

**Chair's Statement from the High Level Ministerial Panel:  
'Integrating the Rights of Nature and the green economy in the context of sustainable  
development and poverty eradication: finding solutions to protecting international wildlife'**

**11th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory of Wild  
Animals, Quito (Ecuador), 3 November 2014**

Economic growth and poverty eradication come at an enormous social and environmental cost. Many trends indicate that the world is approaching tipping points: today we can see more inequality than ever before between and within countries. The wealth of the richest 1 per cent of people in the world is 65 times greater than the poorest half. The levels of contamination of ground water and of the air are increasing exponentially causing health problems of a growing number of people. To date, between 40% and 50% of the world's species have gone extinct as a result of excessive exploitation of natural resources; the loss of habitats, climate change, bycatch, barriers to migration among others. We can see migratory species as a global ecosystem indicator. If we are losing them, then something fundamental is clearly amiss. States are and have to be protectors of migratory species of wild animals that live within national jurisdictional boundaries and beyond.

One should consider the principles of Rio '92, and the sovereign right of States over their natural resources and the existence of different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, according to their national circumstances and priorities for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

We see that effective systems of governance are required in countries and it is necessary for them to be transposed into law and into financial and non-financial institutional approaches that seek to guarantee the conservation of natural resources including fauna and flora for their intrinsic value, a fair and equitable distribution of the advantages accruing for the benefit of people, particularly for communities and indigenous peoples and for the welfare of the planet in general.

When we calculate national wealth we must go beyond the concept of Gross Domestic Product and take into account also the value of our natural heritage. The debate should move our way of thinking in the direction of considering sustainable human development and sustainable economic development as a single approach, whereby the rights of nature are seen as an important element contributing to both.

Social attitudes often indicate that laws and policies on conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, including migratory species, are not being enforced. We emphasize, therefore, the importance of educational programmes and awareness-raising initiatives aimed at promoting changes in attitude, highlighting in particular the potential for such changes in the young. Such educational and awareness-raising programmes could represent a way to develop our understanding of what it means to live in harmony with nature and to better understand how its rights should be recognized.

There are some good examples of countries that have incorporated the rights of nature in their legislative and constitutional frameworks as a new paradigm for society. In 2008 Ecuador became the first country in the world to include the rights of nature in its Constitution, through recognizing that its existence, its maintenance and regeneration of its essential cycles, its structures, functions and evolutionary processes should be respected in their entirety. This should finally allow a true balance to be struck, placing nature and humans on the same level.

The rights of nature are an important tool for the protection of the right species have to migrate so that their ecosystems are adequately preserved and they also provide a juridical basis allowing effective legal representation before the courts, expanding the availability of more solutions beyond the procedural reviews as is the case at the moment.

Being aware of the reality of migratory species, we urge countries to recognize the rights of nature in the context of national circumstances and to draw up action plans, strategies and programmes for the protection of migratory wildlife globally.

The rights of nature and sustainable economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty

eradication are concepts that can support each other and used in a balanced manner to protect migratory wildlife.

Let us generate greater dialogue, understanding and actions to improve the compatibility between these two approaches to the protection of migratory species

It's Time for Action!