

18.23 Land Degradation

NOTING that there has been a dramatic increase over the past decade in the commitment of nations and the international community to the concept of sustainable development;

AWARE that it is now ten years since the publication of the World Conservation Strategy, that it is four years since the publication of the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and that many countries have produced National Conservation Strategies;

RECOGNIZING that there is now widespread acceptance that conservation, sustainable development and the maintenance of habitats, genetic diversity and species cannot be accomplished only within the boundaries of formally designated protected areas but will depend heavily on appropriate measures outside those boundaries;

NOTING FURTHER that in most continents, land degradation, in its many facets, is one of the most important and serious threats to the attainment of sustainable development;

CONCERNED that land degradation is a major cause of deterioration of freshwater and marine environments;

REMARKING that many policy statements of a general nature have been made on the need to prevent land degradation, but that specific methods to allow landowners to measure land degradation have generally not been developed;

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

STRONGLY RECOMMENDS to national governments, funding agencies, international land-use and conservation organizations as well as national and provincial land-use and conservation organizations that:

- a. greatly increased attention and funding be provided to the study of those land-use practices that contribute to land degradation and the development of practices that promote sustainable land-use;
- b. specific research be directed towards the identification and development of simple procedures and parameters by which land degradation can be identified and measured;
- c. education and extension programmes for land owners and users be developed at all levels of government;
- d. landowners and users be involved to the maximum extent practicable in these research, monitoring, education and extension programmes;
- e. fiscal and taxation measures be developed and applied to encourage and assist landowners and users to apply the results of the above activities.