

**The Hon. Lisa Neville MP**  
**Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water**  
[haveyoursay@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:haveyoursay@delwp.vic.gov.au)

**Sunday 15 May 2016**



Dear Minister,

**Re: Community Consultation Submission to *Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2036*,  
by the Kids In Nature Network**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on and contribute to a state-wide plan for managing Victoria's Biodiversity, *Protecting Victoria's Environment-Biodiversity 2036*. We congratulate the Andrews Government for demonstrating important leadership in developing a long-term biodiversity plan for our state.

The plan provides a much-needed, high-level, long-term policy framework to guide future decision-making and investments for nature protection and restoration as well as initiatives that support nature experiences, nature connection and nature stewardship.

Founded in 2010, Kids In Nature Network is a cross-sectoral network in Victoria which acts to empower, connect and grow a movement of individuals and organisations that are committed to reconnecting children to nature. We exist to link up key initiatives that promote nature play and nature exploration in order to enhance child health and learning, promote creative play and facilitate connection to the natural world. We contribute to a globally connected movement.

Our network based is diverse with thought leaders from health, education, environment, outdoors, urban planning, community, arts and many other sectors. We work by providing a unique meeting space and opportunities for collaboration and capacity building and through open sharing of experiences, ideas and knowledge amongst our members and allies.

Our annual signature event, Nature Play Week, is a part of Premier's Active April. In its third year running, Nature Play Week 2016 featured over 150 nature play experiences and workshops presented by over 70 groups across Victoria and beyond. Participating organisations and initiatives included the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, the YMCA, Local Councils, education-, health-, arts-, recreation- and environment organisations, Landcare groups, small businesses, Bush Kinders and kindergartens, primary schools, family nature clubs and playgroups. For more information on the event, please visit [www.natureplayweek.org.au](http://www.natureplayweek.org.au)

We are looking forward to reading the submissions contributed to this consultation process and to further discussing this important document with you.

Yours sincerely,

Cecile van der Burgh  
Co-founder  
Kids In Nature Network  
[info@kidsinnaturenetwork.org.au](mailto:info@kidsinnaturenetwork.org.au)

## **1. State government leadership**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on and contribute to a state-wide plan for managing Victoria's Biodiversity, *Protecting Victoria's Environment-Biodiversity 2036*. We congratulate the Andrews Government for demonstrating leadership in developing a much-needed, long-term biodiversity strategy for our state.

Biodiversity is a basic foundation for a healthy environment. Our environment, both in metropolitan and regional Victoria is fundamentally important for the health and wellbeing of *all* Victorians. As stated in the draft biodiversity plan, we rely on nature for our existence. Our interaction and connection with nature is vital for us as individuals, our community and our economy. The role of nature is paramount in regulating our climate, through the water- and Co2 cycle and other natural processes sustained and supported by biodiversity.

A reduction of our natural heritage estate and a reduction in access to nature in urban areas impacts on the well-being of all Victorians. Therefore, we strongly support the Jeju Declaration, signed in 2012. [https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/jeju\\_declaration\\_15\\_september\\_final.pdf](https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/jeju_declaration_15_september_final.pdf)

The draft Victorian biodiversity plan provides a much-needed, high-level, long-term policy framework to guide future decision making and investments for nature protection and restoration as well as nature experience, connection and stewardship.

## **2. Health benefits of nature for people - the evidence**

An emergent, global body of research now confirms that people who spend time in and connect with nature are happier and healthier. Nature provides important physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health benefits. Research also confirms that these benefits are especially important for young people. Children who play outside and in nature reap the benefits for life.

Victorian researchers are leaders in studying the benefits of the connections between nature and human health. For example a team of local researchers at Deakin University, Melbourne, in collaboration with Parks Victoria, has compiled the following state of the evidence report:  
[http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/672582/HPHP\\_state-of-the-evidence\\_2015.pdf](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/672582/HPHP_state-of-the-evidence_2015.pdf)

We also recommend the body of evidence compiled by the online research centre led by the Children and Nature Network (based in the USA):

<https://www.childrenandnature.org/research/>

The report Beyond Blue into Green (Townsend and Weerasuriya 2010) explores the mental health benefits of connecting with nature: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/research-projects/research-projects/beyond-blue-to-green-the-health-benefits-of-contact-with-nature-in-a-park-context-literature-review>

We are happy to provide further references and literature reviews on request.

