

7. IUCN Motion 042 – Environment

IUCN names fossil fuels as ‘threat to nature’, backs call for global phase-out Treaty. The IUCN passed Motion 042, officially naming fossil fuel production as a direct threat to nature and calling for a complete, just phase-out of coal, oil, and gas. The motion also endorses exploring a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and links climate action with biodiversity protection.

IUCN Motion 042 – Fossil Fuels as a Threat to Nature

1. Context – At the World Conservation Congress, the IUCN passed Motion 042, marking the first time a multilateral organization explicitly named fossil fuel production as a direct threat to nature.

2. About IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

Nature & Composition – World’s largest and most diverse environmental network; includes government and civil society organizations.

Established – 1948, Fontainebleau, France (originally as International Union for the Protection of Nature – IUPN).

Renaming Timeline –

1956 – Became International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

1964 – Published first IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

1980 – Released World Conservation Strategy, defining “sustainable development.”

2008 – Officially named International Union for Conservation of Nature.

3. About Motion 042

Origin – Tabled by the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and co-sponsored by civil society and Indigenous organizations.

WWF Background –

1. Established in 1961 in Switzerland.
2. Initially focused on protecting endangered species; symbolized by the giant panda logo.
3. Expanded focus in 1986 to habitat protection, climate change, and sustainability.

4. Core Provisions of Motion 042

A. Naming Fossil Fuels as a Direct Threat – Explicitly identifies fossil fuel production and combustion as the primary cause of climate and biodiversity crises. Shifts focus from mere carbon emissions to addressing the source of environmental harm.

B. Call for Complete and Just Phase-Out

Urges governments to –

1. Phase out coal, oil, and gas production and use.
2. Halt all new fossil fuel extraction projects worldwide.
3. Ensure a “just transition” for workers and communities dependent on fossil fuels.

C. Endorsement of Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty – Supports exploring new international legal instruments to manage fossil fuel supply. Treaty backed by climate-vulnerable nations and civil society groups.

5. Significance and Implications

A. Unification of Climate and Biodiversity Agendas – Motion asserts that nature protection and climate action are interconnected. Establishes that fossil fuel phase-out is crucial for both ecosystems and climate stability.

B. Momentum for Global Climate Negotiations – Decision increases pressure on leaders ahead of COP30 in Belém, Brazil. Encourages ambitious fossil fuel reduction commitments beyond vague pledges.

C. Strengthening Call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty – Addresses lack of global agreement managing fossil fuel production. Complements the Paris Agreement, which focuses on emissions rather than supply.

D. Amplifying Voices of Indigenous & Vulnerable Communities – Indigenous groups co-sponsored motion highlighting adverse impacts of fossil fuel extraction.

Experts emphasize –

1. “No conservation without Indigenous rights.”

2. "No climate justice without full and fair fossil fuel phase-out."

E. Reinforcing Legal and Moral Obligations

Motion aligned with other IUCN resolutions –

Motion 141 – Supports ICJ advisory opinion affirming state obligations to prevent climate harm.

Motion 038 – Calls for implementing Paris Agreement goals via just, orderly, and equitable fossil fuel transition.

6. Conclusion

IUCN Motion 042 formally classifies fossil fuels as a threat to nature. Connects ecosystem protection with the urgent need to phase out coal, oil, and gas. Unifies climate and biodiversity objectives while supporting a new Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Strengthens legal, moral, and social mandates for a just transition for affected communities.

Source – <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/wildlife-biodiversity/iucn-names-fossil-fuels-as-threat-to-nature-backs-call-for-global-phase-out-treaty>

