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Bariloche Declaration



THE MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED PARTICIPANTS IN THIS **SECOND LATIN AMERICAN CONGRESS ON NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS**, HELD IN BARILOCHE, ARGENTINA, FROM 30 SEPTEMBER TO 6 OCTOBER 2007,

Represent a broad range of different interests: protected areas managers; representatives of national and local governments; regional integration bodies; civil organizations dedicated to nature conservation and social development; international organizations; indigenous and local communities; civil society; scientists and academics; and private business. All of us who attended the Congress also **share** a common concern and commitment.

We appreciate and are grateful for the efforts made by the National Parks Administration of Argentina, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), REDPARQUES, the World Conservation Union (UICN) and its World Commission on Protected Areas, as well as all the organizations and individuals whose contributions made it possible to hold the Congress that facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and discussion of our concerns and aspirations regarding our protected areas.

We recognize that the region's protected areas, as part of our natural and cultural heritage, are essential instruments if we are to achieve sustainable development objectives and improve our populations' well-being while, at the same time, solving the main global environmental problems. There is an urgent need to recognize this great challenge that we all face. **We reaffirm** that the developed countries owe an environmental debt to the Latin American region.

We recognize that, a decade after the First Latin American Congress on National Parks and Other Protected Areas was held in the city of Santa Marta, Colombia (21-28 May 1997), a series of important events have taken place that set guidelines for the international protected areas agenda:

- a) the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals at the United Nations Summit on the Millennium (New York, United States, September 2000) that set priority development objectives and indicators;
- b) the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002) where the following goals were adopted: before 2012 to reduce the present rate of biological diversity loss; before 2012 to establish a network of protected marine areas; and, before 2015 to maintain fish populations or re-establish them to sustainable levels;
- c) the Fifth World Parks Congress of the UICN (Durban, South Africa, September 2003) where the Durban Accord and the Durban Action Plan on protected areas were adopted;
- d) the adoption (decision VII/28) by the Seventh Conference of the Parties (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2004) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of the Convention's Programme of Work on Protected areas;
- e) the First and Second Mesoamerican Congresses on Protected Areas (Managua, Nicaragua, 2003 and Panama City, April 2006) where guidelines

were established and recommendations made to strengthen the region's protected areas;

- f) the First International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC, Geelong, Australia, October 2005) that made recommendations to increase coverage and strengthen effectiveness of protected marine areas;
- g) the Fourth (Australia, 2003) and Fifth (Scotland, 2005) World Ranger Congresses and the First Iberoamerican Ranger Congress (Chile, 2005);
- h) ratification by countries of the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, ILO 169, Geneva, 1989.

We emphasize that different forms of social organization have appeared, advanced and strengthened in the region in recent decades that have led to environmental management of protected areas being shared among States and local social stakeholders, thus helping to conserve protected natural spaces and biological diversity.

We reaffirm our support of and commitment to the Programme of Work on Protected Areas established by the CBD as being essential to reaching the goal of having financially sustainable and efficiently managed protected areas systems.

We are aware that we live in a constantly changing world where each day brings more evidence of the impacts caused by climate change, the growing fragmentation of ecosystems and the spread of invasive species. We face great conservation and development challenges of: poverty reduction; population growth; urbanization; cases of uncontrolled economic and industrial development, and pollution associated with their production processes; rapidly developing megaprojects; non-food agroindustries; a growing demand for food and other natural resources; over exploitation of fishery resources; deteriorating coastal environments, especially the growing and serious problems of the demand for good quality water; and problems associated with the availability of land and land speculation.

We take pride in our great natural and cultural wealth in a region that has several of the world's most important megadiverse areas and with globally important endemism and biodiversity centres. We are also proud of the knowledge and experiences we have accumulated in the difficult but vital task of confronting the threats to our natural and cultural patrimony.

We appreciate that Latin America now has some 4 000 protected areas covering over 4 million km², or more than 18 percent of the region's terrain. These figures represent 4 percent of the number of areas but 20 percent of the extension of all the world's protected areas. This makes our region one of the planet's most dynamic and committed to establishing and managing protected areas.