## **3. Childrens' right to connect with nature and to a healthy environment**

Protecting and restoring nature for our children and future generations is an inter-generational equity issue. We believe that children and young people, now and in future, deserve to experience the same joy, wonder, life-changing moments and life-lessons in nature that we have

experienced when we were children. Often, experiences in nature become the best and most important childhood memories in life. Nature is a teacher, a place to think and connect with oneself, friends and the wider universe. A place for deep reflection and connection, for finding peace and for finding adventure. A connection with nature makes us realise we are part of a much bigger network of life and that our lives are connected with other life. It is essential that children inherit a natural environment that is healthy and thriving so they, too, can thrive and experience the essential mental, physical, emotional and spiritual benefits that biodiverse, healthy natural places provide. We believe that this connection with nature encompasses not only biodiversity policy, but that it should also be embedded in health, education (kinders (bushkinders, primary, secondary and tertiary education, experiential outdoor education, education learning networks) outdoor recreation, environmental advocacy, urban and regional planning regional tourism, and child protection and well-being (eg playgroups), the arts and research policy.

In September, 2012, the World Congress of the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#), meeting in Jeju, South Korea, passed a resolution declaring that children have [a human right](#) to experience the natural world. Dutch human rights lawyer Annelies Henstra, the IUCN's Keith Wheeler and Cheryl Charles, co-founder of the Children & Nature Network in the USA, and others made the case to the Congress — attended by more than 10,000 people representing the governments of 150 nations and more than 1,000 non-governmental organizations.

[The resolution, “the Child’s Right to Connect with Nature and to a Healthy Environment,”](#) calls on IUCN’s membership - this includes 1) The Australian Federal Department for the Environment, 2) the Victorian Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning and 3) Parks Victoria- to promote the inclusion of this right within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The resolution recognizes *“concern about the increasing disconnection of people and especially children from nature, and the adverse consequences for both healthy child development (‘nature deficit disorder’) as well as responsible stewardship for nature and the environment in the future.”* And it recognizes that: *“...children...not only have the right to a healthy environment, but also to a connection with nature and to the gifts of nature for their physical and psychological health and ability to learn and create, and that until they have these rights they will not bear responsibility for nature and the environment...”* According to the IUCN World Congress resolution, the World Congress is also convinced *“that growing up in a healthy environment and connecting children with nature is of such a fundamental importance for both children and the (future of) the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment, that it should be recognized and codified internationally as a human right for children.”*

The resolution is included as an appendix to this submission.

#### ***The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child***

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold its upcoming Day of General Discussion in September 2016, on the theme “The right of the child to a healthy environment. The proposal and rationale for this discussion is presented on the following website:

[http://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/inhalte/04\\_Was\\_wir\\_tun/Themen/Kinderrecht\\_auf\\_gesunde\\_Umwelt/Proposal\\_DGD\\_by\\_Terre\\_des\\_Hommes.pdf](http://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user_upload/inhalte/04_Was_wir_tun/Themen/Kinderrecht_auf_gesunde_Umwelt/Proposal_DGD_by_Terre_des_Hommes.pdf)

#### **4. *State Government funding investments needed to develop core government capacity and long-term community capacity***

In 2012, leaders of national parks and protected areas throughout the world resolved to work collectively to strengthen people's engagement with nature by approving the "Jeju Declaration on National Parks and Protected Areas in 2012: Connecting People to Nature." This declaration commits to creating a global campaign that recognizes the great contribution of these natural treasures to the health and resilience of people, communities and economies.

For Victoria's biodiversity strategy to have any chance of succeeding, significant funding investments are required, not only for biodiversity protection and management but for creating capacity both in government and community to deal with the complex nature conservation, restoration and connection challenges of our time. A renewed investment should include a boost for public sector jobs in DELWP for the management of our public natural heritage estate (eg Parks Victoria rangers and other public land managers). In addition, a large boost in support for biodiversity protection on private needs to be reinstated. There are many land owners interested in protecting their native vegetation and these efforts deserve better support.

It is vital that the biodiversity plan is supported by significant core funding investments, not for on-off projects but for initiatives that build ongoing capacity and collaborations both in government, across sectors and in the community. Biodiversity protection and management has been structurally under-valued and under-funded by State and Federal Government. We are witnessing a worrying decline of both the extent and the overall health of our natural heritage estate. During the previous change in state government (pre-dating the Andrews Government), funding for nature protection and restoration was significantly reduced, resulting in a significant loss of public sector jobs and community capacity in this sector. This funding urgently needs to be restored.

