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I write to you as Chair of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature to express our concern and to urge to reconsider the recent proposed changes to the Barcelona Zoo as outlined in ZooXXI's proposal IC2017.

I understand this proposal recommends reducing the number of species Barcelona Zoo currently manages down to eleven and calls for the transfer or relocation of the nearly 2,000 additional animals to sanctuaries, rescue centres or reintroduction to the wild.

The IUCN SSC works closely with modern zoos, in particular those accredited through the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), such as Barcelona Zoo, across many initiatives that are critical to species survival – now and into the future. The IUCN SSC greatly values the diversity of expertise within the global zoo community, expertise which is critical in our shared mission of protecting biodiversity. Modern, conservation-focused zoos can play many important roles in saving species: from building on our collective understanding through robust research programs, supporting wild populations through effectively managed breeding, and implementing critical conservation initiatives for wild populations. They also serve as leaders in public education, raising awareness and striving to empower behaviour change amongst millions of zoo visitors annually through the experiences and educational programmes they offer.

The Barcelona Zoo contributes to these conservation roles, for example, through their EAZA-managed breeding programs for endangered species such as the dorcas gazelle, white-capped mangabey, rolaway monkey, and many others. Also through their education programs to over one million visitors per year and through the 1.5 million Euros the Conservation and Research Programme and Barcelona Zoo Foundation have contributed to conservation field and research programmes since 2009.

In considering this proposal, SSC urges Barcelona City Council leadership to base their decisions on science and the role this institution does and can play in species conservation. In considering the future management of the zoo, especially the course of

action outlined in proposal IC2017 we further urge you to review and adhere to both the “IUCN SSC Guidelines for Ex-situ Management for Species Conservation” and the “IUCN SSC Guidelines for Reintroduction and Other Conservation Translocations”. These guidelines provide information on international best practice based on extensive scientific data and experience from global conservation leaders. We would also like to offer the expertise of both our IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group, Chaired by Dr Onnie Byers, and our IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group, Chaired by Dr Axel Moehrenschlager, to provide further advice to Barcelona City Council in your decisions and actions on this matter.

Please let us know if you would like us to discuss this issue further or if you would like for us to connect you with these groups of world-leading experts on these disciplines of conservation science.

With many thanks for your attention to this issue.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jon Paul Rodriguez'.

Jon Paul Rodriguez
IUCN SSC Chair