



### **RESOLUTION 3**

As amended and accepted by contact groups on the 29th and 30th August 2024

#### **Advancing the Rights of Antarctica**

##### **WHEREAS**

The 7<sup>th</sup> World Wilderness Congress (2001) adopted a Resolution, proposed by the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Wangari Maathai, stating that delegates should “develop a jurisprudence that recognizes humans as inseparable from the planetary ecosystem.”

Delegates at the 10<sup>th</sup> World Wilderness Congress (2013) resolved to “support the worldwide recognition of the inherent rights of Nature to exist, thrive and evolve,” and to “actively advance Nature Rights in law and practice,” including through delegates’ own work.

Implementation of this approach has continued to accelerate worldwide, and in 2019 the United Nations Secretary General stated that: “Over the last decade, Earth jurisprudence can be seen as the fastest growing legal movement of the twenty-first century.” Currently, Nature’s rights are recognized in constitutions, treaties, national and municipal legislation, and/or court decisions in at least 24 nations.<sup>1</sup>

The continent of Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean covers ten percent of the surface of Earth, and plays a vital role in maintaining the climate and other conditions which enable life across the planet to flourish. This magnificent, vast wilderness now faces grave threats: climate change is melting the ice and rapidly degrading Antarctic ecosystems on land and in the sea, and increased fishing, tourism, and fossil fuel exploration pose significant and growing risks. Scientists report that Antarctic glaciers are rapidly melting, sea ice is at record lows, ocean currents are weakening, and temperatures of 40°C above average have been recorded.

Antarctica is unique in geopolitical terms: it is not within, or subject to, the sovereignty of, any State. Since 1959, the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) has reserved Antarctica for peaceful purposes, particularly scientific collaboration, and has prohibited mining and militarization. However the ATS alone cannot meet the intensifying threats to Antarctica, nor enable Antarctica to be represented in decision-making processes that affect it.

In response, a growing number of scientists, indigenous representatives, conservationists, and others are calling for transformative change. This includes the recognition of Antarctica as an autonomous, sovereign, self-regulating entity, for humans to respect and uphold the

inherent rights and freedoms of Antarctica and all Antarctic beings, and for decisions that affect Antarctica to be based on what is best for Antarctica.

### **THEREFORE**

The 12<sup>th</sup> World Wilderness Congress, reaffirms the support expressed by the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Congresses for advancing the recognition of Nature's rights, and recognizes: first, that Antarctica is a community of inter-dependent Antarctic beings that plays a vital and indispensable role in maintaining conditions conducive to the flourishing of life on Earth; second, that all people have a duty to safeguard the inherent rights and freedoms of Antarctic beings to exist, to be wild and continue their regenerative cycles and processes free of human disruption or control, and to play their unique roles in the larger Earth community.

### **RESOLVED**

- A. Delegates at this Congress will support the establishment of a global alliance to advocate for the recognition of the rights of Antarctica and all Antarctic beings, and will advance rights of Antarctica in relevant international fora, current or to be developed, to ensure that those rights are protected and that decisions that affect Antarctica are made in the best interests of Antarctica.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://ecojurisprudence.org/> and  
<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/rightsOfNature/>.