

141 Welcoming the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on climate change

Welcoming the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change (23 July 2025);

GRATEFUL to the Director General and the World Commission on Environmental Law for the submissions to the Court on behalf of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature;

AGREEING with the assessment in the Advisory Opinion that the questions “posed by the General Assembly represent more than a legal problem: they concern an existential problem of planetary proportions that imperils all forms of life and the very health of our planet” (Advisory Opinion, para 456);

RECOGNISING that “conservation of nature and natural resources involves the preservation and management of the living world, the natural environment of humanity, and the earth’s renewable natural resources on which rests the foundations of human civilization” (IUCN Statutes, Preamble);

ALARMED that the consequences of exceeding a temperature rise of 1.5° C, as explained by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report) would prevent IUCN from attaining its objectives “to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable” (IUCN Statutes, Article 2);

CONCERNED that adverse impacts of climate change are denying people the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, recognised by the UN General Assembly (Res. 76/300), and by IUCN Resolution 6.081 *Humanity’s Right to a Healthy Environment* (Hawai’i 2016);

CONVINCED that attaining the Sustainable Development Goals is essential for the “just transition” that needs to accompany obligations for climate change mitigation and adaptation; and

RECOGNISING that virtually all States have enacted national legislation providing for environmental impact assessments, which the International Court of Justice finds is necessary to fulfil climate change obligations;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and the World Commission on Environmental Law to prepare a study of relevant legal instruments and approaches for appropriate implementation of the obligations of States in respect of climate change;

2. CALLS UPON all IUCN Members to cooperate with the Director General in producing this study and to take all appropriate measures to observe and implement the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in respect of Climate Change; and

3. URGES IUCN Members to take all appropriate measures to observe and implement the Advisory Opinion, with precedence to duties:

a. to cooperate for addressing climate change as a common concern, as a “pressing need and a legal obligation;”

b. to take all appropriate measures to protect the marine environment;

c. to act with “stringent due diligence” when combatting climate change by limiting greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing greenhouse gas sinks and reservoirs;

d. to undertake environmental impacts assessments, in accordance with law, in order to take necessary measures to protect the climate system and other parts of Earth’s environment; and

e. to fulfil the human right to the environment and attain the Sustainable Development Goals, as foundations for a “just transition.”