



Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea's (PNG) forests support a disproportionate amount of species not found elsewhere on the planet. A major challenge to the conservation of Papua New Guinean biodiversity is that it remains largely unexplored and therefore under-studied.

In July 2014, the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC), the largest organization in the world for the study and conservation of tropical systems, convened in Cairns, Australia. This brought together 589 scientists and conservationists from 55 countries to Australia's wet tropics, which is essentially, from a biological perspective, an extension of Papua New Guinean forest.

The ATBC congratulates the Government of Papua New Guinea for initiating the establishment of a biologically representative network of Conservation Areas in collaboration with the traditional landowners. This process is essential for the preservation of Papua New Guinean biodiversity.

We call on the Government of Papua New Guinea to provide new funding initiatives to support the training of the next generation of Papua New Guinean biologists. A better system of funding is also needed if established researchers are to continue exploring the biota. These initiatives are essential for the documentation, understanding and protection of the globally important PNG biodiversity.

Therefore, be it resolved that the ATBC:

- Urges the Government of Papua New Guinea to strengthen the PNG Research, Science and Technology Secretariat and to establish a competitive funding mechanism for biodiversity research open to all Papua New Guineans from government and non-governmental research organizations. The selection process should be based on scientific merit;
- Implores the Government of Papua New Guinea to expand the number of studentships available for postgraduate biology students;
- Urges the Government of Papua New Guinea to create a network of Conservation Areas by approving pending proposals for the Managalas, Wanang, Torricelli and Sulamesi Conservation Areas, by increasing the number of protected areas and designating, together with the landowners, additional Conservation Areas representing all principal ecosystems in Papua New Guinea.
- Exhorts the Government of Papua New Guinea to promote the effective management of protected areas and Conservation Areas.

- Encourages the Government of Papua New Guinea to compensate landowners with royalties for their conservation set-asides and assist them with sustainable development projects.
- Encourages private enterprise within Papua New Guinea to support the Government in its efforts to promote the study and preservation of the country's biodiversity.
- Encourages the PNG government to seek international collaboration with scientists and conservationists to achieve the above mentioned goals.