

17.42 IUCN WETLANDS PROGRAMME

RECOGNIZING the excellent progress the IUCN Wetlands Programme has achieved towards conservation and sustainable use of wetlands world-wide, and particularly in developing countries;

RECOGNIZING the global importance of wetlands, the recent and crucial strengthening of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), and the advantage of coordinating wetland conservation activities with that Convention's Bureau;

RECOGNIZING FURTHER the quintessential role that wetlands provide in the well-being and development of rural communities and in the preservation of biological diversity;

APPROVING the Wetlands Programme's broad focus on conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, as a means of ensuring that wetlands conservation is sustainable in the long term;

AWARE that far-reaching actions by both governments and development assistance institutions are needed to conserve wetlands worldwide;

RECOGNIZING the essential role that the nongovernmental organization (NGO) members of IUCN must play in carrying out the Wetlands Programme and in influencing major development aid agencies in favour of wetlands conservation and biological diversity;

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

1. URGES governments and development assistance institutions to:
 - a. Pursue policies and practices aimed at conservation, through wise use of wetlands, including requirements that environmental impact assessments be prepared before taking any action that would significantly affect the ecological character of wetlands;
 - b. Develop methods of assessing wetland values and identifying future use options and give appropriate consideration to these values in decision-making;
 - c. Encourage the active participation of local conservation and indigenous peoples' organizations in the planning and implementation of activities or policies affecting wetlands;
 - d. Provide to concerned or affected nongovernmental and community organizations, early in the preparation phase and at all subsequent stages of planning, full information concerning proposed development projects, policies, and loans that would significantly affect the ecological character of wetlands;
 - e. Ensure adequate expertise concerning wetlands management and conservation, by establishing or strengthening training programmes.
2. FURTHER URGES development assistance institutions to coordinate their programmes at the international, regional, and country levels to ensure that their independent activities do not, in combination, adversely affect wetlands and that they cooperate in affirmative action to conserve wetlands.
3. CALLS UPON all members of IUCN to participate actively in the Wetlands Programme.
4. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN, within the resources available, to:
 - a. Maintain the broad focus of the Wetlands Programme on conservation and sustainable use of wetlands;
 - b. Continue and expand the involvement of IUCN's NGO members in the Wetlands Programme.
 - c. Continue to promote the closest possible cooperation between IUCN's Wetlands Programme and the Ramsar Convention.