

## **M083**

### **The conservation and protection of the world's indigenous temperate grasslands**

CONSIDERING that indigenous temperate grasslands provide a wide range of ecological services for life on Earth: as a source of food, water and fibre for human livelihoods and well-being; for cultural and biological diversity; and the sequestration of carbon, particularly in the face of global climate change;

ACKNOWLEDGING that indigenous temperate grasslands, that occur on every continent except Antarctica, have been modified by human activity to such a degree that very little remains in its natural state and that they are currently considered by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) as one of the most at-risk ecosystems in the world;

CONFIRMING that indigenous temperate grasslands have a global level of protection of only 4–5%, the lowest of all terrestrial biomes, and that many new, large and ecologically viable protected areas need to be established to achieve conservation and protection on a landscape scale to reach the Aichi Biodiversity Target of 17%;

RECOGNIZING that the remaining areas of indigenous temperate grasslands continue to be threatened by inappropriate policies that lead to further loss through conversion and unsustainable land use and management practices;

ACKNOWLEDGING that many indigenous temperate grasslands play an important role in poverty and hunger alleviation and food production, and thus are not only strategic ecologically but are essential for contributing to the achievement of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs);

REALIZING the importance of indigenous temperate grasslands to the life and cultural survival of mobile indigenous peoples and, in turn, the value of the accumulated knowledge and experience of traditional temperate grasslands users to their on-going conservation and management;

ACKNOWLEDGING that climate change seriously affects the biodiversity of, and the provision of goods and services by, indigenous temperate grasslands, thus having a negative impact on biodiversity and people that depend on these grasslands for sustaining their lives and livelihoods;

CONSCIOUS that developing and implementing effective incentives for good land stewardship, restoration and the sustainable management of indigenous temperate grasslands is essential to guaranteeing their long-term sustainable use as healthy and living environments; and

RECOGNIZING that the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) of the WCPA Grasslands Specialist Group is focused on achieving the conservation and protection of the world's indigenous temperate grasslands to meet the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) targets and to contribute to the MDGs and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in coherence with the IUCN Drylands Programme, having achieved the following goals over the past decade:

- a. Assembled an international network of grasslands professionals to address the issues surrounding their conservation and protection;
- b. Improved communications on the subject through workshops, a newsletter, publications and website;

- c. Compiled a list of existing protected areas in the grasslands biome and identified priorities for future conservation and protection;
- d. Assessed the current state of knowledge on the economic value of intact indigenous temperate grasslands; and
- e. Observed an increase in the level of protection for this biome of 600%, from 0.69% to 5%, since the TGCI's inception in 1996;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and the IUCN Commissions to:
  - a. Acknowledge that indigenous temperate grasslands are one of the most imperilled and the least protected ecosystems and are under-represented in the world's protected area system and, as a consequence, include this issue in the implementation of the Global and Regional Programmes;
  - b. Encourage governments, non-government organizations and private interests to protect indigenous temperate grasslands, with the aim of achieving Aichi Target 11, with a minimum of 10% by 2014, as proposed at the IV<sup>th</sup> World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas in 1992 in Caracas, Venezuela;
  - c. Recognize that indigenous temperate grasslands require urgent and targeted action to protect, maintain and restore their biodiversity and the many valuable social, cultural, economic and ecological services they provide to sustain human life and well-being under the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016*; and
  - d. Support the work of the *Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative* and the WCPA Grasslands Specialist Group;
2. REQUESTS relevant governments to:
  - a. Increase the efforts to designate protected areas within indigenous temperate grassland regions, and integrate them into broader, multiple use landscapes; and
  - b. Promote the sustainable use of indigenous temperate grasslands through the development of incentive mechanisms and certification schemes; and
3. REQUESTS international funding mechanisms, including the Global Environment Facility, to support a targeted increase in funds available for temperate grassland conservation, protection and sustainable management.

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