

STATE PARTY REPORT

STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE RÍO PLÁTANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE HONDURAS

World Heritage Site No. 196

DECISION: 42 COM 7A.44

February 2018- February 2019



Content

Decision: 42 COM 7A. 44 World Heritage Committee, 42st session (Manama, 2018).	4
I. Executive Summary	5
II. State Party's response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee	6
Recommendation 3. Commends the State Party and governmental and non-governmental partners on continued progress made in land titling and granting negotiated local access to natural resources in the buffer and cultural zones of the biosphere reserve, encourages the State Party and partners involved to consolidate the innovative and promising governance mechanisms and urges the State Party to develop an effective and funded exit strategy to sustain these advances beyond the duration of external project support.	6
Recommendation 4. Reiterates its strong concern that human, financial and logistical resources allocated by the State Party continue to be insufficient to ensure systematic law enforcement, presence on the ground and adequate monitoring of the property;	7
1. Reactivation of the Ad-Hoc Committee for the Protection of Rio Plátano Reserve World Heritage Site 196.	7
2. Strategy of Immediate Actions for the protection of the Rio Plátano Reserve	8
2.1 Launching of the Presidential Campaign SOS Honduras for the Protection of Río Plátano	8
2.2 Execution of Strategic Operational	9
2.3 Strengthening, Equipment and Forest Ranger Recruitment	9
3. Interagency coordination and technical assistance for the Protection Reserve Rio Plátano	11
Recommendation 5. Reiterates its recommendation that the State Party maintain the overflights and ground level surveys to detect illegal activities and illegal new settlements as early as possible to enable immediate responses, avoiding evictions after the full establishment of settlements;	12
Recommendation 6. Also urges the State Party to take concrete steps to follow up on the updated conclusions and recommendations facilitated by the 2017 Advisory mission regarding the Significant Boundary Modification and the efforts to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger - in line with the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) adopted in 2015 - with the technical support of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, as required;	14
Recommendation 7. Welcomes the acknowledgement of the possible benefits of a Significant Boundary Modification by the State Party, while fully respecting the interests, rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples, Afro-Honduran and Ladino (mestizo) communities;	15

Recommendation 8. Expresses its utmost concern that the State Party did not report on the possible impacts of the Patuca III project despite repeated requests, and requests the State Party to ensure that current and potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property are specifically assessed urgently, in line with IUCN'S World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, and to ensure that the project will not proceed before this assessment is completed;	15
III. Updates on other conservation initiatives identified by the State party	16
IV. List of Attachments	17

Decision: 42 COM 7A. 44 World Heritage Committee, 42st session (Manama, 2018).

Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve

Decision42 COM 7A. 44

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having Examined Document WHC / 18/42. COM / 7A,
2. Recalling Decision 41 COM 7A. 3, adopted at its 41st session (KRAKOW, 2017)
3. Commends the State Party and governmental and non-governmental partners on continued progress made in land titling and granting negotiated local access to natural resources in the buffer and cultural zones of the biosphere reserve, encourages the State Party and partners involved to consolidate the innovative and promising governance mechanisms and urges the State Party to develop an effective and funded exit strategy to sustain these advances beyond the duration of external project support.
4. Reiterates its strong concern that human, financial and logistical resources allocated by the State Party continue to be insufficient to ensure systematic law enforcement, presence on the ground and adequate monitoring of the property;
5. Reiterates its recommendation that the State Party maintain the overflights and ground level surveys to detect illegal activities and illegal new settlements as early as possible to enable immediate responses, avoiding evictions after the full establishment of settlements;
6. Also urges the State Party to take concrete steps to follow up on the updated conclusions and recommendations facilitated by the 2017 Advisory mission regarding the Significant Boundary Modification and the efforts to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger - in line with the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) adopted in 2015 - with the technical support of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, as required;
7. Welcomes the acknowledgement of the possible benefits of a Significant Boundary Modification by the State Party, while fully respecting the interests, rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples, Afro-Honduran and Ladino (mestizo) communities;
8. Expresses its utmost concern that the State Party did not report on the possible impacts of the Patuca III project despite repeated requests, and requests the State Party to ensure that current and potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property are specifically assessed urgently, in line with IUCN'S World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, and to ensure that the project will not proceed before this assessment is completed;
9. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2019, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session in 2019;
10. Decides to retain Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

I. Executive Summary

This report describes the efforts made by the Government of Honduras to maintain and contribute to the preservation of the integrity of the Outstanding Universal Values of the Property of Río Plátano and move forward with the recommendations of Decision 42 COM 7A.44 Session 42° of the World Heritage Committee developed in Manama, Bahrain.

