

19.28 Environmental Impact Assessment

NOTING that Agenda 21 states that governments should regularly assess the laws, regulations and administrative arrangements in the field of environment and sustainable development with a view to rendering them more effective in practice;

NOTING further that Agenda 21 states that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and that are subject to a decision of a competent national authority;

RECOGNIZING that Agenda 21 strongly supports access to information and involvement in planning processes by the public and NGOs and the right of the public and NGOs to protect the public interest through legal action;

ACKNOWLEDGING that improved planning and decision-making processes are essential to ensure the protection of biological diversity and ecological integrity;

RECOGNIZING that EIA provides an effective means of integrating environmental factors into planning and decision-making processes in a manner that promotes ecologically sustainable development;

ACCEPTING that EIA should be an integral part of established planning and decision-making processes;

NOTING that industry seeks certainty and efficiency in development approval processes;

ACKNOWLEDGING that development approvals should be more transparent and participatory and that there is a need for greater accountability and independence of EIA processes;

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

1. CALLS on all governments, especially those with no legislation yet in place, to adopt Environmental Impact Assessment legislation, which should consider, *inter alia*, the following elements:
 - (a) taking the principles of ecologically sustainable development as the basis for, and an integral part of, the EIA process;
 - (b) undertaking EIAs within a regional and resource planning framework;
 - (c) adoption of a standard minimum set of requirements for a development that would make an EIA compulsory, and not subject to political discretion;
 - (d) inclusion in law of provisions for meaningful public participation in the EIA process and full public access to relevant information;
 - (e) establishment of a statutory authority or systems for ensuring the full objectivity, neutrality, reliability and adequacy of all stages of EIA and that EIAs that are found to be inadequate are rejected;
 - (f) ensuring that, as a matter of principle, the costs of EIA are borne by the proponent;

- (g) incorporation of health, cultural and socio-economic aspects of any proposed development into decision-making, including an economic analysis of the costs and benefits of environmental degradation and resource loss;
- (h) a requirement that project approval be subject to strict and legally enforceable conditions including monitoring.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State member Australia indicated that had there been a vote, the delegation would have abstained.