

16/24. WILD GENETIC RESOURCES AND ENDANGERED SPECIES HABITAT PROTECTION

RECOGNIZING that genetic processes are natural biological phenomena which are actuated by the genetic material present in wild animal and plant species and which may be put to use by mankind in scientific and technological applications;

FULLY CONSCIOUS that wild plant and animal species in all their genetic diversity constitute a vast and virtually untapped reservoir of innumerable, irreplaceable genetically controlled processes of immense value to mankind now and in the future;

RECOGNIZING that these processes by their very nature cannot be the subject of exclusive or proprietary rights on the part of any state or individual;

ACKNOWLEDGING that these processes form part of the common heritage of mankind and that they should be and remain available to present and future generations;

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the increasing rate of human destruction of natural habitats, wild species and the genetic resources they contain, especially in regions such as the Mediterranean, the Himalayan and nearly all tropical regions;

ALARMED that the rate of species extinction has now far outstripped natural extinction rates to the point where a large number of species will be lost by the year 2000;

RECOGNIZING the responsibility of stewardship towards all other life forms on this planet that rests upon humankind and the inalienable rights of species to exist;

CONVINCED that the preservation of this heritage can in most cases best be achieved by *in situ* conservation;

RECOGNIZING that costs incurred for the conservation of wild genetic resources should be shared and, in particular, that commercial users of the processes generated by these resources must contribute to these costs;

RECALLING Recommendations 39, 40 and 93 of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the relevant work of UNEP and Unesco, as well as of FAO, in particular the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources adopted by the 22nd Session of FAO General Conference on 23 November 1983;

FURTHER RECALLING Resolution 15/10 adopted by the 15th Session of the IUCN General Assembly in Christchurch, New Zealand, 11-23 October 1981 and Recommendation 10 of the World Congress on National Parks, Bali, Indonesia, 11-22 October 1982;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN, after having evaluated current proposals for international action, to promote the implementation of the following principles which should also serve as a basis of a preliminary draft for a global agreement on the conservation of the world's wild genetic resources with a view to developing a joint draft by late 1985;
 - (a) Wild genetic processes are both renewable and non-renewable, they must be maintained because they are the basis of ecological diversity. Access to wild genetic resources should be unrestricted for the purpose of pure or applied research, breeding and conservation. Where access to genetic material involves the collection of individual specimens of species from the wild, such collection must be subject to strict regulation so as not to operate to the disadvantage of the species.
 - (b) The world community has the responsibility to preserve these resources for future generations, States, as the custodians of these resources, have a duty of stewardship for those wild genetic resources under their jurisdiction or control.
 - (c) Conservation measures taken in pursuance of this duty should aim primarily at preserving wild genetic resources *in situ* and should include the adoption and implementation by Governments of legislation for the conservation of natural habitats, and particularly the habitats of endangered species, as well as long-term management plans for these species and their habitats. These measures should also make appropriate provision for training.
 - (d) Financial resources necessary to implement these conservation measures shall be made available through contributions (such as those described in subpara (e) below, through other contributions by States or through other means) to those States that protect wild genetic resources *in situ* in the interest of mankind and cannot afford to do it alone.
 - (e) In particular, commercial users of processes derived from

wild genetic resources have to participate in these conservation efforts through financial contributions towards the costs incurred by individual States in the fulfilment of this duty.