



## RESOLUTION 10

### **Recognition of Central Mexico's Forest of Water as a Strategic Region for the Viability of Central Mexico's Megalopolis**

#### **PREAMBLE**

We, the delegates of the 12th World Wilderness Congress convened in the sacred lands of the Black Hills, clearly see that the highly biodiverse and rapidly degrading Forest of Water of Central Mexico is the largest benefactor of the country's most densely populated region, providing water and vital ecological services to a growing number of over 25 million people, today nearly a fifth of Mexico's total human population, in the region where 30% of the gross domestic product is generated. We further see that its loss would not only put at risk the social, political and economic viability of Mexico as a country, but that its effects would also ripple across borders. The Forest of Water is a world-wide example of how very large wild, natural areas are able to provide ecological services to people, water being the most obvious of them all.

#### **WHEREAS:**

The Forest of Water harbors over 2% of the world's flora and fauna, Mexico's highest number of endemisms and 10% of Mexico's flora and fauna species; and of the region's biotic diversity, 10% of its species are endemic: a total of 325 species found nowhere else on Earth; and although the Forest of Water represents only 0.065% of the national territory, it harbors an important proportion of Mexico's biodiversity (5 of its 6 Ecological Zones, 8 of its 10 types of ecosystems, 13% of its plant species, 17% of its fungi species, 20% of its invertebrate species and 15% of all the vertebrate species known in Mexico); and the Forest of Water is also the provider of water to three RAMSAR SITES (Hueyapan lagoon, Xochimilco and the Ciénegas de Lerma); and hundreds of migratory bird species hibernate in the Forest of Water.

Close to 80% of the water consumed in Mexico City comes from the Forest of Water; and in 2024 the metropolitan area of the Mexico City valley experienced dramatic water scarcity during the dry season, followed by a high record of urban floods when the rains settled in.

Urban sprawl from the valleys of Mexico, Toluca and Cuernavaca is rapidly climbing up the slopes of the Forest of Water mountains; and very powerful real estate corporations are making exclusive residential areas in protected and or very well-conserved stretches of the Forest of Water, such as the residential projects of Reserva Santa Fe, Bosque Real, Villa Alpina and Bosque Diamante.

New roads and highways are planned for this region that is already fragmented by over 90 paved roads, some of them being highways whose construction violently transgressed the rights of local native communities. Illegal logging and soil extraction are degrading the Forest of Water at an unprecedented and highly alarming rate. Numerous new stressors associated with and induced by climate change such as the increase in fire frequency and intensity and additional susceptibility and decline of forest resilience in vast swaths of the Forest of Water, and the Forest of Water lacks a proper land-use plan with a regional and watershed perspective.

**THEREFORE:**

The delegates to the 12th World Wilderness Congress (WILD12), convening in He Sapa, the Black Hills of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate are hereby

**RESOLVED:**

- A. To call for the recognition and management of Central Mexico's Forest of Water as a region that is strategic to the viability of Central Mexico's Megalopolis, as well as for the recognition of its indigenous and agrarian communities -ancestral inhabitants of the territory- as its true and essential custodians;
- B. To call on the governments of the states of Morelos, Mexico and of Mexico City to sign a Collaboration Agreement for the conservation of the Forest of Water, to implement the *Strategy for the Conservation of the Forest of Water 2012-2030*, and to renew it with a 2025-2050 Action Plan to be developed in very close collaboration with with people from the Forest of Water communities, the academic sector and NGOs, all with a proven track-record of defending the forest;
- C. To urge all levels of government to immediately stop the proliferation of industrial and residential developments and highways on the slopes and highlands of the Forest of Water;
- D. To call all new federal and state congresses to legislate towards landscape connectivity (of natural protected areas with all other biodiversity conservation areas) to preserve biological and hydrological corridors, for the conservation of ecosystems and of their environmental benefits;
- E. To urge all levels of government to immediately safeguard that the mountains themselves and their wildlife are hydrated, by not exporting all the water from its springs to the towns and cities, but leaving some to hydrate the ecosystems and their species;
- F. To call upon all levels of government to immediately carry out a participatory process to develop a regional land-use plan for the entirety of the Forest of Water, to respect the rights of indigenous communities to define the destiny of their territories, to support communities in the development and implementation of their local land-use plans, and to strictly respect these plans;
- G. To urge the Ministry of the Defense and the National Guard to design and carry out a plan to oust all organized crime activities including illegal logging and other illegal activities such as soil extraction, land-use change and arson forest fires;

- H. To call upon all levels of government to immediately carry out ecological restoration programs throughout the Forest of Water, generating employment for people from the local indigenous and agrarian communities in all conservation and restoration activities, and in the management of all protected areas in the region.

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