

## 19.65 Conservation of South American Native Forests

RECOGNIZING that in South America there is a great diversity of forest ecosystems, ranging from the tropical to the subantarctic, which makes that continent the most diverse in this type of natural formations in the world;

CONSIDERING that the native forests of the region have a most important ecological, economic, social and cultural role;

NOTING the serious conservation situation affecting all types of forest present in the South American region due to the extension of the agricultural frontier as a result of poverty and the processes of colonization, the irrational extraction activities of national and transnational forest companies and the development, in forest areas, of other economic activities such as mining, tourism and oil extraction, without taking the necessary environmental precautions;

BEARING IN MIND that the conservation of native forests in the South American region has been the object of thorough analysis and the subject of recommendations and conclusions at the South American Members meetings of Santa Marta, Colombia, in 1991 and Parati, Brazil, in 1992, and at the South American Regional Committee meetings in Quito, Ecuador, and La Paz, Bolivia, in 1993;

RECALLING that at the international level there is an interest in addressing the issue from a global perspective through the establishment of a Convention on Forests towards which the first step was taken with the definition of the "Forest Principles" agreed by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992);

STRESSING that an active process of replacement of native forests by forest plantations is taking place and that many plantations are established with the justification of increasing the capacity of storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, which does not conform with *Caring for the Earth*, Chapter 14, point 4, where it is stated that plantations "should be in addition to natural and modified forests and not replace them";

NOTING that the native forests of the region are mainly being used today as a source of timber only, and in most cases without any higher value-added process, which implies poor assessment of the potential value of their biodiversity and a loss of employment opportunities for the local population;

CONSIDERING that the present management of natural forests is taking place at the regional level, basically with practices that do not take into account such aspects as the protection of soil and hydrological cycles, maintenance of wildlife habitat and genetic reserves;

EMPHASIZING that in most countries of the region major processes of legislation regarding forestry activities in progress and that these are being developed under the active influence of those involved in the issue, mainly the business sector;

RECOGNIZING that the establishment of protected areas is one of the essential instruments for the successful conservation of the region's native forests but that there is inadequate representation of the forest ecosystems of South America in these protected area systems;

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

1. RECOMMENDS that Governments establish basic principles which ensure the sustainability in ecological, economic and social terms of forest plantations so that those plantations do not affect the natural forest ecosystems and local communities;
2. URGES the Governments concerned not to replace natural forests by forest plantations but, on the contrary, to develop the natural forest resources as a predominant factor in national development;
3. RECOMMENDS the Governments of the South American region to protect actively the forest remnants of the High Andes and the Andes' western slopes, the cloud forests, the dry tropical forest of the Pacific, the subtropical moist forest, the temperate forest, the subantarctic forest and those forests that include threatened species and ecosystems;
4. RECOMMENDS the Governments of South America to implement the necessary measures so that the

management of natural forests is aimed at a multiple sustainable use of resources (commodities and services), taking into consideration the functions of the forest such as the protection of catchment areas, the regulation of fresh-water cycles, the provision of habitat for wild fauna, the maintenance of biological diversity and gene banks, and the rights of indigenous people to the restitution of their ancestral lands and the sustainable management of their forests;

5. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources:

- (a) to incorporate as a predominant subject of IUCN's work in the region, the types of native forests with the above-mentioned conservation problems and their economic development, as well as that of the forest products so that the implicit external factors in this type of evaluation be included in the analysis;
- (b) to support through the Forest Conservation Programme the promotion, formulation and implementation by States of international legal instruments aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of the world's forests;
- (c) to support IUCN members in the region in their task to promote the development of policies and legislation favourable to the sustainable management of forest resources;
- (d) to recommend all IUCN members and partners to further the development of actions necessary to increase the political support to tasks aimed at bringing the Governments of the region to consider as a national priority the consolidation of the protected areas at the regional level;
- (e) to inform the General Assembly of the actions carried out and the results obtained.

*Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State member United States indicated that had there been a vote, the delegation would have voted against, because of Operative Paragraph 4.*