

18.75 Antarctica

RECOGNIZING the importance of Antarctica and its surrounding seas for the world as a whole, particularly for monitoring the stability of the global marine environment and atmosphere, as a living laboratory for the study of flora and fauna, for its wilderness qualities, and for science, education and inspiration;

MINDFUL that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs) have recognized the conservation significance of the Antarctic Treaty Area by referring to it as a Special Conservation Area (Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora, 1964, Preamble);

NOTING that the Second World Congress on National Parks in 1972 recommended that States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty should establish the Antarctic Continent and surrounding seas as the first World Park;

NOTING ALSO that the World National Parks Congress held in Bali, Indonesia, in 1982 in its recommendations on Antarctica expressed the belief that the concepts of international parks, reserves and protected areas should be promoted and that the concept of a World Park and other appropriate designations should be developed more urgently;

FURTHER NOTING the Australian Government's nomination of its sub-Antarctic islands, Heard and McDonald, for consideration for addition, if appropriate, to the World Heritage List;

RECALLING that Resolutions 15.20, 16.18 and 16.9 and Recommendations 17.52 and 17.53 of the 15th, 16th, and 17th Sessions of the IUCN General Assembly proposed a large number of environmental protection measures including the development of an Antarctic Conservation Strategy;

RECALLING ALSO that these previous Sessions of the IUCN General Assembly strongly recommended that the ATCPs should further enhance the status of the Antarctic environment as a whole and foster measures which would:

- maintain for all time the intrinsic value of the Antarctic environment for mankind and the global ecosystem;
- ensure that all human activities are compatible with the maintenance of these values;
- ascribe to the Antarctic environment as a whole a designation which connotes worldwide its unique character and value and the special measures accorded to its planning, management and conservation;

CONVINCED that any exploitation of minerals would adversely affect the values of the Antarctic environment;

AWARE that there is now growing public support around the world for a comprehensive protection regime, including a ban on mineral activity, for Antarctica;

ALSO AWARE that at the XVth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting held in Paris in October 1989, Australia and France, having declined to sign the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities, jointly proposed a new comprehensive environmental protection convention for Antarctica which would, amongst other things, ban mineral activity;

FURTHER AWARE that this proposal, amongst others, was referred to a Special Consultative Meeting to begin the elaboration of proposals in 1990;

RECOGNIZING that the Special Consultative Meeting provides a forum and opportunity for the exploration and development of the measures foreseen at the previous sessions of the General Assembly, for the implementation of the Antarctic Conservation Strategy, and for improved management of the atmospheric, marine and terrestrial environments of Antarctica;

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

1. REAFFIRMS the resolutions and recommendations on Antarctica of the last three sessions of the IUCN General Assembly;
2. STRONGLY RECOMMENDS that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and all other interested governments and non-governmental bodies:
 - a. work towards the adoption of a comprehensive environmental protection regime for Antarctica embodied in legally binding agreements;
 - b. incorporate in these agreements a permanent exclusion of mineral prospecting, exploration and exploitation in Antarctica;
 - c. also incorporate in these agreements measures which complement, or where appropriate integrate, the provisions of the Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora, the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals and the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, so that these form part of the overall comprehensive environmental protection regime;
 - d. cooperate wherever possible with the Special Consultative Meeting to further develop the comprehensive environmental protection regime;
3. CALLS UPON the relevant nations to consider their sub-Antarctic islands for nomination for World Heritage listing;
4. PLEDGES IUCN's full support and assistance for the development and ultimate acceptance of the comprehensive environmental protection regime by:
 - a. making available relevant technical expertise;
 - b. exploring improved forms of management of human activity in the Antarctic including science;
 - c. promoting public and official understanding of the comprehensive environmental protection regime so that the chances of its acceptance are optimized;
5. CALLS UPON the Director General to immediately communicate this resolution to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties now meeting in Chile.

Note: This recommendation was adopted by consensus. The United Kingdom State member delegation made a statement of that Government's policy (included in the Proceedings of the General Assembly) and stated that had there been a vote the delegation would have abstained. The delegations of the State members Norway and the United States associated themselves with the UK position. The statement by the United States delegation is also included in the Proceedings of the General Assembly.