During 2018, the Government of Honduras made significant efforts to address and combat the major threats through the execution of a strategy led by the President of the Republic, aiming to instruct and encourage interagency efforts through the execution of strategic operations, enablement of checkpoint posts, arrangement of financial resources, implementation of a forest rangers program nationwide and the strengthening and coordination of the institutions involved in the protection and management of the Property of Río Plátano Reserve.

As part of the management of the Property of Río Plátano, the strategy for strengthening the governance and land use within the territory of the Reserve has continued through the construction and implementation of life plans of the indigenous populations and cadastral and contractual maintenance with local and national authorities.

During 2018, the strengthening of the interagency coordination has created institutional plans and agendas that share common goals with governmental and non-governmental organizations at national and international levels, in which protection actions have been prioritized for the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve.

The State Party expresses its commitment to continue moving forward and comply with the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee, in relation to the nomination for significant boundary modification for the property of Río Plátano, the impact assessment of the Property, and the desired State of Conservation that will allow the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

II. State Party's response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee

Recommendation 3. Commends the State Party and governmental and non-governmental partners on continued progress made in land titling and granting negotiated local access to natural resources in the buffer and cultural zones of the biosphere reserve, encourages the State Party and partners involved to consolidate the innovative and promising governance mechanisms and urges the State Party to develop an effective and funded exit strategy to sustain these advances beyond the duration of external project support.

National efforts continue to strengthen the governance of the territory, and the recognition of the rights of use and possession of both indigenous communities and land users in the Río Plátano Reserve. There has been a follow up of the formal agreements with land users in the buffer zone and in the cultural zone of Río Plátano Reserve. The goal is to promote sustainable use of natural resources that allow social benefits, promoting the appropriation and commitments of the population for the management of the Río Plátano Reserve, while maintaining a database of inhabitants, cadastre, resources and uses within the territory.

Specifically regarding this recommendation, since May 2017 and up to date, a complementary measure is taken place with the Communal Land Management and Environmental Protection in Río Plátano Project (MC-PROTEP); This measure is framed in the bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Honduras and the Federal Republic of Germany and is executed by the National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife (ICF), through the financial assistance of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany through the German Development Bank - KfW. The area of influence includes the boundaries of the World Heritage site of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve in its entirety and has a budget of 3,387,126 Euros from external funds and a national counterpart.

The objective of the MCPRÓTEP is to strengthen the sustainability of the results of the investments made with the project, especially regarding the regularization of land tenure and municipal cadastre, as central issues of management and land use planning.

The MCPRÓTEP focuses on the following components:

1. Municipal strengthening the territorial management of the Río Plátano Reserve
2. Strengthening of ICF in territorial management Reserve Río Plátano
3. Strengthening of indigenous organizations and afro-descendants in the Río Plátano Reserve.

During 2018, the following progress and results were obtained:

1. Technical advice and conditioning in the cadastral municipal maintenance has been provided to the municipalities that are part of the Río Plátano Reserve maintenance,
2. Training in advanced measurement and instruments use, geographic information systems tools for the cadastral database management and procedures for regularization of land tenure,
3. Management of Understanding Letters between the ICF and the municipalities of Iriona, Juan Francisco Bulnes and Dulce Nombre de Culmí, on the commitment and support in the cadastral survey,

4. A draft of an Executive Agreement has been made regarding the Regularization of Land Tenure in the buffer zone of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve; instrument that will support the conformation of the Technical Unit for the Maintenance of Family Usufruct Contracts (CUF) (Annex 1),
5. Advances in the standardization of tools for the maintenance of Family Usufruct Contracts (CUF), which include a format for a Plan of Measures for Land Use Restoration,
6. The document "2012 Forest Cover Analysis for the Río Plátano Man and Biosphere Reserve and the analysis of forest loss and gain for temporality 2000-2006, 2006-2012 and 2012-2016" was presented with the purpose to release the official data of the country in terms of monitoring and the state of forest in the Río Plátano Reserve. (Annex 2)
7. The Life Plan of the Pech tribal council in the buffer zone of Río Plátano was prepared, through a participatory process, promoted by Pech Tribe Federation of Honduras and coordinated by the Board of the Pech tribal council of Jocomico; with the participation of communities and the support of youth Pech from the community of Jocomico in the gathering of information. According to the Life Plan, the vision of the Pech tribal council of Jocomico is: "To be a tribal council that is organized, responsible, transparent, honest, caring of natural and cultural resources and uses them rationally, including the entire population to recognize, defend and empower its territory, for the sake of future generations. " (Annex 3)
8. Influence with the President of the Republic to implement measures based on the Life Plans, especially with the Pech People (Annex 4)
9. As part of the strategy for the governance strengthening, in coordination with local governments and ICF in the buffer zone, mechanisms for cadastral and usufruct contracts have been defined. With the indigenous communities, the strategic approach to ensure governance, is carried out by the construction and implementation of Life Plans.