We are aware of the considerable gaps, especially when it comes to protecting marine environments and inland freshwater ecosystems, and that there are significant biases in conserving land biodiversity in the different regions. Cause for concern is the limited cover of protected marine areas that account for only 0.5 percent of the region's total marine zone. Few new protected marine areas are established and there are also important gaps in ecosystems representation, especially in the southeast Pacific and in the southwest Atlantic. No efforts are

being made to establish oceanic and high seas protected areas in this zone with one of the world's highest levels of fisheries exploitation. We know that, without tireless short-term efforts, it will be very hard to meet the international 2012 deadline.

We welcome that regional and subregional policies and plans to conserve biodiversity are being advanced and implemented¹. These instruments show that countries are willing to jointly deal with environmental themes; we hope that these plans will be converted into policies to take action regionally, nationally and locally.

We recognize progress made, although still incomplete, in: developing national protected areas; the international recognition given to many areas as World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar Sites and Important Bird Conservation Areas; assessing whether management is effective in many of the protected areas; and the continued advances made by park rangers and other conservation workers to improve their performance. We also recognize the experiences gained in deconcentrating and decentralizing government functions in establishing and managing protected areas, developing ecological and functional connectivity initiatives, and providing governance outlines on, for example, protected areas co-management, areas administered by sub-national and local governments, indigenous and local communities, and private owners.

We emphasize that protected areas tourism, as one of the main sources of financing conservation activities, may help conservation by making it possible for protected areas to play an important role in developing regional economies and, therefore, bringing benefits to local and indigenous communities; tourism promotes education in protected areas by putting the tourist in direct contact with nature and, furthermore, it lets society as a whole have access to and learn about protected areas; by so doing, it helps to raise environmental awareness and to strengthen the commitment to conservation's values and objectives.

We recognize that the region is a global leader in joint and co-responsible protected areas management with indigenous, afrodescendent and diverse ethnic groups whose territories, lands and resources have, in many cases, been conserved by using traditional practices and knowledge. However, these groups are still not doing enough to fully exercise their collective and individual rights guaranteed in national and international legislation. We propose, therefore, that this wealth of experience and lessons learnt be used, when appropriate, when defining policies and technical guidelines on global and regional protected areas, and in promoting scientific and traditional knowledge while respecting the human rights of the populations and communities whose ancestors inhabited such sites.

We recognize the value of protected areas as excellent spaces for environmental education and interpretation.

⁽¹⁾ The Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the countries of the Tropical Andes, the Sustainable Development Plan for the Amazonian Countries, the Central American Biodiversity and Sustainable Use Plan and the Regional Strategic Connectivity Programmes – PERCON and Work in Protected areas – PERTAP of the Central American Environment and Development Commission, and the Southern Cone bioregional integration strategies, for example Yungas, Gran Chaco and Patagonian Andean Forest, the OTCA regional programme on sustainable management of Amazonian protected areas, the CPPS Plan of Action, the UNEP regional seas programme for the Greater Caribbean, among others.

We are aware that in the past decade more threats have appeared against the integrity of protected areas, especially: the advance of large-scale agriculture (including agrofuels production); illegal land colonization; illicit traffic in timber (felling) and other flora and fauna invasive species; the extension of unsustainable mining, petroleum and forestry activities; and illicit crops in some countries. In many cases these threats are intensified by the emergence of road and energy infrastructure initiatives without adequate consideration given to the environment, as well as by the increased demand for natural resources for international trade, making them more vulnerable to global change.

We are concerned that the impact of climate change in altering temperature and precipitation patterns, as well as the subsequent variations in biome and species distribution, is a new threat to protected areas in Latin America. It is urgent, therefore, that action be taken to allow the vulnerability protected areas to climate change to be identified on different scales, that mitigation and adaptation measures be taken, especially for critical ecosystems, and that special indicators and monitoring tools be designed. Likewise, the design of National Protected Areas Systems should be modified to allow the most fragile ecosystems to become more resilient, and continue to reduce the vulnerability of populations that directly depend on the goods and services ecosystems provide.

We are aware that coastal and marine areas are under increasing pressure to be used for fishing, tourism and urban development. There are coastal and marine areas of great ecological importance that become more vulnerable because they are neglected or are not properly managed.

We are also aware of the need to establish protected areas to conserve the region's special high mountain and fragile ecosystems, such as glaciers, high plateaus (punas, páramos, jalcas) and swamps, with integrated strategies to conserve these ecosystems and that assess how they can be managed to prevent their loss because of degradation due to global threats.

