

## 19.73 Paraguay-Parana Waterway Project

RECOGNIZING that major hydraulic projects have caused serious and irreversible ecological and socio-environmental damage in many parts of the world;

CONSIDERING that, unless the Paraguay-Parana Waterway Project is well-structured and planned, it may cause permanent changes in the ecosystems involved;

RECOGNIZING that the Governments members of the Waterway Committee have taken due account of the possible environmental impacts of this Project and that they have arranged for an assessment to be made so as to adopt the decisions which are shown to be advisable;

AWARE of the study made by "Wetlands for the Americas" and other documents already submitted containing valuable data and information, which draw attention, *inter alia*, to the following possible risks posed by the Waterway: modification of the hydrological regime of the basin, with a dangerous acceleration in water discharge, especially from the Pantanal in Brazil; deterioration of water quality as a result of a one thousand per cent increase in powered shipping on the water courses; reduction and modification of the wetlands affecting more than 200,000 square kilometres of the Pantanal; and loss or modification of the "sponge" effect which the wetlands exert over the entire basin;

CONCERNED by the economic as well as the environmental costs, which could greatly increase the indebtedness of the countries involved;

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

1. APPEALS to the Government of Argentina and the Governments of Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, to the Interamerican Development Bank and to all bodies providing partial financing or technical support for the Paraguay-Parana Waterway Project:
  - (a) in the event that the environmental impact assessment is negative, to require the project to be modified on the basis of the results obtained in the corresponding studies and to support efforts to protect natural resources and the communities involved, including the indigenous peoples;
  - (b) to make a thorough analysis of the short-, medium- and long-term effects of the Project on ecosystems and their natural resources and on the socio-environmental conditions of the inhabitants of the zone involved;
  - (c) to issue, for public distribution and consultation of those concerned, the plans and outlines of the Project so that errors and omissions may be noted and detected;
2. URGES the Director General and the members of IUCN to familiarize themselves with the Project, cooperating with the relevant authorities and interceding to defend the area's environment.