Recommendation 4. Reiterates its strong concern that human, financial and logistical resources allocated by the State Party continue to be insufficient to ensure systematic law enforcement, presence on the ground and adequate monitoring of the property;

Responding to threats in relation to the protection of Property of Río Plátano and the follow up the recommendations made by the World Heritage Committee, concrete actions have been taken with the participation and coordination of various governmental and non-governmental organizations, led by the National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife (ICF). The main actions undertaken in 2018 are as follows:

1. Reactivation of the Ad-Hoc Committee for the Protection of Río Plátano Reserve World Heritage Site 196.

In response to the Executive Decrees PCM-010-2011 and PCM-006-2013, which declare Río Plátano Reserve as a special interest site and creates the Ad-Hoc Technical Committee, as an operational entity and promoter for an interagency coordination for specific and priority conservation actions for Río Plátano Reserve and its influence zone; the committee has been reactivated and by using this work and coordination platform, interagency meetings were held, with the following results:

- a) The state of conservation, threats, and the Decision 42 COM 7A.44 of the recommendations from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for Río Plátano Reserve was presented,
- b) Approval of the Action Plan and Operating Regulations of the Ad hoc Committee for the Protection of Río Plátano,

- c) Support and approval by the Ad-Hoc Committee of the Immediate Actions Strategy in attention of the main threats Río Plátano Reserve and the launching of the Campaign SOS Río Plátano (Annex 5),
- d) Conformation of a Petit committee to follow up actions from the Action Plan of the AdHoc Committee.

These meetings were held in the months of July and October 2018, with the participation of the following institutions:

- 1. National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife
- 2. Ministry of National Defense and Armed Forces,
- 3. National Police,
- 4. Environmental Prosecutor Office of the Public Ministry,
- 5. General Attorney of the Republic
- 6. Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources,
- 7. Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History,
- 8. Indigenous People and Afro-Honduran Directorate,
- 9. Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras,
- 10. Ministry of Finance,
- 11. National Agrarian Institute,
- 12. Institute of the Property,
- 13. Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- 14. Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Services
- 15. National Council for Forest Protection

2. Strategy of Immediate Actions for the protection of the Río Plátano Reserve

Through the participation and coordination with governmental and non-governmental institutions, linked to the management and protection of natural resources on the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, the ICF has promoted a Strategy for Immediate Actions for the Protection of Río Plátano, focusing in the following strategic actions:

2.1 Launching of the Presidential Campaign SOS Honduras for the Protection of Río Plátano

The President of the Republic of Honduras, with the support of ICF, the Ad-Hoc Committee, donors, indigenous and civil society organizations and other strategic partners, on 8 November, 2018, performed the launching of the campaign "SOS Honduras – Río Plátano: Stop the Destruction of Forests"; this campaign aims to instruct and promote inter-agency efforts for immediate actions for the conservation of forests; during his participation, President Juan Orlando Hernandez, in his presidential discourse emphasized that the protection of the Río Plátano Reserve, La Moskitia, protected areas and forests are a national priority.

Through this launch, the President of the Republic committed to take actions and efforts to link national security and forest conservation, giving priority to immediate actions in Río Plátano to pursue tangible results through the implementation of strategic operations in the area, as well as enabling interagency monitoring model stations and the implementation of a forest ranger program nationwide (Annex 6, 7, 8).

