

16/14. OCEAN DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES

RECOGNIZING that the marine environment and the living resources of the sea are of vital importance to all nations;

AWARE that the London Dumping Convention (LDC) plays a decisive role as a means of protecting the marine environment, along with regional efforts under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Seas Programme, and national efforts directed towards achieving that goal;

NOTING that the disposal at sea (dumping) of high-level radioactive wastes is prohibited under the LDC, and that the dumping of low-level radioactive wastes is allowed only under certain "special permit" conditions;

OBSERVING the increasing concern of a growing body of public opinion with regard to the dumping at sea of low-level radioactive wastes;

AWARE that in February 1983 the Contracting Parties to the LDC adopted a moratorium resolution calling for an immediate suspension of ocean dumping of low-level radioactive wastes pending the completion of an LDC-sponsored scientific review of the risks associated with such dumping, and that no nations have dumped radioactive wastes at sea since the moratorium resolution was adopted;

FURTHER AWARE that the scientific risk review is moving forward, that an initial meeting of experts was convened in Vienna, Austria in October 1984, that a second experts meeting is scheduled for April 1985, and that the findings and recommendations of that review will be presented to the next formal meeting of the Contracting Parties to the LDC, scheduled for September 1985;

RECOGNIZING that it is inappropriate to apply to the disposal of radioactive wastes the traditional approach of requiring those who question or challenge such activities to prove that they are harmful, given that such wastes are highly toxic and persistent;

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

1. RECOMMENDS that with respect to the disposal of radioactive wastes, the "burden of proof" that such activities are safe should be placed on the proponents of such disposal, in order for any disposal to be permitted; and
2. RECOMMENDS FURTHER that the Contracting Parties to the LDC, at their next formal consultative meeting, should consider the findings and recommendations of the scientific review experts in this context.