

16/31. SUPPORT FOR THE PROTECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

RECALLING that a central objective of the World Conservation Strategy is to protect a worldwide network of representative ecosystems as an aspect of maintaining biological diversity;

RECALLING FURTHER that IUCN has identified many ecosystems which should be protected as part of such a network;

NOTING that a large proportion of these ecosystems are located in developing nations, and that these nations often lack the resources required to protect them adequately;

RECOGNIZING that the benefits of protecting these areas will accrue to all humanity and not just to the nations in which they are situated;

RECALLING ALSO the declaration of the World Conservation Strategy that "protecting genetic resources is an international responsibility and an international mechanism is needed by which those countries with an especially heavy responsibility can be compensated", and recognizing that the same principle applies to biotic diversity in general;

AWARE that a number of proposals have been made for international actions or agreements to provide financial assistance to nations in protecting representative ecosystems;

FURTHER AWARE that there already exist international mechanisms to assist in the establishment and maintenance of protected areas, among them the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the World Heritage Convention and Unesco's Man and the Biosphere Programme;

CONVINCED that there is an urgent need to find ways of providing substantially more financial assistance to enable nations to protect an adequate network of representative ecosystems;

FURTHER CONVINCED that IUCN has a unique capability to evaluate existing international mechanisms and current proposals for additional international actions or agreements and to develop and promote methods which are feasible and suited to the needs of conservation;

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

RESOLVES that IUCN shall, as a matter of priority, evaluate existing and proposed international mechanisms for providing nations with the financial resources necessary to protect representative ecosystems; and shall, as swiftly as possible, develop and promote mechanisms which are feasible and meet the needs of conservation.