Initiatives and organisations that collaborate across sectors to build and sustain community capacity for Victorians to connect with and look after nature such as Kids In Nature Network, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Play Group Victoria, the Victorian Naturally Alliance, Outdoors Victoria and Play Australia and key education networks and initiatives, such as Bush Kinders, Environment Education Victoria, Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) and Early Childhood Outdoors Learning Network (ECOLN) deserve strategic government support.

We also commend the work of strategic community-led alliances that work to protect nature at a landscape scale, such as the Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance and Landcare networks. These are inspiring examples of effective community leadership in action.

Investing in collaborative community initiatives is cost-effective, because a huge amount of work is executed and sustained, regardless of election cycles, by long-term volunteer efforts. In addition, community organisations have access to extensive grassroots, community and family networks. For example, Kids In Nature Network and partners are currently collaboratively mapping kids and nature play initiatives across Victoria. This collaborative project is supported by The Department of Health and Human Services.

We need strategic investments by state government in the people and initiatives that protect and restore nature and that build long-term community capacity and collaborations for young people to connect with nature.

***The following areas need state government support***

- First and foremost, a significant investment is required in core government staff to protect and manage the integrity and quality of nature on public land, support the protection of nature on private land and restore a state-wide network of nature to sustain healthy natural processes and opportunities for Victorians to connect with nature;
- The development of a well-resourced network of Bush Kinders across Victoria (based on Westgarth Bush Kinder model) – this model is tailored for and by the community in which it resides; it acknowledges the uniqueness of teacher, team and community. These contextual elements are documented in literature and research;
- Ongoing support for long-term programs that support Australia's First Peoples sharing their knowledge of Country and culture with all who are involved in teaching, learning and playing outdoors and in long-term community capacity building;
- Funding support to grow the core capacity and collaborative initiatives of the Kids In Nature Network to continue and build cross-sectoral community capacity across the state for connecting young people and nature;
- Increased support for Nature Play Week, Victoria's flagship nature play and nature connection event for young people, families and professionals involved in connecting kids and nature;
- Funding support for a regular roundtable of key community initiatives that build cross-sector collaboration and capacity to connect Victorian kids and nature;
- an investment in good facilitators that improve long-term cohesion across sectors and government departments;
- Support for meaningful, experiential environmental education and outdoor education in early childhood, primary schools and secondary schools;
- An investment in key education networks and initiatives , such as Bush Kinders, Environment Education Victoria, Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) and Early Childhood Outdoors Learning Network (ECOLN);
- Funding support for a website/education campaign that promotes nature play for families (similar to campaigns in WA, SA and QLD);
- A boost in funding to support dedicated network staff in key organisations to build community development and collaborations in connecting young people with nature, eg Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, Local Councils, Playgroup Victoria and other key NGO's active in this space, such as Outdoors Victoria, Victoria Naturally Alliance, the Australian Camps Association, Play Australia (this list is by no means exhaustive);
- An investment in capacity for environmental advocacy as provided by organisations in The Victoria Naturally Alliance is needed to defend nature from inappropriate development;
- An investment in health initiatives that provide young people with the benefits of connecting with and looking after nature. Innovative partnerships should be built with Landcare, Friends Of groups, Naturalists groups;
- A health policy should be developed that enshrines nature connection in mainstream practise to prevent disease and mental illness, e.g. doctors should be prescribing walking and park visits (green scripts). Victoria Walks is an excellent example of community and health leadership in this space, supported by VicHealth. The People and Parks Foundation, in collaboration with Parks Victoria has also piloted a very successful Green Scrips program in the Geelong/Barwon Region;
- A network of natural, biodiverse green spaces across Melbourne CBD, Greater Melbourne and regional Victoria for biodiversity and nature connection for families as well as nature-sensitive active transport (walking and cycling);