We emphasize that the Latin American region has forestry and associated ecosystems, particularly in Amazonia (basin and biome), with an enormous diversity of landscapes, ecosystems and species, a significant volume of water and stored carbon, a multiplicity of ecological, social and economic values and environmental services that are particularly important in maintaining the global and regional climate balance. In spite of this, because Amazonia is also fragile in the face of climate change, conservation strategies must be included in priority guidelines for protected areas, and countries must take integrated action on such matters as analyzing the region, interpreting ecological processes and interactions that go beyond frontiers, as well as assessing management effectiveness, promoting financial sustainability and capacity building.

We are greatly concerned that although research has shown the significant contribution protected areas make to maintaining important ecosystem services such as providing water and protecting coasts and watersheds from natural disasters, and the opportunities they provide to improve local populations' living standards, many protected areas continue to suffer from a lack of human resources and financial support for effective management, as well as from the negative impacts of a lack of economic development and infrastructure projects. In their land

use regulations, governments in the region must include the needs of these areas in the different national planning policies and strategies on how these lands, waters and seas are to be used.

We recognize how the use by indigenous populations in Latin America of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices in their territories helps to conserve biological diversity and, therefore, environmental quality and sustainable development.

We welcome the recent approval of the Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) as a landmark to press forward with strengthening national protected areas systems.

We congratulate the organizers of this Congress on their voluntary initiative, in carrying it out, to mitigate our ecological footprint, and we invite future Congresses to consider its environmental impact and apply a similar mechanism.

We recognize that many protected areas in the region provide space for people living in voluntary isolation and, therefore, when managing these areas, specific consideration must be given to the human rights of such communities.

CONSIDERING THE ABOVE, THOSE OF US WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SECOND LATIN AMERICAN CONGRESS ON NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS **DECLARE THAT:**

- a) it is fundamental to reaffirm that, when applying protected areas policies that include broad participation by local communities and by society as a whole, States play an indisputable role in management processes that include protected areas;
- b) society in Latin American and in the rest of the world must make integral assessments of protected areas and all their attributes, tangible as well as intangible. In this respect, promotion must be given to including this concept when establishing and managing protected areas;
- c) it is extremely important to articulate and strengthen the components of national protected areas systems by consolidating the proper integration of land use regulation and other public and private conservation policies;
- d) it is essential that the different local, national, regional and international institutions linked to diversity conservation and sustainable development be bolstered by the experiences and lessons learnt in the region so that the best possible advantage may be taken of them when defining policies and executing the various regional and international conventions, agreements and programmes operating in Latin America;
- e) it is important to reaffirm the Latin American vision of protected areas agreed at the Congress in Santa Marta which considers these territories to be ***"strategic spaces for countries, because not only are they essential to their growth, to their future development and to the search for suitable living conditions within those territories, but they also represent one of the main ways to protect our natural heritage"***;

- f) a strategically important priority is to take advantage of the opportunities provided by international and regional agreements so that protected areas planning and management may be considered in national and sectorial policies and strategies;
- g) mining and hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation in protected areas, as well as the reducing, for purpose of extraction, the size of declared protected areas, are obstacles to the objectives of biodiversity conservation;
- h) we applaud initiatives to prioritize ecosystem conservation as being of fundamental importance for the sustainable development of hydrocarbon exploitation and, therefore, we support the Ecuadorian proposal "Yasuní ITT: leave the oil in the ground" and urge the other Latin American countries to develop, as far as it is possible to do so, similar initiatives;
- i) it is of the greatest importance that international donors and cooperation and development agencies reaffirm, through binding agreements, their commitment to and the priority they place on supporting national and regional development and effective management of protected areas systems; they may do so by becoming allies and partners in helping to develop synergies among the different agencies and local and national stakeholders, and by treating the private sector as an essential ally;
- j) advances will have to be made in completing national protected areas systems, including developing and strengthening biological corridors (conservation and management), and other connectivity initiatives, to make them ecologically representative, functional and efficient, especially when facing the climate change challenges to ecosystems;
- k) the range of options to conserve areas of high ecological and cultural value must be broadened; to do so it is necessary to use already existing options for the different categories of protected areas under diverse systems of administration and governance. Likewise, internationally recognized sites must be strengthened so that they serve as good management demonstration models for national systems;
- l) open, public debate must be encouraged about the social character of the environmental services provided by protected areas;
- m) it is essential to strengthen and broaden protected areas participatory planning and apply good governance principles (transparency, equity, rendering of accounts and conflict management mechanisms) and to actively involve stakeholders by providing a space for dialogue and where concerns and expectations may be analyzed and commitments and responsibilities established on joint and coordinated action by institutions, local communities and indigenous inhabitants, scientists and academics, as well as the private sector, in support of effective and participatory protected areas management;
- n) we urge States, by cooperating and making arrangements with national and regional interests, to make possible the full exercise and effective implementation of all the rights recognized in the United Nations Declaration

on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the declared indigenous territories in protected areas;

