

WCC-2012-Res-048-EN

Valuing and conserving geoheritage within the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016*

AWARE of the increasing interest and greater commitment of the States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities with respect to the preservation, value assessment, study and sustainable use of geodiversity (geological diversity) and geoheritage (geological heritage);

RECALLING that geodiversity is an important natural factor that conditions and underpins biological, cultural and landscape diversity, and is also an important parameter to be considered in the conservation, assessment and management of protected areas;

RECALLING ALSO that geoheritage is a constituent and inseparable element of the natural heritage, and that it possesses cultural, aesthetic, landscape, economic and intrinsic values that must be preserved and transmitted to future generations;

BEARING IN MIND the pioneering work carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other international institutions in the promotion and sustainable use of geoheritage to promote local socioeconomic development in underdeveloped areas through the Global Geoparks Network (GGN);

ACKNOWLEDGING the increasing impacts of economic development, which are frequently not sustainable, on the world's geodiversity and geoheritage;

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO that the planning of this development underestimates or even ignores the intrinsic values of geodiversity, geoheritage and geological processes present in natural areas;

AWARE that the GGN and UNESCO Global Geosites Programme covers less than 2% of the world's terrestrial and marine surface, and that most of the geoheritage is not included in protected natural areas;

RECALLING the pioneering trend established by the Council of Europe in 2004 with the approval of recommendation Rec(2004)3 on Conservation of the Geological Heritage and Areas of Special Geological Interest, and its call to strengthen cooperation with international organizations, scientific institutions and NGOs in the field of geological heritage conservation, and their participation in programmes towards geoconservation;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the conservation of geodiversity and geoheritage (i.e. geoconservation) also contributes to avoiding the loss of species and habitats, and to preserving the integrity of ecosystems, as well as to safeguarding the diversity and the quality of landscapes;

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO that the conservation and management of geoheritage requires that all governments and organizations integrate geoconservation within their objectives and action plans;

BEARING IN MIND that the IUCN guidelines for the application of management categories in protected areas explicitly consider amongst the common objectives for all protected areas the need to:

- a. maintain the diversity of landscape or habitat;
- b. preserve important landscape, geomorphological and geological features; and

- c. preserve natural and scenic areas of national and international relevance for cultural, spiritual and scientific purposes;

BEARING IN MIND ALSO that the objectives of IUCN are to influence, encourage and assist the societies of the world to preserve the integrity of nature, and that this integrity is incomplete and inefficient if it does not consider and incorporate the totality of natural heritage, i.e. the most valued elements and processes of nature, both biotic and abiotic;

RECALLING that the conservation of geodiversity and geoheritage at international, national and local level contributes towards the objectives of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014);

RECALLING ALSO that IUCN Resolution 4.040 *Conservation of geodiversity and geological heritage*, adopted by the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008), promotes actions related with geodiversity and geoheritage, as well as the collaboration between the members and other organizations in this matter;

BEARING IN MIND that areas with relevant geoheritage may deteriorate if this type of natural heritage is not considered in planning and development policies; and

AWARE of the need to promote the proper conservation and management of the world's geoheritage, and in particular of the sites of geological interest that represent it;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. CALLS ON IUCN Members to ensure that, when reference is made in the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016* to nature in general, preference be given to inclusive terms like nature, natural diversity or natural heritage, so that geodiversity and geoheritage are not excluded;
2. REQUESTS the Director General to initiate a discussion in the regions on the conservation and management of geodiversity and geoheritage, in collaboration with IUCN Members and other organizations, in the spirit of the abovementioned request and with the view to giving consideration to this issue for the next intersessional programme; and
3. CALLS ON IUCN Commissions, and in particular on the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), to:
 - a. promote and support local socioeconomic development initiatives, such as UNESCO Geoparks, based on the sustainable use of geoheritage, including the proper management of geoheritage in protected areas;
 - b. promote and support, in collaboration with UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), the elaboration and extension of the inventory for the Global Geosites Programme, as well as other regional and international inventories of sites of geologic interest; and
 - c. support the Secretariat in the implementation of the actions requested in point 1 above.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.