- Urban planning policies should maximise the quality (including biodiversity) and connectivity of green space, walkability and cycle infrastructure combined with public transport to optimise daily nature experiences for Victorians;
- An investment in well-connected, safe cycling and walking infrastructure across councils that sustains and protects the natural and cultural environment is needed;
- Invest in nature-based tourism initiatives and jobs for families in regional Victoria sustaining natural and cultural heritage;
- Invest in nature protection and restoration programs that actively and regularly involve, activate and inspire families and young people;
- Funding for new national parks (including a new Great Forest National Park) and other high conservation value public land protection;
- Funding for private land conservation covenants and other private conservation and restoration works that involve young people and families;
- Funding to support the community leadership of long-term community landscape networks and alliances, such as the Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance;
- Invest in local indigenous nurseries and education programs at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and regional gardens and programs to plant native species in cities and local parks, gardens, green roofs and other open spaces across Victoria and restore biodiversity in these areas;
- Melbourne is known as The Garden City and Victoria as “The Garden State” – We are lucky to boast some of the best and most celebrated nature in the country and indeed the world. We have an opportunity to build on this strength and to develop local economic capacity supporting this unique brand;
- Further academic research in the local health benefits of nature connections for Victorians should be supported and encouraged;
- There is a unique opportunity to integrate nature connection and celebration with arts education, therapy and unique locally-led community arts initiatives;
- A small grants program for an growing number of small businesses working collaboratively with community initiatives to connect young people and nature.

### ***5. Outcomes and targets are of paramount importance***

Any strategy or business plan needs targets for it to be transparent and accountable. To be able to track any progress made, each key section of the biodiversity plan needs to be supported by baseline data, strong, transparent targets. The plan and related policies for funding investments should describe the processes and strategies by which these targets will be achieved and how performance will be assessed or measured.

Without targets in the plan, Victorians will end up with a state biodiversity strategy that is never implemented. Considering the importance of nature health for the health and well-being of all Victorians, this is not acceptable and requires urgent attention and leadership.

### ***6. Bi-partisan support***

The biodiversity strategy is not just a framework that should be developed and applied by this current state government, but a document that should be supported and built upon collaboratively over time by all political parties. Ideally the biodiversity strategy is supported by the state opposition and by Federal Government, regardless of the leading political party/parties. A healthy, biodiverse environment in Victoria is not optional but vital for our wellbeing as a community, society, country

and economy regardless of political affiliation. Any strategy ideally should ideally secure bi-partisan, long-term support.

## **7. Cross-departmental communication and collaboration**

We support better communication and coordination across state government departments and key community groups so that the true potential of the plan can be achieved without duplication and waste of precious resources. Liaison and better communication is needed with health, education, recreation, regional tourism and community development portfolios to harness support for the biodiversity strategy across government. We are aware that these sectors are also investigating ways to support a healthy, resilient society and economy, both for Victoria and Australia-wide.

## **8. What is our initiative doing?**

Founded in 2010, Kids In Nature Network is a cross-sectoral network in Victoria which acts to empower, connect and grow a movement of individuals and organisations that are committed to reconnecting children to nature. We exist to link up key initiatives that promote nature play and nature exploration in order to enhance child health and learning, promote creative play and facilitate connection to the natural world.

Our network is diverse with thought leaders from health, education, environment, outdoors, urban planning, community, arts and many other sectors. We work by providing a unique meeting space and opportunities for collaboration and capacity building and through open sharing of experiences, ideas and knowledge amongst our members and allies.

Our annual signature event, Nature Play Week, is a part of Premier's Active April. In its third year running, Nature Play Week 2016 featured over 150 nature play experiences and workshops presented by over 70 groups across Victoria and beyond. Participating organisations and initiatives included the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, the YMCA, Local Councils, education-, health-, arts-, recreation- and environment organisations, Landcare groups, small businesses, Bush Kinders and kindergartens, primary schools, family nature clubs and playgroups. For more information on the event, please visit [www.natureplayweek.org.au](http://www.natureplayweek.org.au)

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews responded to Nature Play Week in The Herald Sun, 6 April 2015, Game for Fresh Air. Andrea Hamblin writes: "Premier Andrews wants parents to let their kids imaginations go wild outside during school holidays: *"Some of the best experiences can be had out in nature's playground, where you can make your own adventures and have fun away from the iPad and telly"*, Mr Andrews said". You can find the full article in the selection of media coverage below for Nature Play Week 2015.

Since 2010, Kids In Nature Network has

- Created and facilitated Nature Play Week in 2014, 2015 and 2016;
- Built relationships with over 75 groups and initiatives in Victoria involved in getting kids outdoors, active and connected with nature;

- Held the inaugural Nature Connect Conference in 2014, in collaboration with the Australian Conservation Foundation for policy makers and practitioners featuring keynote speaker Richard Louv, author and founder of the international Children and Nature Network based in the United States. This event was supported broadly by the Outdoors Education and Recreation Sector;
- Held over 15 fully booked cross-sectoral networking events at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and other high profile venues, featuring local and international speakers and sharing of ideas and knowledge amongst network members and allies;
- Provided presentations at conferences, festivals, leadership courses and other events, including the World Parks Congress in Sydney (2014) and at the Centre for Sustainability Leadership (2011-2015);
- Generated media coverage, including a two-page feature article with online film clip in The Age (2014), three articles in the Herald Sun (2015-2016), front pages of local papers (2015), ABC TV news (2014) and broad radio and online coverage (2013-2016).