- o) protected areas totally or partially declared on indigenous peoples' territories must be administered by respecting their rights and ensuring their representative organizations have full and effective participation in managing and protecting those sites, including management schemes, in accordance with Article 28.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- p) in the case of neighbouring indigenous peoples in protected areas, we consider they have the right to share in managing them on the same conditions as the other stakeholders;
- q) mechanisms and legal and institutional frameworks must be harmonized, broadened, strengthened and updated to encourage key stakeholders, especially local communities and indigenous peoples, to become involved and participate in decision making at all levels of management, as well as in the fair distribution of the benefits associated with establishing and managing protected areas;
- r) it is essential to continue developing, on well defined, clearly established and accepted bases and norms, new and interesting alliances with the private and business sector, to agree to make innovative commitments and support protected areas and which, at the same time, will promote the well-being of society in Latin America;
- s) we recognize the role of protected areas in reducing risks to the environment. On this premise, as a more effective way of mitigating and adapting to climate change, it is necessary that the concept of conservation be broadened to include landscapes and water basins by expanding the territorial frame of reference on how the environment is managed in our countries.
- t) we are becoming more aware that protected areas have an essential role to play in protecting water regulation and, furthermore, that access to drinking water is a fundamental right of human societies. States and societies will have to find ways to meet the costs.

BEARING IN MIND THAT THIS DECLARATION WILL HAVE NO IMPACT WITHOUT THE DECIDED SUPPORT AND THE WILL TO PROMOTE AND ACT UPON IT, WE **MAKE A COMMITMENT TO:**

1. Demonstrate and communicate, with environmental, social, cultural and economic arguments taken from the results of research and from traditional knowledge, the unique role of protected areas in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in applying important Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Convention on Biological Diversity, World Heritage Convention, Convention on migratory Species, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Antarctic Treaty) and we urge States to comply with the obligations imposed by these frameworks.

2. Urge Latin American governments and regional integration bodies to recognize the fundamental role of protected areas in strategies to adapt to phenomena such as climate change and desertification, and to promote appropriate regional monitoring, mitigation and adaptation strategies.

3. Revitalize the region's interest in the Antarctic Treaty, bearing in mind that the Antarctic is a permanent international protected area where many countries in the region with a permanent presence bear the responsibility of complying with the treaty that legitimates their presence, especially when confronted with the threat of climate change and emerging economic interests.

4. Exhort governments, international cooperation organizations and civil society to agree, for the period 2008-2018, on firm annual budgets and to implement the legal and administrative reforms needed to close the gaps identified in financial sustainability plans for national parks included in the work programme of the Seventh Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

5. Promote consolidation of the financial sustainability of protected areas by proposing attractive and tangible mechanisms to complement fiscal financing provided by governments in compliance with ineludible function.

6. Ensure that commercial and development commitments and agreements, as well as infrastructure initiatives, do not have a negative effect on protected areas, making it harder to reach the objectives of conservation and of supporting development for which they were created, by ensuring our countries comply with binding international conventions.

7. Support and promote the application of studies and assessments designed to achieve better representation in the Latin American protected areas system, with special attention to strengthening conservation of the marine environment and inland freshwater ecosystems.

8. Urge governments to declare 2008–2018 as the Marine Protected Areas Decade, by making it a priority of Latin American countries, in compliance with their commitments to reach the 2012 and 2015 goals, to create national and regional protected marine areas and to integrate oceanic management. During that decade it will be particularly urgent to increase the number and size of the region's protected marine areas, both in coastal zones and on the high seas, thus helping to conserve biodiversity and marine processes, to ensure their integrated management, and to maintain sustainable fisheries.

9. Develop and promote bi-national, subregional or regional collaboration to plan, develop, and jointly manage protected areas adjacent to frontier zones and bi-national or subregional protected areas systems.

10. Promote and facilitate the development of new alliances and innovative strategies to provide the income that will make protected areas financially sustainable, including making more use of opportunities and mechanisms to compensate for ecosystems' goods and services.

