

Motion number S 202: Avoiding Irreversible Ecological Damage and Tipping Points in the Congo Basin: Urgent Assessment and Protective Measures

Preambular Paragraphs:

RECALLING IUCN Res. 129 (WCC-2020-Res-129) Avoiding the Point of No Return in the Amazon, which recognized the Amazon's approach to an ecological tipping point with global implications, serving as a critical precedent for the Congo Basin;

NOTING that the Congo Basin, the world's second largest tropical forest basin and home to the largest tropical peatland complex on Earth, is of comparable planetary significance for climate stability, biodiversity, and water regulation;

RECOGNISING recent scientific evidence underscoring the risk of irreversible ecological damage in the Congo Basin, and indicating the need to maintain the high ecological integrity of forests in the Congo basin in line with a 74% intactness minimum threshold in order to prevent irreversible ecological damage¹, beyond which these ecosystems risk losing their vital hydrological and climate-regulating functions;

NOTING that Congo Basin ecosystems face rising risks of savannization and peatland destabilization, tipping points that would trigger irreversible biodiversity loss, release of billions of tonnes of carbon, and profound disruptions to local and global water cycles;

ALARMED that newly announced oil and gas blocks in multiple countries in the Congo Basin in 2025 overlap directly with protected and conserved areas, Key Biodiversity Areas, ecologically sensitive peatlands, intact forests and community forests, compounding existing logging, agriculture, and mining pressures, and accelerating the risk of irreversible collapse;

ACKNOWLEDGING that only a small proportion of Congo Basin peatlands and intact forests are legally protected, and that governance gaps heighten their vulnerability to extractive and infrastructure pressures;

RECOGNISING that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are the primary stewards of Congo Basin forests and peatlands, and that their customary rights, governance systems, stewardship and knowledge are essential to preventing ecological damage and tipping points;

Operative Paragraphs:

¹ **Ewane, E.B.** (2022). *How much deforestation in the Congo Basin can cause the hydrological cycle to degrade to a tipping point?* *Academia Letters*, 5040. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360121491_How_much_deforestation_in_the_Congo_Basin_can_cause_the_hydrological_cycle_to_degrade_to_a_tipping_point. Accessed on October 1, 2025

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

1. URGES the Director General, IUCN Members, and States of the Congo Basin to advocate, support, and take emergency measures to maintain the high ecological integrity of forests in the Congo basin in line with a 74% intactness threshold necessary to avert irreversible ecological damage.
2. REQUESTS IUCN Members to endorse and relevant States to implement a geographical exclusion of all extractive industries in intact and high integrity areas of the Congo Basin;
3. REQUESTS the Director General to urgently convene a Congo Basin Tipping Point Assessment Task Force mandated to:
 - a. Rapidly assess climatic and ecological thresholds in forest and peatland ecosystems;
 - b. Identify and map hotspots of risk;
 - c. Deliver an interim science-based report with recommendations by the end of 2026.
4. URGES IUCN, Member States, and partners to prioritize capacity building, including training programmes for local conservation organizations and support for Indigenous- and community-led monitoring, conservation, and restoration efforts.
5. ENCOURAGES governments, donors, multilateral institutions, and private sector actors to mobilize and to increase finance for Congo Basin forest protection.
6. ENTREATS international financial institutions and donor governments to align all investment flows with the precautionary principle.

Proponent:

Ajemalebu Self Help (Cameroon)

Co-sponsors:

Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (Ecuador)

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (Uganda)

Nigerian Conservation Foundation (Nigeria)

Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (Peru)

EcoCiencia, Fundación Ecuatoriana de Estudios Ecológicos (Ecuador)

Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Peru)

PROVITA (Venezuela)

Fundación Biodiversidad (Argentina)

Fundación para la Conservación del Bosque Chiquitano (Bolivia)

Conservation de la Faune Congolaise (Congo)

MBOU-MON-TOUR (DR Congo)

Conservation Alliance of Kenya (Kenya)
Association Tunisienne de Taxonomie (Tunisia)
Cheetah Conservation Fund (Namibia)
Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre (Morocco)
Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (Mauritius)
Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (Malawi)
Grupo de Apoio à Educação e Comunicação Ambiental "PALMEIRINHA" (Guinea Bissau)
Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team (Nigeria)
Association Sénégalaise des Amis de la Nature (Senegal)
Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (Cameroon)
Arcus Foundation (USA)
Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (Togo)
A ROCHA GHANA (Ghana)
Natural Resources Defense Council (USA)
Nature-Communautés-Développement (Senegal)
Secretariat pour l'Evaluation Environnementale en Afrique Centrale (Cameroon)
Benin Environment and Education Society (Benin)
Cameroon Environmental Watch (Cameroon)
Cameroun Ecologie (Cameroon)
Service d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Développement (Cameroon)
Organisation pour la Nature, l'Environnement et le Développement du Cameroun (Cameroon)