

12. Energy and Conservation

Convinced that the availability, development, use and conservation of energy are matters of foremost importance to conservationists, both because of the profound effects these matters have upon the natural environment and their role in determining how present and future generations will live;

Noting that the impending shortage of oil and natural gas has given new impetus to energy development and that a transition toward the use of new sources of energy is inevitable;

Concerned that if the direction of this transition is toward forms of energy development and use that involve serious environmental impacts and risks, the adverse consequences for nature conservation and human welfare can be far-reaching;

Being aware of the particular hazards to the environment and quality of life associated with the continuing development and use of certain sources of energy;

Considering the evidence of potentially grave hazards to the environment and mankind involved in the production of energy from nuclear fission (and in particular from fast breeder reactors);

The 12th General Assembly of IUCN meeting in Kinshasa, Zaire, in September 1975:

Recommends

- (1) That governments, particularly those of industrialized nations, explore all means for conserving conventional energy resources and reducing demands for increased energy supplies, and that particular attention be paid initially to the mitigation of losses associated with extraction and use of energy resources;
- (2) That governments should exercise restraint in any further development of energy generation from nuclear fission, and that the financial and manpower resources now devoted to development of fast breeder reactors be redirected to the efforts described in the preceding and following recommendations;
- (3) That governments give full support to research, development and deployment of less conventional technologies that involve renewable or inexhaustible sources of energy, and that have minimal environmental risks and/or impact associated with their production and use—particularly decentralized technologies using solar, tidal and wind energy, directly or indirectly;
- (4) That governments promote technologies, ways of life and economic patterns which permit marked reduction in energy use (including such matters as the development of energy-efficient settlement patterns and transport systems, low-energy architecture, decreased reliance on electricity for space-heating and other low-grade energy uses, and increased emphasis on energy-efficient labour-intensive food production), those agencies charged with the responsibility for conservation of nature being urged to set an example in applying this recommendation;
- (5) That governments investigate, develop and encourage efficient agricultural systems that are independent of high inputs of imported energy;
- (6) That, since fossil fuels must provide a bridge until conserving societies previously mentioned can be established, governments promptly deploy transitional technologies which use coal and other fossil fuels more efficiently and with greatly reduced environmental impact; and

That governments foster large-scale public understanding and balanced discussion of the wide range of energy choices available, public awareness of natural limits to man's use of energy, and public readiness to engage in ways of life compatible with these principles.