

## **WCC-2012-Res-051-EN**

### **Improving conservation and sustainability of the Yellow Sea**

RECOGNIZING that the natural phenomenon of the Asian Monsoon system coupled with a relatively shallow sea creates both heavy sediment and significant freshwater discharges into the Yellow Sea on an annual basis;

AWARE of the extensive development of cities bordering on the Yellow Sea, both in Korea and China, and the reliance of the population of these cities on the Yellow Sea ecosystem for a large portion of their basic and economic requirements;

CONSIDERING in particular the global significance of East Asia's tidal mudflats evidenced by the fact that approximately 1,600 species have been recorded from marine and coastal habitats in the Yellow Sea, including 70 phytoplankton, 300 benthic diatoms, 300 marine macroalgae, 50 halophytes, 500 marine invertebrates, 150 fishes, 230 water birds and sea birds and 10 marine mammals, with most of these organisms dependent on tidal flats at least once during their life histories;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the rapid increase in coastal industrialization has contributed to an increase in pollution and disruption in ecosystem functioning in the Yellow Sea, compounded by the fact that the sea water exchange interval between the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea is about seven years;

NOTING that advances in fishing technology since the mid-1980s have resulted in catches of the ten most important commercial species landed in the Yellow Sea area increasing from 400,000 tonnes in 1986 to 2,300,000 tonnes in 2004, and that this rapid increase in the annual catch of fish is considered unsustainable;

FURTHER NOTING that several implemented and proposed large-scale reclamation projects in the region are having and will have a significant impact on coastal areas;

RECALLING Recommendation 4.129 *Strengthening the integrated management of coastal areas* adopted by the 4<sup>th</sup> IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008) which recognizes the vulnerability of coastal areas and their central importance to human needs therein reinforcing the principles of integrated coastal zone management;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation V.22 *Building a Global System of Marine and Coastal Protected Area Networks* adopted at the V<sup>th</sup> IUCN World Parks Congress (Durban, 2003) and Aichi Target 11 of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020*, both of which call for the establishment of representative, effectively and equitably managed systems of marine and coastal protected areas;

WELCOMING the commitments made by the Republic of Korea to the Ramsar Convention to ensure appropriate management and wise use of internationally important wetlands that have not yet been formally designated as Ramsar sites and confirming that no large-scale reclamations projects are now being approved in the Republic of Korea;

FURTHER WELCOMING the international efforts of projects like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Project and initiatives such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Seas Programme to focus on improved regional cooperation, governance and conservation action, noting, however, that more is needed to address the acknowledged issues; and

ALARMED however, that the ecological conditions and sustainability of resource exploitation in the Yellow Sea continue to rapidly deteriorate due to the combination of its biophysical characteristics along with the overexploitation of marine resources and increased pressure from urban coastal development and along its coastal borders;

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

1. CALLS on all countries bordering the Yellow Sea to collaborate in reversing the current negative impacts on the ecosystems of the Yellow Sea resulting from over-development and resource exploitation, and to mitigate the negative impacts of coastal development, particularly land reclamation;
2. ENCOURAGES all countries bordering the Yellow Sea to facilitate agency level working groups to expedite the Strategic Action Programmes already in place in current programmes such as the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) project;
3. URGES international and regional institutions such as the Ramsar Convention and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership to direct increased attention, technical guidance and capacity development in support of the conservation and wise use of the internationally significant tidal mudflats of the Yellow sea and the region of East Asia;
4. URGES IUCN Members to:
  - a. promote and support enhanced efforts to conserve the ecosystems of the Yellow Sea, including the unique tidal mudflat ecosystems of East Asia, to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources;
  - b. support the conservation of the Yellow Sea ecosystem by creating and effectively managing national parks and other marine and coastal protected areas;
  - c. review the existing Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) of the UNDP/GEF YSLME project and support the urgent implementation of the SAPs;
  - d. promote increased research and monitoring of the ecosystems of the Yellow Sea, especially the unique tidal mudflats and marine waters of the Yellow Sea and the region of East Asia; and
  - e. promote awareness of the need for effective conservation of regional seas including the Yellow Sea and the region of East Asia through relevant national and regional institutions and non-governmental organizations; and
5. REQUESTS the Director General to:
  - a. collaborate with IUCN Members, Commissions, and other partners to strengthen regional governance, action and increased international awareness for conservation of the Yellow Sea, and strengthen the protection of East Asia's tidal mudflat ecosystems, to ensure more coordinated consideration of damaging coastal developments and to increase international awareness of the need to conserve these systems;
  - b. utilize where possible existing mechanisms such as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, of which IUCN is a member institution, and the IUCN World

Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Asian Regional Steering Committee to advance conservation action in the Yellow Sea; and

- c. provide technical and programmatic support to the above efforts to foster regional tidal expert networks and share conservation information.

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.