

15/20. ANTARCTICA ENVIRONMENT AND THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

PREAMBLE

1. RECOGNIZING the importance of Antarctica and its Continental shelf ("the Antarctica environment") and the Southern Ocean for the world as a whole, particularly in maintaining the stability of the global marine environment and atmosphere, and the paramount importance to mankind of its great wilderness qualities for science, education and inspiration;
2. RECALLING the continued and long established interest that IUCN has in the conservation of the ecosystems of the Antarctica environment as well as in the conservation of the species and habitats that it supports;
3. MINDFUL that the World Conservation Strategy (prepared by IUCN with the advice, cooperation and financial assistance of UNEP and WWF and in collaboration with FAO and Unesco)

identifies Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as a priority for international action;

4. NOTING that eleven Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties are represented in IUCN and that they have already espoused the aims of the World Conservation Strategy;
5. AWARE of the achievements of the Consultative Parties in their stewardship under the Antarctic Treaty in protecting the Antarctica environment from harmful interference, and the provision of measures for the conservation of flora and fauna, guidelines to minimize harmful effects of human activities, and measures specifically related to tourism activities;
6. COGNIZANT ALSO of the fact that the Consultative Parties are presently considering the establishment of a regime to govern both commercial exploration and exploitation of any mineral resources should this ever prove acceptable and that any exploitation of minerals would adversely affect the values of the Antarctica environment;
7. FURTHER AWARE of the additional efforts of the same nations to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the living resources of the region, in particular by the initiative taken to negotiate and adopt the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (1972) and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (1980);
8. TAKING NOTE of the action taken by the International Whaling Commission with regard to whaling in the Southern Ocean and the relevance to that ocean of other activities affecting conservation of the marine environment generally;
9. RECALLING that the Second World Conference on National Parks in 1972 recommended that nations Party to the Antarctic Treaty should establish the Antarctic Continent and surrounding seas as the first World Park and that other protective designations are being proposed to reflect the unique status of the area;
10. CONCERNED further that the effective planning, management and conservation of the Antarctica environment can only be achieved by thorough consideration of feasible alternatives and if all actions are based on restraint and scientific knowledge, as well as through cooperation and coordination; The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 15th Session in Christ-church, New Zealand, 11-23 October 1981:

THE ANTARCTICA ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL

11. STRONGLY RECOMMENDS that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties should further enhance the status of the Antarctica environment and foster measures which would:
 - (a) maintain for all time the intrinsic values of the Antarctica environment for mankind and the global ecosystem;
 - (b) ensure that all human activities are compatible with the maintenance of these values; and
 - (c) ascribe to the Antarctica environment as a whole a designation which connotes worldwide its unique

- character and values and the special measures accorded to its planning, management and conservation;
12. URGES the Parties to ensure the protection of the Antarctica environment from harmful interference, as expressed in Recommendation 5 of the Ninth Meeting of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties;

MINERALS

13. URGES that no mineral regime be brought into operation until such time as full consideration has been given to protecting the Antarctica environment completely from minerals activities and the environmental risks have been fully ascertained and safeguards developed to avoid adverse environmental effects;

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

14. URGES the Consultative Parties to recognize the increased interest in the Antarctica environment of the world community, and therefore that they:
- (a) mobilize and draw upon the goodwill and expertise available to support their work by effective communication and consultation with interested parties;
 - (b) foster, through well-informed public interest and awareness, educational measures based on accurate reporting and dissemination of their policies and actions in relation to the Antarctica environment; and
 - (c) invite representatives from appropriate non-governmental organizations (including IUCN and the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition) to participate in meetings according to normal international practice;
15. FURTHER URGES national delegations to the Antarctic Treaty to keep fully in touch and consult with NGOs in their countries concerned with the Antarctica environment and to include advisers from these bodies in their delegations;

MEMBERSHIP

16. URGES all nations concerned with the future of the Antarctica environment not yet Party to the Antarctic Treaty to accede to that treaty;