#### **Selection of media coverage – Kids In Nature Network/Nature Play Week**

Nature Play Week 2016

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/nature-play-week-aims-to-get-kids-outdoors-to-rediscover-the-natural-world/news-story/84e18f3a2a0171c9076499098f0f78a0>

Nature Play Week 2015

[http://natureplayweek.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Nature-Play-Week-2015\\_Selection\\_of\\_media\\_coverage\\_3\\_August\\_2015.pdf](http://natureplayweek.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Nature-Play-Week-2015_Selection_of_media_coverage_3_August_2015.pdf)

Nature Play Week 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLRXdnt3xVMaPPRI4iffF8w>

General media coverage

<http://www.smh.com.au/digital-life/digital-life-news/overprotected-overorganised--why-kids-need-time-to-play-20140716-ztq7p.html>

## APPENDIX 1

[International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)  
meeting in Jeju, South Korea

### **Resolution**

#### ***Child's right to connect with nature and to a healthy environment***

OBSERVING that there is a significant decline in the quality and quantity of children's direct experience with the natural world as a result of global developments such as urbanization (already 50% of the world population lives in cities and this will be 70% in 2050 according to predictions of the United Nations), biodiversity loss, deforestation, industrialization and environmental degradation;

RECOGNIZING that there is a widely shared concern about the increasing disconnection of people and especially children from nature, and the adverse consequences for both healthy child development ("nature deficit disorder") as well as responsible stewardship for nature and the environment in the future;

BUILDING ON Resolution 4.105 *Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) in conservation* adopted by the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008), which acknowledges the vital importance of connecting children and nature, and states that "connecting children to nature as part of their everyday lives in meaningful ways tends to be a precursor to their growing up as adults with passion and commitment to work actively in support of conservation of the environment and natural resources" and in addition requests the IUCN Director General to assist the IUCN membership in reconnecting people, especially children, and nature as a priority in order to assure responsible stewardship of the environment for the generations to come;

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the significant consequences of the increasing environmental problems such as climate change, species extinction and degradation of ecosystems, for the lives and development of children, the most vulnerable group of society in this respect, and for their future;

CONVINCED that children, since they are an inalienable part of nature, not only have the right to a healthy environment, but also to a connection with nature and to the gifts of nature for their physical and psychological health and ability to learn and create, and that until they have these rights they will not bear responsibility for nature and the environment;

ALSO CONVINCED that growing up in a healthy environment and connecting children with nature is of such a fundamental importance for both children and the (future of) the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment, that it should be recognized and codified internationally as a human right for children;

WELCOMING the identification of human rights issues as a cross-cutting issue within IUCN and the IUCN Rights Based Approach mandate based on Resolution 4.056 *Rights-based Approaches to Conservation* adopted by the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008);

FURTHER WELCOMING the significant and substantial work done by the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC) in collaboration with the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (CEL), aiming to further develop the concept of a rights-based approach to conservation, among others in the publication *Conservation with Justice: a rights-based approach*;

NOTING that the concept of a child's right to connect with nature and a healthy environment fits with the Rights Based Approach to conservation, since it contributes positively to the valuation and conservation of nature *and* to the realization of existing children's rights – such as the right to life and development, health, an adequate standard of living and the right to engage in play;

RECALLING that links between human rights and the environment have been recognized in Article 1 of the *Aarhus Convention* (1998), and in several United Nations policy instruments, among others the *Stockholm Declaration* (1972), the *World Charter for Nature* (1982), the *Rio Declaration* (1992) and *Agenda 21*, the *Millennium Development Goals*, in particular Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability, as well as in *The Earth Charter*: a "peoples" document which provides an ethical framework for sustainable development;

ALSO RECALLING the explicit recognition of a human right to water and sanitation as part of other existing human rights in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010 and in General Comment No 15 (2002) of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

AWARE of the recent appointment of an independent expert on human rights and the environment by the United Nations Human Rights Council in its resolution HRC/19/L.8/Rev.1 of 20 March 2012;

