

16/6. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND CONSERVATION ACTION

AWARE that, within two decades, more than half the world's population of about six billion will be living in towns and cities and that developments in human settlements and styles of living have profound repercussions for the local and global environment;

ACKNOWLEDGING that human settlements and their margins are often the focus of natural resource problems such as deforestation, desertification, the loss and degradation of croplands, industrial dereliction and pollution, brought about by increasing demands for food, fuel, water, building materials and space to dispose of wastes;

RECOGNIZING the valuable research of Unesco's Man and the Biosphere Programme on human settlement ecosystems and the importance of public participation in human settlement management (most recently expressed at a Unesco/UNEP/USSR technical meeting at Suzdal, USSR, in September 1984, on ecological approaches to human settlement planning);

BELIEVING that the idea of sustainable development, which husband natural resources, applies as much to human settlements as to other kinds of development, particularly because so many people are directly involved (often the poorest, who suffer most from environmental degradation);

REALIZING that better management of human settlements and associated natural resources (for food and fuel production, habitat creation and protection, for energy conservation and waste recycling) could not only reduce the damaging environmental impacts of human settlements but also improve the quality of life for urban dwellers, and thereby build greater support for the wider goals of conservation;

CONSCIOUS that people of cities, towns and villages have the skills, energies and enthusiasms which can be unlocked to play an active part in conservation, both within and outside their settlements, and that this can create new jobs;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 16th Session in Madrid, Spain, 5-14 November 1984:

1. CALLS UPON all nations to take action to bring about a more sustainable approach to the management of human settlement systems in such a way that local people can participate; and
2. REQUESTS that IUCN, in collaboration with WWF, UNEP, Unesco, HABITAT and its other partners (including those organizations concerned with human welfare):
 - (a) incorporate considerations of "human settlements and conservation action" within the appropriate programme areas of the IUCN Programme 1985-87 (e.g. in the work on National and Local Conservation Strategies and the work of Commissions);
 - (b) support, document and publicize, both directly and indirectly, appropriate projects which can show innovations and demonstrate good practice so as to strengthen the capacity of individuals and groups to undertake practical conservation tasks in their daily lives;
 - (c) undertake, as an early step, to explore, by means of a feasibility study, ways of improving the training of individuals and community groups in leadership and practical conservation skills through training courses, the establishment of a network of training centres and the international exchange of personnel and experience.

