18.6 Increased IUCN Support for the Asian Region

RECOGNIZING that Asia contains immense biological, geological and physical diversity ranging from the highest mountain systems to tropical seas and from arid areas and deserts to major wetlands;

CONSCIOUS that Asia is home to more than half of humanity, more particularly concentrated in southern and eastern Asia, and is immensely rich in cultural diversity;

NOTING that the pressure of population upon the natural resource base is severe and requires urgent alleviation through integrated local, national, regional and international interventions and strategies;

NOTING ALSO that the ecosystems of Asia are being severely damaged and disrupted;

NOTING ALSO that Asian societies are predominantly agricultural and have a high degree of dependence on nature, and a rich traditional knowledge of life processes;

CONSCIOUS that Asia is a major producer and supplier of raw materials such as tropical timber;

CONSCIOUS that, despite these trends, there are projects and programmes in Asia undertaken by governments, non-governmental agencies and communities that afford lessons and models in sustainable resource use and development and in equity and participation;

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

CALLS UPON the Director General, within the resources available, to provide greater attention and assistance to the Asian region and promote:

a. greater regional cooperation and effort in addressing conservation issues through, for example, the development of programme activities including conservation strategies for:

   i. the mountain systems of the region, particularly the Himalayas;

   ii. the river systems of the Ganges, Indus, Brahmaputra and the Mekong;

   iii. the establishment and maintenance of a representative system of trans-national protected areas in the region;

   iv. wetlands and marine and coastal areas, giving priority to those which provide essential habitats for migrating species and to those which are important for artisanal fisheries;

   v. the establishment and promotion of programmes and management practices aimed at controlling and eventually halting desertification, for example as initiated in Saudi Arabia;

   vi. migratory terrestrial species, particularly in Western Asia.

b. a survey of the status of biodiversity in all countries of the region, of their natural resource capital and of the nature and extent of resource transfer between Asia and the rest of the world;

c. research, conservation and management of rangelands, which have hitherto been neglected;

d. conservation of tropical forests, particularly with respect to the study of traditional sustainable resource tenures and the critical links between forestry, agriculture and biodiversity;

e. the formulation of National Conservation Strategies and action plans to provide umbrella policies for integrating environment with development in all sectors;

f. the establishment of environmental planning systems in each country which emphasize and enhance community involvement and which build upon traditional practices and knowledge;

g. the role and capacity of non-governmental environmental organizations and peoples groups and cooperation between these organizations and governments in addressing shared goals;

h. the development and strengthening of environmental laws and institutions which build upon customary law and practices for the sustainable use of living resources and which respect traditional tenure and avoid insensitive transfer of laws from other countries;

i. the expansion of IUCN membership and its network of programmes and offices in the region;

j. increased Asian representation in the offices and Commissions of IUCN;

k. increased financial and technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors to support the work of IUCN in Asia and to support governments, non-governmental organizations and peoples groups of the region in meeting conservation for sustainable development goals.