

144 Mobilise urgent action to prevent and combat forest fires

ALARMED by the unprecedented scale of forest fires in 2025, with more than 1 million hectares burned in Europe (compared to an average of 350,000 from 2006 to 2024) and 3.5 million in Canada, and by data published by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in 2025 showing that, for the first time, mega-fires affected both tropical and boreal forests in 2024, with South America alone accounting for a quarter of global losses;

SERIOUSLY CONCERNED about the growing impacts of anthropogenic megafires on the climate, biodiversity, ecosystem services provided by forests, the economy, human health and populations;

RECOGNISING that the ecological role of fire varies across ecosystems and that policies must be adapted to each ecological and social context, in relation to climate change;

AWARE that the frequency and scale of fires increases the vulnerability of species, ecosystems and protected areas;

RECALLING the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scenarios with temperature increases that could exceed +4.5 °C, exacerbating droughts and heat waves that increase the frequency, size, intensity and extent of forest fires;

ALSO RECALLING the recommendations to immediately begin adapting to climate change, as specified in the IPCC's sixth report;

EMPHASISING that rural, peri-urban and island communities, particularly in Southern countries, are on the front line when it comes to the intensification of fires, without having sufficient resources and tools to deal with them or to restore the environment after a disaster; and

INSISTING on the need to strengthen access to funding, real-time data and early warning tools through partnerships with national authorities, universities, NGOs and international organisations ;

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

1. CALLS UPON States and local authorities to:

- a. make fire prevention a political priority and build cooperation from the local to the international level;
- b. manage ecosystems sustainably to prevent fires and limit their impact by:
 - i. assessing the flammability of forest stands;
 - ii. promoting more resilient mixed forests; and
 - iii. managing the territory taking into account fire vulnerability, biodiversity and soils;
- c. promote prevention through information campaigns and dialogue with local communities to better adapt land use practices and involve them in prevention, firefighting and restoration;
- d. integrate biodiversity and soil protection into all phases: prevention, firefighting and post-fire measures;
- e. study burned habitats and restore them using Nature-based Solutions;
- f. build a global database of feedback, cooperating to develop AI tools that are useful to actors in the field; and
- g. integrate Indigenous knowledge into fire management; and

2. REQUESTS the Director General and the Commissions to:

a. establish guidelines distinguishing between different contexts (fires resulting from the natural cycle of ecosystems, cultural or controlled burning, extreme fires), ensuring socially inclusive measures, the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, and priority support for the most vulnerable; and

b. develop guidelines for fire risk management in protected areas.