

19.56 Global Fisheries

CONSIDERING that, owing to inadequate management and over-fishing, global fish stocks have reached a dangerously low level and that, according to a report in 1990 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), virtually every commercial species has been "depleted", "fully exploited" or "over-exploited";

NOTING that FAO concluded in 1993 that "excessive fishing is endangering the very sustainability of high seas fisheries resources";

NOTING also that the size of the world's deep-sea fishing fleet has grown to more than a million medium to large boats, costing far more than the revenues generated and causing the global deep-sea fish industry to become unprofitable and dependent on government subsidies;

AWARE that in many coastal states fishing communities, traditionally dependent on fishing for food and livelihoods, are jeopardized by industrial scale, offshore fisheries, and that in various instances such interactions not only lead to over-exploitation of fish stocks and damage to ecosystems, but also to unemployment of workers in small-scale fisheries and social disruption of artisanal fishing communities;

AWARE that, as a follow-up to the UN Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations has called for a Conference on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, which should give its final report to the UN at its 49th General Assembly in 1994;

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

1. EMPHASIZES the importance of sustainable management of natural resources in the High Seas and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs);
2. CALLS UPON all governments:
 - (a) to base their procedures for future fisheries development and management on the precautionary principle;
 - (b) to agree that fisheries management at a minimum shall include a method for the calculation of total allowable catches, effective monitoring, control and enforcement mechanisms and that all States should submit to dispute settlement;
 - (c) to take responsibility for the conservation and protection of the habitats of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks and their associated and dependent species, on both the high seas and within EEZs, with due regard to the precautionary principle;
 - (d) to incorporate these and other reforms in legally binding measures and enforcement mechanisms;

- (e) to ensure that decision-making processes for the management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks provide for consultation with, and broad participation by, affected parties and NGOs in conformity with the recommendations in Agenda 21;
 - (f) to resolve outstanding differences over the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and give particular focus to executing UNCLOS paragraphs relating to marine living resources and the protection of the marine environment;
3. CALLS UPON fishing nations to end subsidies to their deep-sea fishing fleet in order to reduce the overcapacity in global deep-sea (off-shore) fisheries and give priority to small, artisanal coastal fishing;
 4. REQUESTS the Director General to communicate this recommendation to the UN, FAO and all relevant State members.

