

A Statement on Transboundary Conservation for Biodiversity and Peace

endorsed by the participants of the International Symposium on Biodiversity Conservation and Peace Building in the Korean DMZ, CBD COP 12, Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 8 October 2014

Realizing the continuous expansion of transboundary conservation initiatives and the widespread establishment of Transboundary Conservation Areas worldwide;

Acknowledging that transboundary conservation, aimed at achieving conservation goals across international boundaries and through cooperative models, has the capacity to deliver multiple objectives, including enhanced nature conservation outcomes, sustainable socio-economic development, and the promotion of peace;

Recognizing that cooperative frameworks supported by transboundary conservation processes in times of political instability, involving local communities, indigenous peoples, protected area staff, civil society, and/or scientists, may be used as a platform for peace building and international collaboration;

Highlighting the important natural values of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which reflect inter alia a valuable model of ecosystem restoration in the temperate zone;

Reminding that the DMZ is the last relic of the Cold War in the 20th century, symbolizing a living peace monument and an 'ecology and history museum';

Considering the establishment of the Korea DMZ Eco-Peace Park would symbolize transformation of a conflict zone into a peace and biodiversity conservation zone through the convergence of ecology and peace;

Recalling the Recommendation 152 'Enlarging and connecting transboundary protected areas for the Ecological Corridor of Northeast Asia', adopted at the 5th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Jeju, 2012), particularly its component related to Baekdudaegan protected area that traverses the DMZ and encourages cooperation between Parties in ROK and DPRK in creating and sustaining the ecological network;

Reminding of the Decision X/31 'Protected Areas', Target 11 of the Strategic plan for biodiversity 2011-2020, and the Aichi biodiversity targets, adopted at the CBD COP 10 (Nagoya, 2010);

Noting the Section II/8 and the Goal 1.3. of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, adopted at the CBD COP 7 (Kuala Lumpur, 2004) and reflecting on the Recommendation 5.15 'Peace, Conflict and Protected Areas', adopted at the Vth World Parks Congress (Durban, 2003);

Acknowledging initiatives that foster transboundary cooperation for conservation of biodiversity and promotion of peace, such as the UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserves, European Green Belt, the Dinaric Arc Initiative, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, Cordillera del Condor, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, 'W' International Peace Park, Emerald Triangle Protected Forest Complex and many others;

The participants of the International Symposium on Biodiversity Conservation and Peace Building in the Korean DMZ

Call upon the CBD Parties to:

Support the initiation of a transboundary dialogue at local, national and/or regional levels for effective planning of transboundary conservation processes in areas where conservation goals can be better achieved through common approaches;

Establish Transboundary Conservation Areas as an efficient model for conserving nature across international boundaries and for promoting cooperation and peace;

Engage all relevant sectors of society in the governance of Transboundary Conservation Areas to secure efficiency and effectiveness of transboundary conservation governance, and participatory approaches;

Promote the generation of social, cultural and economic benefits for local communities and indigenous peoples through transboundary conservation and cooperation;

Support the development of a comprehensive global inventory of Transboundary Conservation Areas, in cooperation with IUCN WCPA, UNEP WCMC, UNESCO and CBD Secretariat;

Encourage mutual cooperation and exchange of knowledge between scientists, protected area managers, civil society and other interested parties from ROK, DPRK and wider countries in the region, with the view of the future Korea DMZ Eco-Peace Park being at the heart of cooperative efforts in Northeast Asia and connecting the region;

Call upon the international organisations to:

Facilitate the strengthening of the dialogue between the Parties in ROK and DPRK on the future of the DMZ and the adjoining areas, keeping in mind the important natural and cultural values and the historical importance of the area, and presenting the international cooperation model to seek peaceful prosperity and reconciliation between the two Koreas;

Work with the Parties of ROK and DPRK to develop an appropriate approach for the future of the DMZ, providing advice on the creation of a network of protected areas while ensuring the integrity of the DMZ and the support of local communities, with a deep understanding of this specific context.

Call upon the Governments of ROK and DPRK to:

Work to harmonize consensus to apply for international recognition of the DMZ as an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, highlighting the DMZ's function as an area of coexistence between man and nature, in line with the principles of sustainable development;

Consider the establishment of a permanent ecological monitoring station and sites within the DMZ to foster scientific and educational cooperation between scientists, professors and students from ROK, DPRK and the international community;

Secure the sustainability of biodiversity values in the DMZ and adjoining areas while carefully balancing socio-economic progress and conservation, and undertaking a coordinated approach in planning the future of the DMZ.