

# Mālama Honua—To Care for Our Island Earth

*A Statement of Commitments from the Nature–Culture Journey Participants at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Hawai‘i 2016.*

Mindful of urgent challenges that have placed our Planet at the Crossroads, we, the participants in the Nature–Culture Journey at IUCN’s World Conservation Congress assembled in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, in September 2016:

**Acknowledge** the *kama ‘āina*—people of the land—where we have gathered;

**Acknowledge** the generous spirit of *aloha* of the people of Hawai‘i in providing a timely space to broaden our horizons and enhance our understanding of the integral relationship of nature and culture;

**Acknowledge** the relevance of the Hawaiian cultural concept of *kuleana*—care, responsibility and stewardship of the lands and seas;

**Commend** the Nature–Culture Journey for creating an opportunity for people from many different backgrounds to exchange knowledge and practices that further advance the interconnectedness of nature and culture in the conservation and management of places important to people around the world;

**Reflect upon** the diversity of perspectives presented during the Nature–Culture Journey that illustrate the ways in which nature and culture are entangled in landscapes/seascapes providing a framework in many contexts including sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty and the well-being of urban environments;

**Recognize** the spiritual and sacred dimensions of nature and culture, and commend the dialogue and outcomes of the Spirituality and Conservation Journey, that contributed to our reflections;

**Value** the inspiring examples of harmonious approaches to nature and culture shared at the Congress that demonstrate place-based approaches, governance and equity, respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and strengthen traditional institutions;

**Recognize** our deep concern that cultural and natural diversity and heritage are seriously threatened around the world by a number of challenges including climate change, and that the construction of the culture/nature divide is a symptom of larger processes that have put us on an unsustainable path;

**Recognize** that our planet is at the crossroads and that there is compelling evidence that integrated nature–culture approaches improve conservation outcomes, foster cultural

diversity, support the well-being of contemporary societies in urban and rural areas, and advance sustainability objectives;

**Recall** the potential afforded by existing international treaties such as the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which explicitly brings together nature and culture, as well as culture and biodiversity related conventions, declarations and other international documents that set global standards;

**Celebrate** the increasing recognition of the inherent value of indigenous knowledge, localized place-based learning and on-ground experience;

**Recognize** the profound contribution that natural and cultural heritage make toward the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and Habitat III's New Urban Agenda, and the fundamental need to better link nature and culture to achieve that potential;

**We therefore—**

**Call for** new working methods and practices that bring together nature and culture to achieve conservation outcomes on a landscape scale, while promoting the leadership, participation, resilience, and well-being of associated communities;

**Call on** the nature and culture sectors to work together to address the urgent global challenges we face, by advancing integrated nature–culture solutions to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and Habitat III's New Urban Agenda;

**Commit** ourselves to advancing this transformation of conservation in our own work by reaching across professional disciplines and continuing these conversations with our colleagues and communities, and engaging future generations;

**Call upon** IUCN to develop and adopt a policy on understanding and incorporating cultural values and practices in nature conservation as resolved by the 2008 IUCN World Conservation Congress;

**Call upon** ICOMOS to further develop its activities for incorporating natural values and practices in cultural heritage, and to continue this Nature–Culture Journey collaboration and conversation at its General Assembly in New Delhi, India, in 2017;

**Call upon** ICCROM to continue its leadership in capacity building and continue to develop programs which emphasize interlinkages in the management of cultural and natural heritage and the role of communities, particularly through the implementation of the World Heritage Leadership program, launched at this IUCN World Conservation Congress;

**Call upon** ICOMOS, IUCN, ICCROM and UNESCO to expand and deepen their long history of collaboration to transform approaches and methods in natural and cultural heritage conservation to effectively meet the tremendous challenges being faced today.

**Call upon** governments, local authorities and practitioners to implement joint approaches that advance synergies among Conventions, legal frameworks and international instruments for safeguarding cultural and biological diversity;

**Call upon** donors, non-government organizations, civil society, and the private sector to advance the important relationship of nature and culture;

**Call upon** academic institutions to develop interdisciplinary research and education programs on the integral relationship of nature and culture that support re-imagining and transforming the practice of conservation, and to share this knowledge in plain language to the widest possible audiences;

**Invite** people around the world who are engaged in nature–culture conservation to join us in this commitment and apply the principles within their own communities.

*Nature–Culture Journey was jointly coordinated by IUCN and ICOMOS with the assistance of US/ICOMOS and in collaboration with a wide range of partners.*