2.2 Execution of Strategic Operational

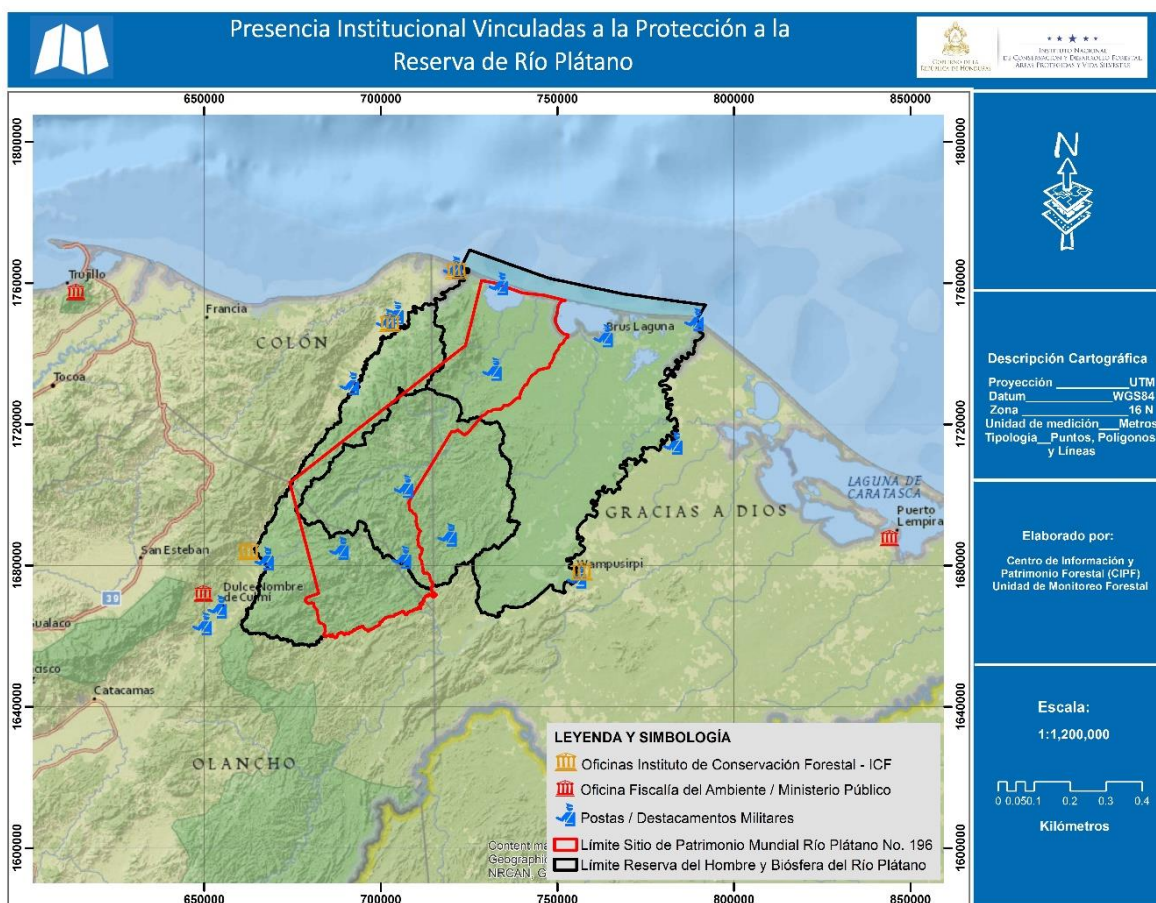
Following the presidential instructions, ground and air interagency operations for recognition and control were scheduled, with the coordinated and effective participation of the Interagency Task Force against Environmental Crime (FTIA), including the National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife (ICF), the Environmental Prosecutor Office of the Public Ministry (FEMA), the Armed Forces, the National Police and the General Attorney of the Republic (PGR). As a result of this operations, timber, firearms and vehicles seizures, and arrest warrants of offenders were achieved.

Also in the year 2018, several operations with specific goals were achieved, which are detailed in the response to Recommendation 5 of the World Heritage Committee.

2.3 Strengthening, Equipment and Forest Ranger Recruitment

In order to establish the institutional presence, that allow the minimum field and security conditions for the Río Plátano management and conservation, as well as generating employment opportunities in the area, ICF has set out at various levels, to increase institutional presence through recruitment of forest rangers in the area. As part of these efforts, the following progress has been made in 2018:

- a) The initiation of the project Strengthening the conservation management of the Reserve of the man and the biosphere of the Río Plátano in Honduras, Central America. Through this project with funds from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and in order to support conservation efforts in Río Plátano, the recruitment of five (5) additional forest rangers to the already working personnel in the Río Plátano institutional office.
The project has a duration of 2 years for an implementation period 2018-2020 (Annex 9).
- b) As part of the institutional arrangements, the Board of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Fund (FAPVS), has approved a National Forest Ranger Program of 10 million Lempiras (≈\$ 406.504). This year, the administrative procedures will take place for the recruitment of at least 20 forest rangers through this Program to strengthen the human resources in the Reserve Río Plátano (Annex 10).
- c) Through partnerships of cooperation and technical assistance with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), during the year 2018, cooperation for technical strengthening and equipment for field personnel in Río Plátano and La Moskitia and future recruitments have been agreed. It is expected that this support will initiate during the first half of 2019.
- d) Regarding the institutional presence through the Río Plátano ICF Regional Office, currently this office has a staff of 47 persons, that include forest rangers, technical and administrative personnel. It is highlighted that the Armed Forces have 16 military posts or military detachments in the Biosphere Reserve Río Plátano area (See Map 1).



Map 1. Institutional Presence for the Protection of Río Plátano.

Considering the threats and knowing the access routes to the Río Plátano Reserve and the possible routes for illegal traffic of forest products and byproducts, wildlife, archaeological objects and other illegal acts; during the year 2018, an initiative was proposed to enable a model checkpoint post in the village of Dulce Nombre de Culmí. This site has been identified as a strategic chokepoint due to actual threats. With the enabling of this model checkpoint, the following impacts are expected:

- Stop illegal traffic of timber, wildlife, and archaeological pieces,
- Flow control of machinery, livestock, invaders, equipment and tools towards Río Plátano,
- Serve as a managing checkpoint model to replicate in other future checkpoints,
- Capacity building in human, logistical and technical resources,
- Allow and demonstrate an increased effectiveness of interagency collaboration between the Armed Forces and ICF.
- Keep the population informed while transiting in and around Río Plátano Reserve about the conservation and site management regulations and initiatives.

