

## IUCN Barcelona World Conservation Congress Connectivity Conservation Resolution

### **Conserving connectivity of natural lands between protected areas: a response to climate change**

Recognising the fundamental importance of protected areas in the conservation of life on Earth;

Recalling that the seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted a *Programme of Work* on protected areas, the overall objective of which was to establish and maintain “*comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative systems of protected areas*” that collectively, will significantly reduce the rate of loss of global biodiversity;

Noting that there is a limit to the area which can be set aside as protected areas, and that those areas reserved have geographically fixed, legally defined boundaries;

Aware that human caused changes to climate will result in habitat changes in protected areas and biome shift beyond fixed boundaries which in turn will impact the distribution of species and may lead to extinctions;

Mindful that the conservation of local, regional and large scale interconnected natural lands and seas between protected areas maintain opportunities for species to move beyond reserve boundaries in association with biome shift;

Recalling the resolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Montreal, Canada in 1996 which called on IUCN members to “*further the development of ecological networks at national, regional and intercontinental levels as a means of strengthening the integrity and resilience of the world’s biological diversity*” and called on the Director-General “*to review experience in developing and applying ecological networks*” and to “*promote co-operation in the further development of ecological networks*” especially at transboundary sites.

Recalling that the CBD Programme of Work targets for 2015 “*that all protected area systems are integrated into the wider landscape and seascape, and relevant sectors, by applying the ecosystem approach and taking into account ecological connectivity and the concept, where appropriate, of ecological networks*”;

Noting that connectivity conservation is a strategic part of landscape and seascape integration of protected areas, and is focused on retaining intact lands and seas for species conservation amongst the last of the world’s natural areas, such as along the World’s great terrestrial mountains, from mountain summits to the sea, and along submerged mountain ranges;

Aware of the precedents established by international connectivity conservation initiatives pioneered by Non Government Organisation’s, nations, and communities such as Yellowstone to Yukon and boreal conservation efforts in North America; the Pan-European Ecological Network, especially Estonia and many Central European

States; the Alps to Atherton, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Gondwana link in Australia; the Terai Arc in Nepal and India; and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and; the Vilacamba-Amboró in South America;

Recognising the critical importance of people in natural connectivity conservation areas, their values, rights, needs, and aspirations, and the need for them to be part of an integrated approach to connectivity conservation areas as part of ecological networks and to enable them to share in the benefits of protecting connectivity;

Recalling that the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report* found that “over the past 50 years humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history”;

Noting the urgency of action required to help retain these natural, interconnected lands and seas due to the pressures of global change, and in particular, the growth in the world’s population from 6.7 billion to 9.2 billion peoples by 2050;

Noting that the new carbon economy provides an opportunity for carbon storage and carbon sequestration in ecological networks including protected areas and connectivity conservation areas, and in particular, in high biodiversity conservation value sites;

Noting that for terrestrial connectivity conservation areas, future water economies will value even more, natural catchments that deliver reliable quantities of high quality water.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress at its fourth session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:

1. REQUESTS the Director General to urgently facilitate strategic connectivity conservation areas as part of ecological network initiatives including:

(a) achieving clear recognition of the need for and establishment of connectivity conservation areas as a critical national and international adaptation and mitigation response to climate change;

(b) achieving a Union wide (one programme) approach to connectivity conservation initiatives in recognition of the interdisciplinary nature of the responses needed and the benefits of the IUCN Secretariat, Commissions, Members and partners working together;

(c) determining, in collaboration with national governments and Non Government Organisations, a priority list of strategic connectivity conservation areas that can help sustain the natural values of protected areas, World Heritage Sites, World Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar Sites; that help conserve species of the World; and for terrestrial areas, that help retain natural water catchments of critical importance to people;

(d) identifying and securing “best practice” planning and implementation tools and mechanisms necessary for achieving and managing connectivity conservation areas for the long-term;

(e) investigating mechanisms for funding ecological networks and especially connectivity conservation areas and protected areas through the new carbon economy; the water economy; and through national or other government or philanthropic investments;

(f) providing leadership and guidance to facilitate connectivity conservation areas at local, national, regional and very large scales particularly where such natural areas extend to cover more than one country (including transboundary protected areas) or extend across parts of the high seas;

(g) providing leadership to facilitate the completion of national reserve systems of nations and international reserves as part of achieving effective large scale connectivity conservation areas and ecological networks.