

17.16 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF NUCLEAR WAR

RECALLING that the 16th Session of the General Assembly (1984) of IUCN considered the then new scientific studies on the devastating global environmental consequences of nuclear war;

RECALLING in particular the consequent Resolution 16/1, calling upon all States, international organizations and members of IUCN, to take specific actions in response to the threat posed by the so-called "nuclear winter";

NOTING the subsequent completion in 1985 of a major study on the Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War (ENUWAR), under the auspices of the Scientific Committee on the Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), and involving some 300 scientists from 30 nations;

DRAWING ATTENTION to the conclusions of the SCOPE ENUWAR report that a major nuclear war could profoundly disrupt global climate, thus triggering a "nuclear winter";

RECOGNIZING that the SCOPE ENUWAR report also concluded that global disruptions to climate and world society following nuclear war could place billions of survivors at risk of death from starvation;

RECOGNIZING FURTHER that the natural world would therefore be at unprecedented risk, both from the destructive impacts of nuclear winter and from over-utilization of natural resources by starving survivors;

AGREEING with the conclusions of the SCOPE ENUWAR report that "any disposition to minimize or ignore the widespread environmental effects of a nuclear war would be a fundamental disservice to the future of global civilization";

CONCERNED that while there have been some hopeful signs of progress towards nuclear arms control and the reduction of the risks of nuclear war, the build-up of already enormous nuclear arsenals continues without sufficient awareness of the potentially very severe environmental consequences of their use;

BELIEVING that there is a more urgent need than ever to reduce existing uncertainties through further scientific research, especially on impacts on non-combatant countries, and to improve public information on the environmental consequences of nuclear war;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 17th Session in San Jose, Costa Rica, 1-10 February 1988:

I. URGES all States and international organizations to:

- a. Encourage, support, and fully cooperate in further studies of the environmental consequences of nuclear war, in particular in regard to the consequences of nuclear war for non-combatant nations and regions;
- b. Support and fully cooperate with research on the impacts of nuclear war on the natural environments of individual countries, including the potential destruction of natural resources through over-utilization by surviving societies;

2.c. Take into account existing and subsequent studies of such impacts in re-examining current nuclear weapons, arms control, and civil defence policies;

d. Disseminate to the public and to policy-makers scientific information on the environmental consequences of nuclear war.

RECOMMENDS that high priority be given by all members of IUCN to advancing the scientific understanding of the environmental consequences of nuclear war and informing the people of the world and their leaders of the importance of taking these new understandings into account in the formulation of relevant national policies.

