to increase their capacities and improve their policies and practices for the adequate recognition and support of territories of life and the diversity of cultures and living knowledge of their custodians.