

Establishment of a Marine Biodiversity Conservation Area in Macaronesia

NOTING the exceptional biodiversity of the Macaronesian region, which encompasses the Azores, Madeira, Selvagens, Canary Islands, and Cape Verde, and its role as a hotspot for marine biodiversity in the North Atlantic;

RECOGNIZING that this biogeographic region is home to unique ecosystems and numerous endemic species, as well as being a critical habitat for migratory cetaceans and other marine megafauna;

AWARE OF the ecological and economic importance of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME), one of the most productive upwelling systems in the world, supporting fisheries and providing essential ecosystem services;

CONCERNED about the increasing threats to marine biodiversity in the Macaronesia region, including overfishing, marine pollution, climate change, habitat degradation, and anthropogenic noise, which jeopardize its ecological integrity and the livelihoods of communities dependent on its resources;

RECALLING WCC-2016-Res-050 "Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation," which highlights the need for enhanced marine protected area (MPA) coverage as a cornerstone of global marine biodiversity conservation efforts;

MINDFUL that Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls for the conservation of 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal, and marine areas by 2030, "through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories";

RECALLING the United Nations High Seas Treaty and other international commitments to promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction;

EMPHASIZING the importance of regional and international cooperation in addressing transboundary conservation challenges and achieving connectivity among marine habitats for migratory species;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

URGES all States with Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in the Macaronesia region, including Portugal, Spain, and Cabo Verde, to:

- a. Establish a transboundary Marine Biodiversity Conservation Area (MBCA) encompassing key ecological habitats within the Macaronesia region, ensuring adequate protection and sustainable management of its unique marine biodiversity;
- b. Develop and implement collaborative management frameworks involving governments, scientific institutions, local communities, and international organizations to ensure the effective governance of the MBCA;
- c. Promote the adoption of science-based measures to mitigate threats to marine biodiversity, including controls on overfishing, marine pollution, underwater noise, and global change impacts;

CALLS ON the governments of Portugal, Spain, and Cabo Verde to cooperate with relevant regional and international entities, including the IUCN, to:

- a. Facilitate research and monitoring programs to enhance understanding of ecological connectivity and biodiversity dynamics in the region;
- b. Support capacity-building initiatives for local stakeholders and authorities to effectively manage and enforce conservation measures in the MBCA;
- c. Advance the inclusion of Macaronesia as a priority area in international conservation agendas;

REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN to:

- a. Provide technical support and guidance to States and stakeholders in the development of the Marine Biodiversity Conservation Area in Macaronesia;