Safeguarding Coral Reefs From Harmful Chemicals in Sunscreen

Admin

Submitted by: Submitted 1 month 2 weeks ago by ELPStudent.ENVI....

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Status: Submitted

Original language of the motion as submitted: English

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Background information

1. Does the proposed motion:

Correspond with the purpose of motions as defined in Rule 48bis:

Yes

Propose an amendment to either the draft IUCN Programme 2021-2024:

No

Address issues pertaining to the governance of IUCN?:

No

2. Specify which IUCN constituents (Members or components of IUCN) or third parties (Rule 54 (b) viii.) referred to in the operative paragraph(s) of this motion have:

Been consulted during the development of this motion:

IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)

Collaborated in the development of the motion:

IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)

Provide any additional information about consultations carried out/ collaboration with IUCN constituents in the development of this motion, in particular if consultations had the purpose of identifying solutions that might address the underlying issues. (Rule 54 (b) x.) :

The World Commission on Environmental Law was consulted about the development of this motion.

3. Before submitting this motion, have you searched the IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations Platform to ensure that this motion does not repeat previously adopted Resolutions or Recommendations?:

Yes

Please specify, what is new, over and above previously adopted Resolutions and Recommendations and state which Resolutions / Recommendations:

The IUCN has not previously addressed the issue of harmful chemicals in sunscreen and its impact on coral reefs.

4. Please indicate whether the proposed motion has been discussed in one of the Regional Conservation Fora held in 2019 or - where applicable - in a meeting of the National Committee(s) of the country(ies) concerned? (Regulation 66ter):

Yes

Please specify in which:

North America Regional Conservation Forum

Oceania Regional Conservation Forum

5. Does the motion focus on local, national or regional issues?:

No

6. Does the proposed motion concern issues arising in a State or States outside the proponent's State/Region?:

No

Preamble

The preamble explains in a succinct way the rationale for the motion and substantiates the action(s) called for in the operative part. :

EMPHASIZING that coral reef ecosystems play a fundamental role in ecological, social, and economic well-being;

AWARE that over sixty percent of the world's coral reefs are at risk from factors including climate change, pollution, and overfishing;

RECOGNIZING that sunscreen is a source of coral reef pollution and scientists have found certain chemicals in sunscreen contribute to coral reef bleaching and pose a threat to healthy coral reef ecosystems, even at extremely low concentrations;

CONCERNED that 6,000 to 14,000 tons of sunscreen wash into the ocean every year;

RECOGNIZING that sound coral reef management and protection is integral to a strong and healthy marine ecosystem;

HIGHLIGHTING that Hawaii, Palau, US Virgin Islands, certain parts of Mexico, and parts of the Florida Keys have banned sunscreens containing chemicals harmful to coral reefs;

RECALLING the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets, particularly Target 10, "By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning;"

UNDERLINING that the Fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook found that Aichi Target 10 is not being met and significantly accelerated actions are needed to reverse this trend;

RECOGNIZING that the proposed IUCN Programme 2021-2024 identifies restoring the health of the world ocean as one of four priority areas;

ACKNOWLEDGING Goal (3) of the International Coral Reef Initiative Plan of Action 2016-2018 to "review issues related to the impact of sunscreens and other endocrine disruptors on coral reefs, and encourage the production of sunscreens that are proven not to damage coral reefs;"

APPRECIATING IUCN's longstanding commitment to coral reef protection;

Operative paragraphs

The operative section of the motion specifies the position of Members and contains the action(s) that they are agreeing to take.:

1. URGES the IUCN Species Survival Commission to conduct an assessment on best practices to inform and help member states protect coral reefs from the harmful chemicals found in sunscreen;

2. CALLS UPON the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law to develop model legislation for Member States to adopt for the purpose of protecting coral reefs from harmful chemicals found in sunscreen; and

3. REQUESTS IUCN Members encourage the adoption and implementation of model legislation to protect coral reefs from harmful chemicals found in sunscreen.

Proponents and co-sponsors

You are submitting this motion on behalf of::
Environmental Law Program at the William S. Richardson School of Law [United States of America]

Co-sponsors:
Center for Environmental Legal Studies [United States of America]
Center for Large Landscape Conservation [United States of America]
Global Wildlife Conservation [United States of America]
Palau Conservation Society [Palau]
SYLVIA EARLE ALLIANCE (DBA MISSION BLUE) [United States of America]

Explanatory memorandum

Explanatory memorandum (optional):
Vitally important in terms of biodiversity, culture, and economics; coral reef ecosystems have often been described as the “rainforests of the sea.” Coral reef ecosystems serve as resources for food, income, and protection for over half a billion people. Around the world, healthy and resilient coral reefs are crucially important to indigenous cultures. As hotspots of biodiversity, they “cover less than 1% of the ocean’s floor, but nearly one million species of fish, invertebrates, and algae are estimated to live in and around the world’s reefs.” (National Park Service). In addition to the value of coral reefs in terms of biodiversity, culture, and nature, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) notes that coral reef ecosystems provide an estimated economic value of 375 billion dollars per year.
Despite the abundant benefits of healthy coral reefs, they are facing mounting threats. Scientists estimate that up to ten percent of the world’s reefs are threatened due to sunscreen induced coral reef bleaching. (Danovaro et al.). Studies have shown that even at extremely low concentrations, certain chemicals in sunscreen, such as

oxybenzone and octinoxate, are causing rapid and complete bleaching of hard corals. (Danovaro et al.). A 2016 study concluded that “oxybenzone poses a hazard to coral reef conservation and threatens the resiliency of coral reefs to climate change.” (Downs et al.). Estimates show that 6,000 to 14,000 tons of sunscreen wash into the ocean every year, yet this is not spread out amongst the entire ocean, instead it is concentrated in some of the world’s most popular marine destination areas, such as national parks.

