

18.67 Kakadu National Park, Australia

RECALLING that Kakadu National Park is one of the world's great national parks, with the existing World Heritage Sites of Stages I and II meeting four of the criteria for World Heritage listing, and containing internationally significant wetlands, amongst the finest rock art sites in the world, a living Aboriginal heritage and evidence of Aboriginal occupation dating back over 25,000 years;

RECOGNIZING that Stage III of Kakadu National Park, including the "conservation zone", is an area of extremely high biological significance, an integral and important part of the entire Park, containing rare and endangered plants, mammals and birds and the upper South Alligator River Catchment feeding into the internationally significant wetlands, including the Magela Flood Plain, of Stages I and II downstream;

AWARE that:

- the "conservation zone", which is completely surrounded by, but not legally included in, Kakadu National Park, is threatened with mining and existing mineral exploration;
- any mining within the catchment of the South Alligator River would threaten the ecological integrity of Stages I, II and III and the values for which the first two of these were inscribed on the World Heritage List and that no level of safeguard can completely ensure against a major accident;
- an existing uranium mine is completely surrounded by Kakadu National Park and threatens the Magela Flood Plain within the World Heritage Site;
- two proposed mines, Jabiluka and Koongarra, are completely surrounded by Kakadu National Park;
- the World Heritage Committee, at the World Heritage Meeting in Paris, December 1987, commended the Government of Australia for excluding mining from Stage II of Kakadu National Park and encouraged the Australian authorities to consider "further extending the World Heritage site to include Stage III of the National Park and to modify the boundaries of Stages I and II in order to protect the entire catchment area, and to include the cultural values to the east of the present National Park";
- in November 1987, the Australian Heritage Commission reported that Stage III of Kakadu National Park contains "one of the twelve most important rock art regions in the world";
- the Australian Government, as a signatory to the World Heritage Convention, agrees to refrain from "any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage" of a World Heritage Site;
- Recommendation 17.42 of the 17th Session of the General Assembly on the IUCN Wetlands Conservation Programme involves responsibilities and obligations for the Australian Government;

- part of the proposed Koongarra mine is within an existing World Heritage Site and National Park;
- the Australian Government has requested its Resource Assessment Commission to conduct an inquiry into the use of the resources of the Kakadu Conservation Zone, and has asked the Chair of the Resource Assessment Commission to prepare a report on the significance to Aboriginal people of the "conservation zone";

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

1. URGES the Government of Australia to incorporate the "conservation zone" of Stage III into Kakadu National Park, as encouraged by the World Heritage Committee;
2. RECOMMENDS the Government of Australia to take "appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures" necessary to incorporate into Kakadu National Park the existing Jabiluka and Koongarra Project Areas and ensure rehabilitation of all disturbed areas;
3. URGES the Government of Australia to proceed towards nominating all of Stage III of Kakadu National Park for consideration for World Heritage listing;
4. CALLS on the Government of Australia to honour its obligations for the protection of the Kakadu World Heritage Site under the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act and under the international Ramsar and Bonn Conventions where appropriate.

Note: This recommendation was adopted by consensus. The Australian State member delegation indicated that had there been a vote, the delegation would have abstained. The Government Agency member for Australia's Northern Territory wished it to be recorded that it could not agree with certain clauses of this recommendation.