11. Promote and apply assessments of effective protected areas management as a mechanism to reduce the threats they face, and as an essential tool for feasible

protected areas systems to improve management of both individual protected areas and national protected areas systems and subsystems, including internationally recognized areas, especially in the framework of the CBD Work Programme on Protected Areas established by the Convention's Seventh Conference of the Parties.

12. *Promote* greater dissemination of the Ecosystem Approach and the role of protected areas in national strategies to adapt to climate change and to connect them to surrounding landscapes. To identify, on different levels, how vulnerable protected areas are to climate change, and to establish mitigation and adaptation measures, especially in critical ecosystems such as those in high mountains, wetlands and marine interphase ecotones. It is urgent to carry out research on vulnerable protected areas to help key ecosystems that might be affected by climate change to become more resilient.

13. *Facilitate and strengthen* informed participation in participatory planning of protected areas by local communities, indigenous and afrodescendent inhabitants, civil organizations, women's associations, scientists, academics and users, as well as the private sector, by applying such good governance as transparency, rendering accounts and having access to conflict management mechanisms, and to develop mechanisms and initiatives that allow efficient management of these areas and the fair distribution of costs and benefits associated with the establishment and sustainable management of protected areas.

14. *Strengthen* the institutional capacity of agents and bodies involved in managing protected areas, including government agencies at all levels, NGOs, local communities, associations, private owners, companies and others, and improve the knowledge, abilities and competence of professionals, park rangers and other personnel working in and with protected areas; improve their tenure and working conditions, paying special attention to improving initiatives on training and professionalizing all levels of personnel so that they may effectively implement the CBD protected areas work programme, and on training the younger generations who will be responsible for taking future action to conserve these areas.

15. *Help* to create societies that are aware of and committed to a political environment that favours effective protected areas management and to solving problems and dealing with threats by strengthening institutions, programmes and initiatives on communication, raising awareness, interpretation, and improving formal and informal education. This can also be done by using the media and by messages aimed at specific target audiences to give local communities, visitors to protected areas, decision-makers and society a better understanding of the importance of protected areas and of their contribution to sustainable development and to the future of life on the planet.

16. *Request* countries, where appropriate and with the prior and free consent of the indigenous people, to explore options to define, within their National Protected Areas Systems, the parts of indigenous territories to be conserved.

17. *Request* the UICN to consider integrating the concept of Indigenous Conservation Territories as a legitimate governance model for protected areas established in indigenous people's ancestral territories, whatever the management category may be, and to recognize in that model the integration of culture and

nature, the role of customary rights, traditional institutions and the exercise of indigenous authority in such territories.

18. Promote integration of protected areas policies into poverty reduction strategies, and in planning and executing development instruments based on sustainability and social fairness.

19. Promote recognition of the primordial role of park rangers and other conservation workers in guarding protected areas and their natural and cultural resources. Encourage and promote, in the public and private sectors, consolidation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Park Rangers by using a virtual platform to exchange experiences, to learn, and to create capacities.

20. Facilitate and promote exchanges of knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt on planning and managing protected areas, both regionally and internationally, by working with networks and by means of information and communication systems that can be used to have access to a wide range of users.

21. Strengthen the role of the Latin American Network of National Parks, Other Protected Areas, Wildlife Flora and Fauna as an indispensable horizontal technical cooperation space and a platform to define and coordinate policy guidelines and regional capacities. It is urged that at the meeting in Mexico (March 2008) it be suggested that, when the Network has been operating for 25 years, adjustments be made in describing its mission and that its articles of association be changed to adapt it to the newly applicable conditions and opportunities, thus strengthening its strategic role with respect to national authorities and protected areas in the region.

22. Disseminate and promote, as widely as possible, the results of this Congress and how its conclusions and recommendations may be applied in developing policies and practices designed to strengthen our region's protected areas; this may be done by following the Congress's strategic work plan that gives priority attention to obtaining political support to execute these recommendations within the framework of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Santo Domingo, November 2007), the inter-sessions meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Ninth Conference of the Parties (Germany, May 2008).

23. Request the inclusion in the new UICN Programme (2009-2012), to be discussed and approved at its World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 5-14 October 2008), of the main follow-up activities to be taken by the UICN and its members and associates to promote and execute the recommendations of the Congress.

24. Urge multilateral organisms and cooperation agencies to accept as their own the conclusions and recommendations of this Congress.