Worldwide, coral reef degradation is a critical concern. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Target 10 sought to reduce anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, yet the Fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook found that “we have actually moved away from achieving this target.” To counter this trend, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted priority actions, including “reducing the impacts of multiple stressors, in particular those stressors that are more tractable at the regional, national, and local levels.” The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) adopted goal 3-5, specifically related to the impacts of sunscreens on coral reefs. In response to this goal, the Government of Sweden conducted a study on the impacts of sunscreens on coral reefs and advocated for a proactive and precautionary approach.

In 2018, the Hawai‘i Legislature recognized the harmful impacts of oxybenzone and octinoxate to Hawaii’s marine environment and enacted a law banning the sale of sunscreens containing those chemicals. Additional regions have begun adopting bans of sunscreens containing chemicals harmful to coral reefs, including Palau, US Virgin Islands, certain parts of Mexico, and parts of the Florida Keys. While most bans prohibit the sale, some bans, including the US Virgin Islands ban, also prohibit the distribution and import of sunscreens containing harmful chemicals. With the health and resiliency of coral reef ecosystems at risk, the damaging impacts of certain chemicals found in sunscreen is a key concern. IUCN support would serve a valuable purpose in conserving these incomparable ecosystems.

Information required for the implementation of the motion

1. Provide:

a) An overview of the activities and estimated resources needed to implement the motion (these can be human or other resources, but expressed in USD). Also include an estimation of the resources pledged (in USD), including by the proponent, co-sponsors, or third parties.:

Activity	Estimated financial resources required (USD)	Estimated financial resources pledged (USD)
Field activities	0.00	0.00
Scientific activities	0.00	0.00
Education/ communication/ raising awareness	0.00	0.00
Fundraising	0.00	0.00

Activity	Estimated financial resources required (USD)	Estimated financial resources pledged (USD)
Policy influencing	0.00	0.00
Convening stakeholders/ networking	0.00	0.00
Capacity building	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00
Total	0.00	0.00

Rate here to which degree the resources required for the implementation of the motion have been estimated and committed. During the online discussion of motions, proponents of motions will be able to update this information and rating, while IUCN Members will be able to pledge or commit their contribution to the implementation of a motion.:

D: Motion can be implemented within the regular budget and resources available to the Member or component of IUCN (Secretariat, Commission, etc.) which is called upon to implement the motion.

b) Description of the contributions which proponent and co-sponsors intend to make towards the implementation of the motion: (Rule 54 (b) viii.)

Proponent

IUCN Member:

Environmental Law Program at the William S. Richardson School of Law [United States of America]

Proposed actions:

Convene stakeholders/networking

Education/Communication/Raising awareness

Co-sponsors

Co-sponsor:

SYLVIA EARLE ALLIANCE (DBA MISSION BLUE) [United States of America]

Proposed actions:

Other

Co-sponsor:

Palau Conservation Society [Palau]

Proposed actions:

Field activities

Co-sponsor:

Center for Large Landscape Conservation [United States of America]

Proposed actions:

Other

Co-sponsor:

Global Wildlife Conservation [United States of America]

Proposed actions:

Other

Co-sponsor:

Center for Environmental Legal Studies [United States of America]

Proposed actions:

Convening stakeholders/networking

2. Provide here the name of a focal point who would be in charge of reporting annually on the follow-up and implementation of the motion if adopted:

Name: Emily

Surname: Gaskin

Institution: Environmental Law Program, William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawaii at Manoa

3. If the operative paragraph(s) of this motion is/are directly related to the mandate and work of one or more IUCN Commission(s), has the Steering Committee of the relevant Commission(s) committed to oversee implementation and assist in the gathering of data on the implementation of the Resolutions involved?:

Yes

Specify which Commission(s):

World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)

Species Survival Commission (SSC)

4. As required by WCC-2016-Res-001, please indicate when the motion automatically ceases to be effective and will be moved to the Resolutions and Recommendations Archive. This can be either when a stated period has elapsed or when an objective has been achieved.:

The objective of the motion will be achieved when all IUCN Members have banned sunscreen with harmful chemicals.

Scope

Please specify to which area of the draft IUCN Programme 2021-2024 this motion is related:

Healthy Oceans

Indicate the geographic scope of the implementation of this motion:

Global

Keywords

Region:

- Global

Nature and biodiversity:

- Marine & Coastal
- Fishes
- Mammals

Sustainable Development Goals:

- Goal 12 - responsible consumption and production
- Goal 14 - life below water

Threats and Drivers:

- Human intrusions & disturbance
- Pollution

Type of response / intervention:

- Ecosystems management
- Education / Awareness raising
- Natural resources management (land, water etc.)

Congress themes:

- Managing landscapes for nature and people (/programme/congress-themes/landscapes)
- Restoring ocean health (/programme/congress-themes/oceans)

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