

18.22 Global Climate Change

CONCERNED that the build-up of greenhouse gases is creating a risk of change in the earth's climate at a rate not seen in the last 10,000 years;

AWARE that the concentration of carbon dioxide has already increased substantially over the past century as a result of industrialization and growth in population and that the mean global surface temperature has increased by 0.3-0.6 degrees Celsius;

NOTING that the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted that—in the absence of any changes in behaviour—the mean global temperature is likely to increase by 1-2 degrees Celsius by 2030 and the sea level to rise 10-32 centimetres by the same date as a consequence of the increase of greenhouse gases;

GRAVELY CONCERNED that climate modifications of this magnitude could cause major disruption in the ecosystems of the planet, changing the conditions under which these ecosystems have evolved and forcing change at a rate faster than their component species can respond to through dispersal or other means;

AWARE that the flora and fauna of many protected areas in the world will be put under special stress and in some cases faced with extinction, and that species in many other places may face a similar fate;

CONCERNED about what these changes in climate and sea level will mean for human populations because of impacts on agriculture, natural ecosystems and water resources of coastal areas, and particularly the impact of sea level rise on low-lying, small island states and other low-lying coastal areas;

WELCOMING the offer of the United States Government to host, in February 1991, the first negotiating session for a Framework Convention on Climate Change;

WELCOMING the decisions and commitments of a number of developed countries to take actions aimed at stabilizing the emissions of carbon dioxide, or of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, by the year 2000;

DEPLORING the attitude of those countries which refuse to recognize the reality and severity of this problem;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

URGES the governments of the world and, in particular, of developed countries, to act decisively and with urgency to pursue common efforts to limit emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, and to reverse deforestation, and in particular CALLS FOR:

a. all countries to begin negotiations on an effective Framework Convention on Climate Change, containing appropriate real commitments, to be

ready for signing at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992;

- b. developed countries to give first attention to stabilizing levels of emissions and then reducing them;
- c. all developed countries to establish targets which will have the effect of limiting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, and, in particular, to adopt a goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by at least 20 per cent by the year 2000;
- d. all countries to eliminate production and use of chlorofluorocarbons by the year 2000;
- e. all countries to adopt a goal of ending deforestation by 2010; and to develop a comprehensive approach to managing the world's forests to optimize biomass and resultant carbon storage without detriment to the maintenance of sustainable yields of forest products, biological diversity, water quality and the many other values that forests provide.

Note: The target figures and timetables in operative sub-paragraph (c) were adopted by a majority vote and the recommendation was then adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Canada, Norway and the United States indicated that had there been a vote on the recommendation itself, they would have abstained due to their inability to accept these figures at the present time because of forthcoming governmental negotiations on these issues. The Saudi Arabian State member delegation indicated that they would have voted against, for similar reasons. The State member representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of IUCN State members which are members of the European Community, explained that they too would have abstained because the European Community was already committed to a different target.

