

17.21 POLLUTION AND MARINE DEBRIS

RECOGNIZING that marine debris, particularly persistent plastics and abandoned fishing nets and gear (especially monofilament nets), represent a significant threat to marine life;

AWARE that the accumulation of marine garbage emanating from ships and land-based sources in the marine environment and on beaches is a serious and increasing problem world-wide;

RECOGNIZING that the continuing pollution of the marine environment with toxic substances from land-based sources and from ships is causing serious, and in many areas increasing, damage to marine ecosystems;

WELCOMING the forthcoming entry into force of Annex V of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) that will prohibit ships from discharging plastics at sea and place significant restrictions on the discharge of other garbage;

NOTING the efforts of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) to develop draft guidelines for effective implementation and enforcement of Annex V requirements;

WELCOMING the statement by the Consultative Meeting of the Parties to the London Dumping Convention (LDC) that deliberate disposal at sea of worn-out or broken fishing gear should not be treated under the LDC as exempted discharges in the course of the normal operation of vessels;

WELCOMING ALSO the studies of the incidence of marine debris in the Southern Ocean being made by the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);

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

1. URGES IUCN State members and other States which are Parties to MARPOL, to ratify Annexes II, III and V of the Convention and (where appropriate) to take such steps as are necessary to introduce their provisions into their national law so as to regulate strictly the discharge into the sea of toxic substances and garbage (as defined in the Convention) from vessels flying their flags.
2. FURTHER URGES IUCN State members which are Parties to MARPOL, and other States, to undertake efforts domestically, regionally and internationally to minimise and where possible to eliminate toxic substances and debris entering the sea from land-based sources.
3. RECOMMENDS that:
 - a. Member States of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), after entry into force of Annex V, consider introducing amendments to the Annex to increase the rigour with which it is implemented and enforced, including:
 - a requirement that individual waste management plans be developed for commercial vessels;
 - a requirement that log entries be made for all waste disposal practices;
 - a requirement for the presentation of waste at port side for vessels requiring off loading of waste in accordance with their waste management plans;
 - b. Member States consider a requirement that all fishing vessels flying their flags or operating in their fishing zones adopt methods of indelibly marking fishing gear such as nets, ropes and cables in such a manner that the vessel from which such gear originates may be readily identified, and that they consider creating incentives for fisherman to recover lost gear;
 - c. Member States of other competent international bodies, including the London Dumping Convention and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, consider how the competency of those bodies may be used to initiate

and coordinate practical measures to combat the problems of marine pollution by toxic substances and release of debris ;

- d. Member States of competent regional bodies, including the Oslo Convention, the Paris Convention, the Helsinki Convention and the Regional Seas Conventions supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), consider how the competency of those bodies may be used to initiate practical measures to achieve the objectives of paragraph 2 above.
4. INVITES IUCN State members which are Parties to MARPOL, and other States and relevant international organizations, to institute regional studies of the incidence of marine debris similar to those being carried out in the Southern Ocean under CCAMLR.