Given that this proposal has been socialized and agreed with the involved institutions, during the year 2019, a building design proposal will be prepared, as well as organization and performance

protocols, equipment and staff training through technical and financial support from ICF, WCS, GWC and the Armed Forces of Honduras.

3. Interagency coordination and technical assistance for the Protection Reserve Rio Plátano

In order to provide and strengthen the mechanisms of ongoing coordination, communication, planning and support that comply with the national priorities and institutional capabilities, the following interagency coordination has begun in order to promote the common goals:

- a) Interagency coordination between ICF, Attorney General of the Republic of Honduras, Special Prosecutor for the Environment, National Police and the Armed Forces to program, execute and monitor strategic operations, accusations of forestry and environmental crimes and their respective prosecution; along with the prioritization of dissuasive measures and control and protection actions in the Rio Plátano Reserve by the Inter-Agency Task Force Against Environmental Crime (FTIA).
- b) Support and technical assistance between the ICF and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC) for operational planning and implementation of conservation and protection measures for the Rio Plátano Reserve and the Honduran Moskitia. In 2018, managers and coordinators from these organizations have given their support and advice during the months of June, September and November of 2018 and January 2019; and as a result of this assistance and coordination, the following has been achieved:
 - Establishment of a joint plan for 2019 to support the implementation of the Strategy for Immediate Actions for the Protection of Rio Plátano and the Honduran Moskitia, thus continuing with the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO.
 - Support from ICF to WCS for the project proposal entitled "Reducing the traffic of scarlet macaws in the territories of the Honduran Moskitia", presented to the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and the project proposal "Strengthening the capacities to combat wildlife trafficking in Latin America " presented to the United States Department of State,
 - Elaboration of the Strategy for the Conservation of National Bird of Honduras, Apu Pauni Red Macaw in the Honduran Moskitia 2019-2024 (Annex 11)
 - Technical assistance from WCS in the preparation of the Immediate Impact Strategy for the protection of the Reserve Rio Plátano,
 - Coordination and planning of a tour to assess the changes in land use in the Honduran Moskitia,
 - Coordination between WCS, ICF and the Special Prosecutor for the Environment to establish initiatives to aid technicians and researchers in the follow-up of the forest and environmental crime prosecution.
 - Proposal to support the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Environment of Honduras arrange a special exchange with the Forum on Environmental Justice and Environment Court of Petén, Guatemala.
 - WCS permanent presence in the country by establishing an office in Honduras to coordinate and implement operational actions for the conservation of Rio Plátano Reserve and the Honduran Moskitia.

- c) Coordination between the ICF and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in order to comply with the commitments and recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- d) Cooperation agreement between the ICF and the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History (IHAH). In August 2018, this cooperation agreement was signed in order to establish the legal and procedural basis to jointly and harmoniously carry out the activities related to the protection, preservation, restoration, protection, disclosure and transmission of the natural and cultural heritage of Honduras (Annex 12).
- e) Creation of the Kamasa Kaha Foundation for the management and mobilization of resources to implement conservation actions of the natural, cultural and archaeological heritage of the Man and Biosphere Reserve of Rio Plátano. The signing of a cooperation agreement between the ICF and the organization Kaha Kamasa is currently undergoing negotiations. The existing draft of the agreement aims to establish an efficient mechanism for the inter-agency coordination and cooperation in order to achieve the governance and management of the cultural, archaeological and natural heritage of the Man Biosphere Reserve of Rio Plátano, through the development of monitoring and research activities and scientific tourism. Pending subscription for the first quarter of 2019.
- f) Inter-agency management for the signing of a cooperation agreement between the ICF and the Secretary of National Defense. During the year 2018, a proposal of the cooperation agreement between the two institutions has been elaborated with the following specific objectives:
 - Coordinate actions for the conservation, management and protection of the resources and forest areas, protected areas, watersheds and wildlife of Honduras.
 - Promote strategies and mechanisms that allow actions for the protection, surveillance, monitoring and defense of natural resources.
 - Provide collaboration, training and support within the framework of strengthening the institutional capacities of both parties.
 - Provide mutual collaboration, by allocating human, logistical and material resources as well as technical assistance, equipment loan and aircrafts, according to its availability and within the framework of the laws and regulations that concern both institutions to carry out tasks and actions under the overall objective.
 - Allow effective coordination to carry out flyovers and ensure the detecting and monitoring of pests, natural disasters and forest fires, the conservation of protected areas, the control wild flora and the management of wildlife in captivity along with the release processes, amongst other activities.

