

17.61 PROTECTION OF JUAN FERNANDEZ NATIONAL PARK AND BIOSPHERE RESERVE, CHILE

RECALLING that a central objective of the World Conservation Strategy is to protect a world-wide network of representative ecosystems as an aspect of maintaining biological diversity on Earth;

FURTHER RECALLING that the protection of genetic resources is an international responsibility;

CONSIDERING FURTHER that biosphere reserves play an increasingly important role in conserving representative ecosystems and their biological diversity;

CONSIDERING that the Juan Fernandez Archipelago, 650km west of the Chilean coast, has a richly endemic flora and fauna;

NOTING that this ecosystem has been considered by the scientific community to be highly fragile due to its physiographic and climatic conditions;

RECOGNIZING that based on these considerations, the Chilean Government designated in 1935 more than 95 per cent of these islands as a national park, and in 1977, following nomination by that Government, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) declared it a Biosphere Reserve;

RECALLING that IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, in 1984, included the Juan Fernandez Archipelago National Park in the Register of Threatened Protected Areas of the World, pointing out as threats "introduced plants and animals and erosion caused by livestock grazing";

AWARE that recently the Chilean Government announced its intention to convert these islands into an off-shore banking and tourist centre, constructing roads, banks, hotels and casinos;

FURTHER AWARE that the public office in charge of national parks was not included in the commission designated to prepare the project; and that the project (which could be implemented shortly) has not been subject to an environmental impact study;

NOTING that the implementation of this project, due to its size, could seriously limit the valuable scientific research that has been conducted in the National Park for the last few years;

RECALLING that in the last triennium the IUCN network and specialized Commissions have developed a growing concern about island issues, establishing a Task Force on Island Conservation, a working group on Oceanic Islands and, in collaboration with the International Council for Bird Preservation, an Oceanic Island Data Base at the Conservation Monitoring Centre;

NOTING FINALLY that the opinion of the world conservation community is considered in Chile a valuable instrument and an important support of local efforts to protect the environment and conserve nature;

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

1. CALLS UPON the Chilean Government to refrain from developing the off-shore banking and tourist centre project in the Juan Fernandez Archipelago until the results of a complete environmental impact assessment — which should be carried out by the national scientific community in cooperation with appropriate international conservation entities — are taken into consideration.
2. URGES the Chilean Government, local population and the Chilean conservation community to assure that the development of the Juan Fernandez Archipelago is rational, sustainable and compatible with the conservation of the natural resources of the Juan Fernandez Islands.
3. INVITES all IUCN members to express to the Chilean Government their concern about the future of this threatened protected area and to monitor closely the development plan of this area.