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RESOLUTION ON THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY

The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 13 to 18 June 2019, under the theme “Because we know God’s voice” (John 10:4), deliberated and adopted the following resolution:

Biodiversity is an ecological concept. Healthy ecosystems depend on a diversity of flora, fauna and minerals, and the preservation of habitats in which they can thrive. But the concept of biodiversity also has theological roots. The Holy Trinity is a communion of love, which created life that is sustained by the diverse contribution of each creature. The covenant made initially with Noah protects the integrity of earth and all creatures.

Destruction of habitats and biodiversity loss is causing the agricultural and economic collapse of sustainable communities today and those of future generations, which drives much conflict and human migration. The biological and socio-political consequences are clear. Protecting biodiversity and guarding against habitat loss are essential to preserving just, peaceful and healthy societies.

A 2019 report of the [Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) estimates around 1 million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction. This threat of mass extinction is due to habitat loss caused by land misuse, consumption, and the rise of invasive species caused by deforestation, the pollution of soil, water and air, and the loss of marine and wetland habitats.

Protecting biodiversity is in line with God’s ongoing creation and God’s promise of the fulfilment of creation (eschaton). Genesis (2:15) reminds us that this is part of the human vocation. In the creation narrative, our human vocation is linked to our knowledge and experience of the diversity of creatures with which we live. The New Testament reminds us that each creature has inherent value and every creature participates in the good news of reconciliation. To this end, the Council calls upon:

Its member churches to:

- Participate in earth keeping and local ecological education programs, and promote projects to conserve habitat and nurture local biodiversity in gardens, churchyards, community spaces.
- Engage in meaningful advocacy to political and financial duty bearers, in order to promote policies that will lead to sustainable pathways for land use, conservation, and energy production.
- Actively involve youth at all levels of decision making especially those pertinent to climate justice.

- Name climate emergency as one of the major causes of this catastrophic rate of species extinction.

The International Community to:

- Protect the integrity of creation and put in place special measures to save the plants and animals species at high risk of extinction.
- Build a global sustainable economic system based on the integration of creation, tearing away from the contemporary exploitative capitalist economic growth model.
- Address climate change on an emergency basis.

“God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.’” (Genesis 9:12-13)