

19.81 Conservation of the Gulf Region, Northern Territory, Australia

RECOGNIZING the geological, botanical and zoological significance of the Gulf Region, comprising the coast and land areas in the Gulf of Carpentaria area of the Northern Territory, Australia, including sites of national and international significance for dugong, turtle species, marsupials, lizards, sea grass beds, mangroves, rainforest and vine thickets;

NOTING that the region does not currently include a comprehensive system of reserves that adequately captures ecological variation;

NOTING that a large proportion of the region is range-land used by the pastoral industry, an industry that occurs on some lands incapable of sustaining pastoral activity;

RECOGNIZING that the Northern Territory Government and the Australian Government are currently involved in negotiating access to land that will create a large national park in the area;

CONCERNED at the potential environmental impact from new mining and port developments in the region;

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

- 1. REQUESTS the Australian, Queensland and Northern Territory Governments to investigate the establishment of a comprehensive reserve system in the region and to accelerate and conclude as soon as possible the current negotiations for the national park and ensure that it is ecologically representative;**
- 2. CALLS UPON the Governments to negotiate a socially appropriate means to establish the reserve system, including ownership and management by Aboriginal traditional owners;**
- 3. RECOMMENDS that the Governments investigate sustainable alternative uses for pastoral leases in the Gulf Region that are not viable;**
- 4. RECOMMENDS the Governments act to ensure the minimization of environmental impacts of major developments such as mining and associated transport routes;**
- 5. URGES the Ramsar Secretariat to consult with the Governments regarding the listing of the region's seagrass communities and other wetlands under the Ramsar Convention.**

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Zaire and Zimbabwe, and the delegation of the Department of Environment and Conservation, Papua New Guinea (a Government Agency member), indicated that had there been a vote, they would have abstained.