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION - GENERAL

17. CONSIDERS that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties should ensure that research and conservation action is coordinated and that, as a priority, the research programmes needed to protect the Antarctic ecosystem and allow for informed decision-making are ascertained, together with the institutions best suited to undertake them;
18. URGES full support to on-going scientific efforts and the undertaking of long-term, large-scale cooperative research programmes focused on the ecological structure and processes of the Antarctica environment and on their role with regard to globally relevant phenomena, such as weather and climate;
19. STRESSES the necessity to possess sufficient results of such research before management decisions are taken with regard to both living and non-living resources and the need to maintain this research effort so that such decisions may be related to a continuously evolving situation;
20. CALLS UPON the Consultative Parties to take the lead in such research and conservation programmes;
21. URGES all organizations whose activities and expertise are of relevance to these research and conservation tasks to contribute as appropriate;
22. PLEDGES the support and expertise of IUCN in the establishment and carrying out of such programmes;
23. AND PARTICULARLY RECOMMENDS that:
- (a) the Consultative Parties expand the network of sites meriting special protection within the overall framework of measures for the Antarctica environment;
 - (b) continued attention be given to coordination of research and other activities now being carried out in Antarctica to prevent or minimize harmful environmental consequences such as air pollution and wastes;
 - (c) continuous monitoring be made of the consequences of

- tourism activities, applying strict controls as necessary;
- (d) the possible ecological impact of the utilization of icebergs be studied and ascertained well in advance of any such utilization; and
- (e) vigilance be exercised on the implementation of the measures prohibiting the introduction of alien species;

**THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES
1980**

25. EXPRESSES its satisfaction that the Antarctic Marine Living Resources Convention provides the elements necessary to realize an ecosystem approach to the conservation and management of the natural resources of the area;
26. PLEDGES to make IUCN expertise available to the Commission and the Scientific Committee created under the Convention and urges the development of cooperative relationships with the Commission and Scientific Committee, as foreseen by Article XXIII of the Convention;
27. RECALLS that the dynamics of the Southern Ocean are still poorly known, and urges the Parties to the Convention to exercise caution in its implementation by:
 - (a) developing all fisheries only in conjunction with scientific advice designed to provide the best understanding of the functioning of the ecosystem ; -and
 - (b) establishing, as a consequence, all such fisheries on an experimental basis for an adequate length of time, with an initial conservative quota by area and appropriate enforcement of such quotas;
28. URGES further that:
 - (a) as a high priority, feeding grounds of threatened and endangered whales be identified and closed to krill fishing;
 - (b) some areas be closed to fishing *ab initio*, and at least one large sanctuary be established where krill harvesting would be prohibited or permitted only for scientific purposes, in order to provide for adequate baseline areas;
 - (c) an evaluation be made of the role and status of finfish and squid before substantial exploitation takes place;
 - (d) all data be provided, on an agreed standardized scientific basis, including that from fishing operations carried out over a reasonable past period of time, to facilitate the establishment of a central data bank which can utilize data from all relevant sources;
 - (e) appropriate coordination of objectives and activities under the International Whaling Commission be established, in particular regarding the implementation of measures aiming at the recovery of those whales whose populations have been depleted;
 - (f) the development of dynamic models of the Southern Ocean ecosystem be initiated, bearing in mind the depletion of many whale species; and
 - (g) in the process of developing the fishery on a scientific basis, the development of cooperative relationships with appropriate organizations be effectively carried out;
29. RECOMMENDS further that the Parties to the Convention better inform the scientific and conservation communities of the action they take to protect the Southern Ocean, including reporting on discussions and actions pertaining to environmental conservation issues, and inviting representatives from appropriate NGOs (such as IUCN and ASOC) to participate in appropriate meetings;
30. URGES that IUCN be given accredited status as an adviser to the Scientific Committee of the Convention Commission;
31. FURTHER URGES all nations concerned with the future of the Antarctica environment and the Southern Ocean to support the operation of the Convention and to accede to it as soon as possible;
32. RECOMMENDS that, notwithstanding current worldwide economic difficulties, the significance of the Southern Ocean demands that it be accorded high priority in the allocation of resources adequate to ensure the effective operation of the Commission and its Scientific Committee;

THE MINERALS OF ANTARCTICA

33. COMMENDS the Consultative Parties for their decision to refrain from exploration of Antarctic mineral resources for the time being;
34. URGES that the Treaty Parties keep IUCN and the scientific and conservation communities well informed of any proposed activities in the Antarctica environment and *urges* further that they seek the views of IUCN on any of these which would affect the conservation of the Antarctica environment; and
35. PLEDGES to make IUCN expertise available to the Treaty Parties and other bodies and organizations as appropriate to conduct, or cooperate in conducting, studies necessary to ensure that activities carried on in Antarctica have minimum environmentally adverse effects.