

## **Integrating culture and cultural diversity into IUCN's policy and programme**

CONSIDERING that for millennia human communities have interacted with their local biodiversity and developed belief and value systems upon which are based a diversity of environmental management and conservation practices;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that conventional conservation paradigms have not sufficiently taken into account and effectively incorporated the way in which systems of knowledge and practice differ across cultural groups, and that this can become an obstacle to achieving effective conservation;

NOTING that IUCN's Vision and Mission focus on justice and equity, imply respect for human cultures, and that IUCN constituents should be cognizant of relevant issues;

RECOGNIZING that biodiversity conservation policy, planning and implementation need to be better informed by research and knowledge regarding the integral relations between culture and environmental management and conservation and between cultural and biological diversity;

CONCERNED that cultural diversity, like biological diversity, is seriously threatened around the world, and that this leads to the collective impoverishment of humanity and the diminishment of knowledge and practice that contribute to living in ecologically sustainable ways;

RECOGNIZING that IUCN supports the principles expressed in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, and that IUCN has a solid body of policy recognizing indigenous people's rights but not specifically concerning relations between culture and environmental management and conservation or between cultural and biological diversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that a variety of international declarations, programmes and documents recognize integral relationships between cultural values, environmental management and biodiversity conservation, including: the UN *Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; the Convention on Biological Diversity (Articles 8j and 10c); the *Earth Charter* principles 12 and 12b and 8b; the UN *Declaration on Social and Economic Rights*; the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) *4<sup>th</sup> Global Environment Outlook*; and

CONSIDERING that the Resolutions adopted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IUCN World Conservation Congress call for improved knowledge, policy and practice that link cultural and biological diversity, and address their common threats and opportunities to strengthen linkages;

### **The World Conservation Congress at its 4<sup>th</sup> Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:**

1. URGES all of IUCN's members and partners, and the broader conservation community, to establish appropriate mechanisms to apply the principles contained herein in their work and to develop policies to generate improved understanding of the relations between culture, cultural diversity and biological diversity consistent with these principles; and

2. REQUESTS IUCN's members and partners to endorse, support, participate in and advocate the development of a clear policy on understanding and incorporating diverse cultural values and practices into the planning, design and implementation of programmes to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, based on the following principles:

(a) cultural groups understand, and interact with, their natural surroundings through a variety of belief and value systems, knowledge systems, and practices that affect the condition of biological diversity;

(b) lasting effective conservation practice depends on an in-depth understanding of the relations between ecological conditions and the complex beliefs and values, knowledge systems, and practices of diverse cultural groups; and

(c) the need to use a plurality of appropriate methodological approaches to develop a better understanding of the complex interrelations between *in situ* ecological conditions and the relevant beliefs and values, knowledge systems, and practices of local cultural groups.

**In addition, the World Conservation Congress, at its 4<sup>th</sup> Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the IUCN Programme 2009–2012:**

3. REQUESTS the Director General and IUCN Commissions to endorse, support, participate in and advocate for the development of a clear policy on understanding and incorporating diverse cultural values and practices into the planning, design and implementation of programmes to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, based on the principles listed in sub-paragraphs 3 (a)–(c) above;

4. REQUESTS the Commission Chairs to collaborate in developing policy and technical guidance on the linkages between biological and cultural diversity; and

5. CALLS ON the Director General to give special attention to the integration of culture and environmental management and conservation, and between cultural diversity and biological diversity, within the IUCN Programme.