

Addressing human-wildlife conflict: fostering a safe and beneficial coexistence of people and wildlife

NOTING that although humans have coexisted with terrestrial and marine fauna (wildlife) for millennia, growing competition over space and resources means that Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) is a complex and escalating global challenge;

RECOGNISING that humans and wildlife (terrestrial and marine fauna) are integrated into socio-ecological systems, and that HWC is a complex and escalating global challenge due to changing relationships among people about resources and wild animals that are mediated by local, national, and international economic and cultural trends;

FURTHER NOTING that HWC can be defined as ‘negative interactions between people and wild animals, with consequences for both people and their resources and wildlife and their habitats’;

CONCERNED that HWC is a significant risk to the survival of many threatened species, and the integrity of ecosystems and protected areas, as well as eroding people’s appreciation of the value of wildlife and their support for associated conservation and resource-management measures that can drive wildlife or nature-based economies;

ALSO CONCERNED that HWC involves many wildlife species that are recognised as keystone species and/or ecosystem engineers, whose removal due to HWC irreversibly changes ecosystems, leads to loss of ecological integrity, and cannot be replaced by other species from similar functional groups;

ALARMED that despite IUCN recommendations dating back to 2003 (e.g. World Parks Congress Recommendation V.20 *Preventing and Mitigating Human-Wildlife Conflicts* (Durban, 2003)) HWC still leads to avoidable negative impacts on people’s livelihoods, personal safety and well-being, with many of those affected among the world’s most marginalised and vulnerable peoples;

CONCERNED that in a corporate context HWC has an impact on yields, profits and worker safety, and in the developing world, HWC impacts food security, local and national economic growth, and opportunities for achieving sustainable development;

FURTHER CONCERNED about the scarcity of mechanisms that provide wildlife-derived benefits to, and secure livelihoods for indigenous peoples and local communities most affected by HWC;

RECOGNISING that escalating HWC will hinder achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), *inter alia* SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15;

ACKNOWLEDGING that HWC needs to be addressed at relevant scales that often transcend jurisdictional boundaries, and that there is an urgent need to create a global enabling environment that ensures a safer and more beneficial coexistence of people and wildlife, and to empower affected communities, ensuring that they have the knowledge, skills, resources, resolve and capacity to protect their own lives and their property; and

WELCOMING the establishment of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) Task Force on Human-Wildlife Conflict;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. CALLS ON the Director General and Members to support explicit recognition of HWC as a conservation and livelihood concern in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework of the Convention on Biodiversity and to ensure broad and active participation of IUCN Members in its Task Force on HWC, including the mapping of HWC hotspots and promoting an integrated approach to HWC management (e.g. by applying the SAFE Systems Approach to achieve dual human development and biodiversity objectives without exacerbating HWC);

2. CALLS ON the global community to:

a. recognise Human Wildlife Conflict as a rapidly growing cause of wildlife declines and population disruptions in freshwater, marine and terrestrial environs, as well as a threat to sustainable development, food security, public safety, the rights of wildlife to exist in the landscape, and biodiversity conservation; and

b. develop holistic responses at the necessary scale, co-created and co-implemented by multiple stakeholders, including the local and indigenous communities most affected, and supported by the best-available information and systematically collected and credible evidence;

3. URGES governments to:

- a. incorporate the needs of both wildlife and human populations (including HWC risks) into well-informed spatial and temporal plans that form part of holistic cross-sectoral national and sub-national development plans, and which maintain functional, ecological connectivity, minimise HWC, and optimise opportunities for benefit creation from sustainable wildlife management;
- b. develop specific laws, regulations and incentives, underpinned by good governance, that buffer affected people and businesses from the impacts of HWC, foster wildlife-based benefits and enable those benefits to accrue equitably, with emphasis on incentives to include mitigation of HWCs as part of local or regionally appropriate regulations;
- c. address HWC in the framework of relevant fora, including the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and
- d. identify and engage with public and private conservation agencies and organisations as a component of HWC programmes, when appropriate;

4. URGES the private sector to:

- a. develop and adopt innovative technologies, strategies, and approaches to foster wildlife-based economies, such as ecotourism in the agricultural and ;industrial sectors, which can have positive impacts on wildlife if an integrated landscape approach is followed; and
- b. adopt best management practices to minimise HWC, ensure safe working conditions, conserve agro-biodiversity, and maintain and restore natural habitat connectivity and ecological processes across production sites;

5. URGES donor agencies to address HWC in their programmes and to adopt safeguards to avoid exacerbating HWC; and

6. URGES civil society organisations to undertake active roles in reducing HWC and promoting respectful coexistence of people and wildlife.