EMPHASIZING that the relatively new concept of the right to connect with nature is known and recognized for indigenous peoples in article 25 of the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007): "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, water and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generation in this regard", and that their right to a healthy environment is recognized in Article 29;

FURTHER EMPHASIZING that the Convention on the Rights of the Child contains specific anchors on which the child's right to connect with nature and a healthy environment could be based: Article 29 (1e) on the development of respect for the natural environment as an aim of the child's education and Article 24 (2c and e) on the child's right to health which refers to clean drinking water, the dangers and risks of environmental pollution and environmental sanitation;

CONSCIOUS of the potential of children as agents of change to which Principle 21 of the Rio Declaration refers: "The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all" in conjunction with IUCN Resolution 4.098 *Intergenerational partnerships: fostering ethical leadership for a just, sustainable and peaceful world* adopted at the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008);

CONSIDERING the explicit recognition of a human right to a healthy environment regionally, such as in the *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* and the American Convention on Human Rights, and nationally in multiple national constitutions; and

CONCLUDING HOWEVER, that a human right for children to connect with nature and to a healthy environment has not yet been internationally recognized nor codified in any legally binding United Nations (human rights) treaty, like the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

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

1. ENDORSES the child's right to nature and a healthy environment, which includes *inter alia*:

- a. The child's inherent right to connect with nature in a meaningful way, as a substantial part of his or her everyday life and healthy development, and to enjoy, maintain and strengthen this connection through the direct and ongoing experience of nature;
- b. The child's right to live in an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being, and to the assurance of the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment, for the benefit of present and future generations; and
- c. The child's right to be equipped for the responsibility to help address the environmental challenges he or she will unfortunately be confronted with, and to help realize a sustainable world that values nature and where people live in harmony with nature;

2. CALLS ON IUCN's governmental and non-governmental Members, its Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations and the Director General to:

- a. Promote and actively contribute to the international acknowledgement and codification of the child's right to nature and a healthy environment within the United Nations human rights framework, preferably in an additional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- b. Help introduce the draft text "The child's right to nature and a healthy environment" on the agenda of the United Nations Human Rights Council; and

3. REQUESTS the Director General in collaboration with the Secretariat and the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (CEL), within the scope of their mandates, to:

- a. Contribute to the further development and knowledge of the legal concept: the child's right to nature and a healthy development as part of the rights-based approach to conservation; and
- b. Advise on the draft text "The child's right to nature and a healthy environment" and provide guidance on the aims to be achieved and actions to be undertaken in order to have this right recognized and codified within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Sponsor:

Stichting Lippe - Biesterfeld Natuurcollege, Netherlands

Co-sponsors:

Both Ends - Environment and Development Service for NGOs, Netherlands

Centrum voor Milieukunde, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Netherlands

De Landschappen, Netherlands

Friends of the Earth Netherlands, Netherlands

Nederlands Centrum voor Inheemse Volken, Netherlands

Vereniging voor Natuur en Milieu Educatie (IVN), Netherlands

Reptile Amfibieën Vissen Onderzoek Nederland (RAVON), Netherlands

Staatsbosbeheer, Netherlands

Vereniging voor Zoogdierkunde en Zoogdierbescherming, Netherlands

## **Explanatory Memorandum**

1. The first requirement is that motions must be consistent with IUCN objectives. The issue of this motion presents a clear link with IUCN's vision of *A just world that values and conserves nature* and to the IUCN objectives of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, since connecting children to nature in meaningful ways tends to be a precursor to their growing up as adults with a passion and commitment to work actively in support of conservation of the environment and natural resources.

In this respect it is also relevant to the *IUCN Programme 2013–2016*. Connecting children will contribute to IUCN's work on valuation and Target 1: Public awareness increased and to Target 2: Values of biodiversity recognized.

2. The second requirement is that motions must address new issues other than those already covered by adopted Resolutions or Recommendations or new aspects of issues already addressed by Resolutions and Recommendations. This motion adds a new aspect, that connecting children to nature should be recognized as a human right for children, to IUCN Resolution 4.105 *Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) in conservation* adopted by the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008), which acknowledges the vital importance of connecting children and nature.

This motion also introduces the new legal concept of the child's right to connect with nature in order to contribute to the further development of the IUCN rights-based approach mandate based on Resolution 4.056 *Rights-based approaches to conservation* adopted by the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008).