This cooperation agreement has prioritized the Biosphere Reserve of Rio Plátano as a specific issue to be attended by both institutions.

Recommendation 5. Reiterates its recommendation that the State Party maintain the overflights and ground level surveys to detect illegal activities and illegal new settlements as early as possible to enable immediate responses, avoiding evictions after the full establishment of settlements;

As part of efforts to protect the reserve of Rio Plátano and in response to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee, various strategic air and ground operations have been continued in

the area during 2018.

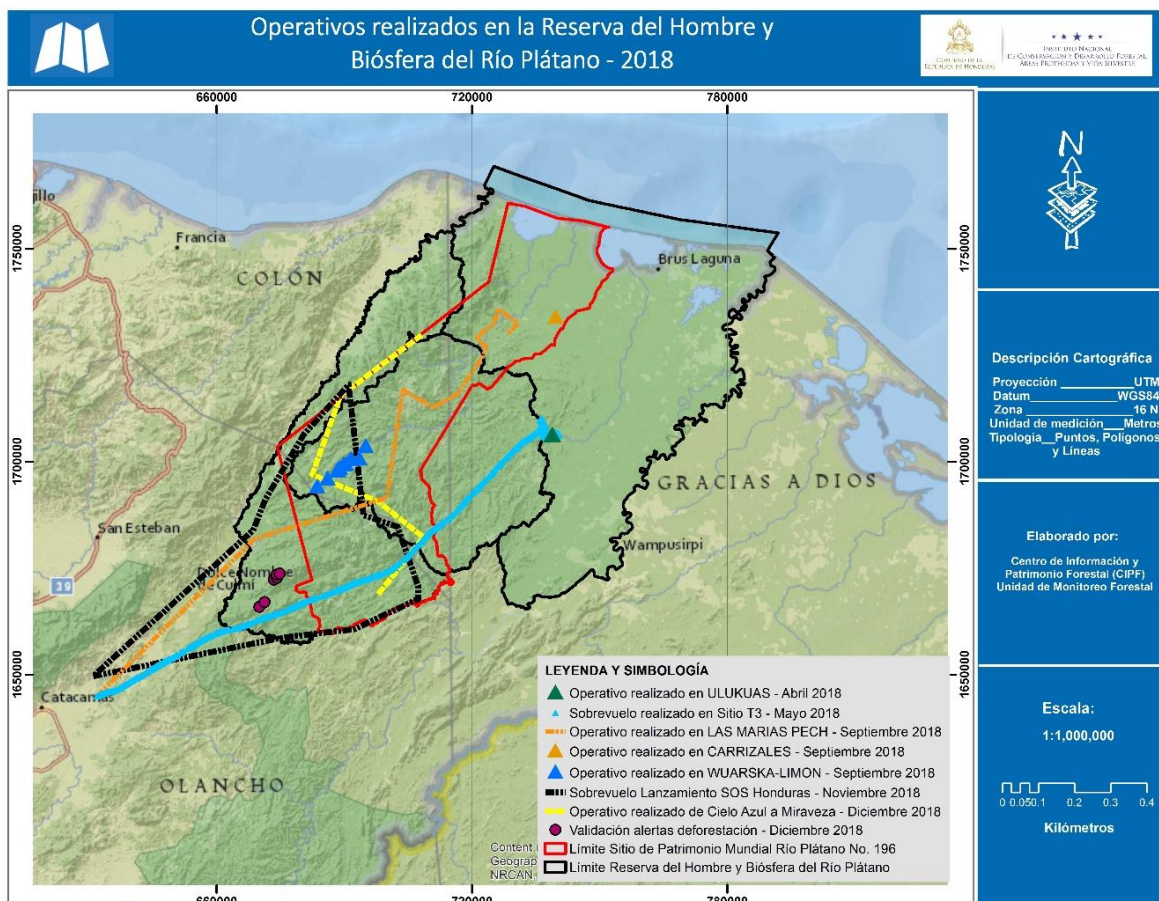
Through these operations, the following objectives were addressed:

- Carry out interagency efforts through the implementation of operations that allow immediate, timely and strategic response for the protection of the Reserve of Rio Plátano,
- Develop night ground operations, pursuing violations and / or environmental crimes, focusing on trafficking of species of flora and fauna and illegal logging.
- Perform air recognition operations and characterize the interventions on the natural resources in priority sites within the Rio Plátano Reserve.
- Develop multidisciplinary efforts to detect threats that could jeopardize the ecological integrity of the core zone of the Reserve of Rio Plátano.
- Field validation of the information from the use of satellite technologies and verification of points to detect changes in land use using unmanned aircraft.

