

19.74 Conservation of the South Atlantic Coastal Ecosystems of South America

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT Recommendation 18.50 of the 18th Session of the General Assembly which endorses the creation of the Inter-American Nature Conservation System for the American continents within the institutional framework of the Organization of American States;

CONSIDERING that beaches are not only the strip of land at the mercy of tides, but also include the adjacent lands that compose the landscape and include perforce the first lines of sand/dunes close to the sea;

AWARE that beaches are not stable entities, but rather dynamic soil formations, constantly subject to the forces that promote erosion and/or siltation; that changes in them are responses to processes that take place far outside the limits of the beaches themselves; and that the banks and shoals in the open sea and the currents are of special importance, as are systems on land, which govern the cycles of erosion and siltation of the beaches;

FURTHER AWARE of the presence of an unusually large number of plant and animal species whose existence depends on beaches and their dynamic processes;

GIVEN the growing deterioration of the coastal ecosystems mainly due to their mismanagement or to the lack of integrated and long-term management;

CONCERNED by the development of tourist and port infrastructures (buildings, breakwaters, piers and others) that close in the beaches destroying the sand-banks and dunes without respecting the maximum high-tide levels, reducing to the minimum and even eliminating the available space for the realization of the natural cyclical maintenance processes of the ecosystem and its resources;

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the increase in number and magnitude of incidents and accidents of hydrocarbon discharges in and over the coastal areas;

ALERTED by the indiscriminate exploitation of bivalve molluscs, which has alarmingly diminished their natural quantity and production;

AFFIRMING that the most important issue for the future of America's coastal marine ecosystems is that urgent measures of restoration and recovery of the deteriorated beaches and the maintenance of those which are not yet degraded, be taken by the local communities and the relevant authorities, modifying current behaviour at the individual, community and governmental levels;

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

1. URGES the authorities of the Republics of Argenti-

na, Brazil and Uruguay to coordinate as of now, even before the creation of the Inter-American Nature Conservation System, joint actions aimed at avoiding the deterioration of coastal ecosystems and the reduction in diversity and quantity of their natural resources;

2. CALLS UPON these Governments to control and reduce their quotas for extraction of bivalve molluscs;
3. STRESSES the need for these Governments to implement and enforce strictly the international agreements on prevention of pollution by hydrocarbons;
4. URGES the legislative authorities to set up legal standards for public use of the coastal area from the beach to the limit of the high-tide line (300-400 metres wide), leaving the dunes and sand-banks intact and free from permanent building;
5. URGES IUCN-South America and, in particular, IUCN members in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, to promote awareness of the problem of the conservation and sustainable management of marine coastal ecosystems, creating and carrying out projects to this end, and further undertaking a strict supervision of the extractions and quotas granted by the government authorities responsible for molluscs and fish;
6. REQUESTS these Governments and urban authorities to halt the development of activities and infrastructures that affect the natural development of coastal marine ecosystems;
7. RECOMMENDS that an environmental impact study be requested for activities related to:
 - (a) the extraction of sand from beaches in general;
 - (b) electro-energetic power plants in general;
 - (c) massive use of water for industrial cooling or heating;

- (d) tourist and recreational urbanization, human settlements;
- (e) establishment of permanent human settlements;
- (f) final disposal of solid and liquid domestic waste;
- (g) building of ports and loading and unloading areas, berths;
- (h) dredging operations;
- (i) the extraction of molluscs, fish and other organisms for industrial and commercial purposes on a large scale;
- (j) installation of oil and gas pipelines and their equivalent;
- (k) establishment of fish-processing plants;
- (l) establishment and operation of petrochemical plants.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Australia and United States indicated that had there been a vote, they would have abstained, in the case of Australia because the Recommendation put obligations upon States.