

19.21 Indigenous People and the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

ACKNOWLEDGING the major international Covenants of 1966 on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, according to which no people may under any circumstances be deprived of its means of subsistence;

RECALLING that the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, in Chapter 26 of Agenda 21, recognized the valuable role of indigenous people and local communities in maintaining sustainable use of nature's resources and underlined, in Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the importance of the active participation of indigenous people in environmental management;

CONSCIOUS of the conclusions in the World Commission on Environment and Development report of 1987 on the need for empowerment of vulnerable groups to promote citizen participation in sustainable development;

COGNISANT of the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 which lends support to the special relationships that exist between indigenous people and nature;

NOTING that the United Nations has begun preparation of a Draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and has declared the Decade of Indigenous People;

The General Assembly of IUCN - The World Conservation Union, at its 19th Session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 17-26 January 1994:

1. DECLARES its continued commitment to advancing the principles contained in the above cited Conventions and Agreements and to further their integration in the work of IUCN;
2. CALLS on governments, and especially State members of IUCN, to recognize and give effect in their national policies and programmes for sustainable use and development to the principles relating to indigenous people contained in the Covenants and Agreements cited above.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Australia and New Zealand indicated that had there been a vote, they would have abstained, because their countries had not adopted or ratified ILO Convention 169, in the case of New Zealand because of the special position accorded to the Maori people by the Treaty of Waitangi.