Table 1 shows the operations carried out during the year 2018, indicating the place, purpose, participating institutions and their execution date as follows:

Table 1. Operations executed during 2018 on the Property of Rio Plátano

#	Site	Objective	Participants	Date
1	Ulukwas	Reconnaissance and assessment of interventions and illegal human settlements in the area	ICF, Armed Forces, Public Prosecutor	April
2	Carrizales	Reconnaissance of illegal settlements and activities in the area	ICF, Armed Forces, Attorney, National Police	September
3	Wuarska - Lemon	Assessment, monitoring and inventory of wildlife and reconnaissance of threats to the natural resources	ICF	September
4	Las Marias	Investigation of illegal cutting and grazing in forest areas	ICF, FEMA, PGR	September
5	Buffer zone and core area	Reconnaissance of threats and forest cover.	President, ICF, SEDENA, IHCIETI,	November
6	La Llorona, Cielo Azul, La Colonia	Field validation of satellite data of changes in land use	ICF through the Information Center and Forest Heritage and Control Unit of Illegal Logging	December
7	Dulce Nombre de Culmí path towards community Mangos - Mahor - La Llorona and Cielo Azul; and towards the communities of Marañones - El Guayabo and La Colonia.	Carrying out of day and night land operations by establishing fixed and mobile checkpoints, in attention to offenders of forestry and environmental crimes	ICF, PGR, National Police, Armed Forces, FEMA	December
8	Cielo Azul Route - Miraveza	Air Operations of reconnaissance at priority sites	ICF, PGR, National Police, Armed Forces, FEMA	December



Recommendation 6. Also urges the State Party to take concrete steps to follow up on the updated conclusions and recommendations facilitated by the 2017 Advisory mission regarding the Significant Boundary Modification and the efforts to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger - in line with the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) adopted in 2015 - with the technical support of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, as required;

The advisory mission conducted in 2017 has been the technical basis to follow up the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee, specifically regarding the harmonization of property boundaries of Rio Plátano, the proposal for a new nomination for the Significant Boundary Modification and the preparation of the format of the tentative list for the Rio Plátano Reserve.

The State Party is aware of the scope of these measures and recommendations regarding the Significant Boundary Modification. During 2017 and 2018, the Government of Honduras continued to take actions to strengthen, improve and enhance governance in the territory, creating spaces for dialogue and following up on signed agreements of formal cooperation with indigenous peoples living in the Rio Plátano Reserve and strengthening the capacities of the State party to address the

main threats linked to illegal activities that endanger the integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value of Rio Plátano Property.

Given that the decision to carry out a Significant Boundary Modification has been socialized with the relevant government institutions, it will be acted precisely to board this recommendation and in parallel, adjust the Desired State of Conservation for the Elimination of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), which must be consistent with the new limits are defined for the Rio Plátano Property.

Simultaneously with this Conservation Status Report for Rio Plátano, the format of the Tentative List to start the nomination process for a Significant Modification of Limits of the World Heritage Property Rio Plátano is being sent (Annex 13).

Recommendation 7. Welcomes the acknowledgement of the possible benefits of a Significant Boundary Modification by the State Party, while fully respecting the interests, rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples, Afro-Honduran and Ladino (mestizo) communities;

It has been considered a priority to continue with the support and commitment of governmental and non-governmental institutions, municipalities, and with special emphasis on indigenous organizations and federations regarding the Significant Boundary Modification. In this regard, the State Party shall implement appropriate mechanisms for socialization and consultation, in compliance with the rights and obligations under international conventions and national legislation. Given that this can be considered a critical requirement for a successful nomination process and for the operation and integrated management of the World Heritage property, it is imperative to effectively involve the communities and associated with the site.

Recommendation 8. Expresses its utmost concern that the State Party did not report on the possible impacts of the Patuca III project despite repeated requests, and requests the State Party to ensure that current and potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property are specifically assessed urgently, in line with IUCN'S World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, and to ensure that the project will not proceed before this assessment is completed;

The impacts of the construction of the hydroelectric dam Patuca III (with a capacity of 104 MW), at approximately 120 kilometers outside the bounds of the Rio Plátano Property Site, have not been evaluated in accordance with the Advisory Note IUCN World Heritage Environmental Assessment.

The State Party is in full readiness to comply with this recommendation and is committed to its development. During 2018, support has been requested to a project of international cooperation for achieving financial assistance to develop such evaluation; however, to date no support has been materialized (Appendix 14); the State Party ignores the required aspects regarding time, budget or other inputs needed for evaluation.

The project is currently under construction and it hasn't started operations.

According to the actions implemented in 2018 and in order to continue advancing all the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee and eliminate Río Plátano from the Heritage

List in Danger, the State party considers it appropriate to resume the technical assistance of the World Heritage Center of UNESCO and IUCN to fulfill the following:

1. Develop the Impact Assessment of the Property Rio Plátano according to the guidelines of IUCN
2. Completing the nomination format for a Significant Boundary Modification according to the Operational Guidelines
3. Update the Desired State of Conservation for the Elimination of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

The State party expresses its willingness and commitment to continue the Committee's recommendations and highlights the support of the President of the Republic of Honduras to include the Rio Plátano Reserve in the World Heritage List.

III. Updates on other conservation initiatives identified by the State party

Throughout this section some institutional activities regarding natural resources management executed within the Property Rio Plátano are reported:

Forest Protection Campaign

In the southern area of the Rio Plátano Reserve a pine savanna sub-montane ecosystem is located. Within this location it has been executed the Regional Plan of Forest Protection and Forest Fire Prevention of 2018, prioritizing activities in the town of Dulce Nombre de Culmí. The plan was implemented through the participation of the Climate Change Adaptation in the Forestry Sector Program (CliFor), the Pech Tribe of Subirana, Jocomico and Culuco Council, the Joint Agroforestry Cooperative Brisas de Wampool Limited (COMBRIWAL), Water Administration Boards, forest owners and users and the Armed Forces.

During the dry season of 2018, various activities aimed at preventing forest fires were carried out; as well as actions to sensitize the people, achieve institutional projection, training and field works such as fire rounds, controlled burns, road repairs, street surveillance and fighting forest fires. As a result of this campaign, were registered and attended 14 forest fires, affecting a total area of 1,050 hectares.

Monitoring and Research

The implementation of the Research Program and monitoring of the conservation targets of the Reserve Rio Plátano remains as a permanent activity. Developed by the ICF, in collaboration with the National Autonomous University of Honduras, during 2018, the following monitoring and research activities were implemented:

- a) Biological Monitoring and Inventory of Flora and Fauna in the Sector of Pico Dama, in the Cultural Area of the Rio Plátano Reserve, January 2018.
- b) Monitoring of Sea Turtles tour on the beaches of the Garifuna Community of Plaplaya Reserve Rio Plátano, April 2018.
- c) Socialization of the results of the biological monitoring developed in the Agroforestry Cooperative CAIFUL assigned area, in the cultural area of the Rio Plátano Reserve, August, 2018.

Plant Production and Restoration

Within the framework of the national strategy for forest restoration, in relation to the production of seedlings for afforestation and reforestation in public and private areas in the Rio Plátano biosphere reserve; in 2018, a total of 58,976 seedlings were produced and 45 hectares of public and private forest areas were repopulated.

Institutional Action and Presence

It is appropriate to report that the ICF, through the Rio Plátano Biosphere Regional Office runs an annual operative plan with institutional goals aimed at meeting the following strategic objectives for the sustainable use and conservation of the exceptional universal values of the Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve:

- Conserve the protected areas and wildlife under the concept of sustainability to ensure the generation of ecosystem goods and services for the benefit of society in general.
- Ensure full compliance with current forest legislation, rules and procedures to guarantee the rational use of forest resources and consequently, a sustainable management.
- Promote the integrated management of natural resources with the participation of municipalities and communities for the sustainable management of watersheds supplying water resource for human consumption, irrigation and power generation.
- Establish a participatory Model of Management and Forestry Development from a Gender and Social Inclusion perspective, Sustainable and Decentralized, capable of generating employment and income in order to contribute to improving the quality of life of the rural population, by signing contracts and agreements of forest management.
- Promote an efficient management of forest resources that contributes to productivity improvement and sustainability of productive forests, and generates employment, income and welfare to the population.
- Participatory forestry development aimed at protecting and restoring ecosystems with a gender and social inclusion focus, decentralized, capable of generating employment and income.

IV. List of Attachments

Annex 1. Executive Agreement Proposal on Procedure Regularization of Land Tenure

Annex 2. Analysis of forest cover for the Man and Biosphere Reserve Rio Plátano and gain and loss analysis for temporalities 2000-2006 2006-2012 and 2012-2016

Annex 3. Life Plan of Jocomico Pech Council Tribe

Annex 4. Negotiation of the Honduran State to the Agenda of the Pech People in Honduras

Annex 5. Aide Memoire Meetings Ad-hoc Committee for the Protection of Rio Plátano

Annex 6. Release Media Coverage of the Presidential Campaign SOS Honduras - Rio Plátano

Annex 7. Campaign Promotional Video: SOS Honduras - Rio Plátano

Annex 8. SOS Rio Plátano Biosphere Informational material

Annex 9. Project Approval USFWS Reserve Rio Plátano 2017-2020

Annex 10. Certification from the Protected Areas and Wildlife Fund about the Forest Ranger Program

Annex 11. National Strategy for the Conservation of the Red Guara in Honduras

Annex 12. Cooperation Agreement between the ICF and the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History

Annex 13. Tentative List Format: Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve.

Annex 14. Request for support to comply with recommendation No. 8 of Decision 42 COM 7A.44 - WHC