

19.82 Conservation of Mangrove Communities in Australia

NOTING that in 1980 Australia's coast contained the third most extensive area of mangroves on the globe, 1.156 million ha, and that mangrove ecosystems are being rapidly lost to agriculture, dams and forestry in many other countries;

BELIEVING that conservation of Australia's mangroves is of international importance because of the area of mangroves concerned and Australia's ability to undertake such a conservation programme;

RECOGNIZING the conservation significance of this extensive area of mangroves in the international context, illustrated by the 48 vascular plant species that regularly inhabit this ecosystem in the Northern Territory;

SUPPORTING the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems and the role of indigenous people in their ownership and management;

CONCERNED that many areas of mangroves are being lost to urban, industrial and tourism developments;

CONCERNED that there are currently plans under consideration in several States and Territories that may adversely impact on a percentage of the mangroves, for example the proposed development of Darwin Harbour;

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

- 1. URGES the Australian Governments, in consultation with the Aboriginal traditional owners, to protect Australian mangroves in secure conservation reserves;**
- 2. URGES the Ramsar Secretariat to consult with the Australian Governments regarding the systematic listing of mangrove sites under the Ramsar Convention;**
- 3. URGES the Australian Governments to find alternative sites for urban, industrial and tourism developments;**
- 4. REQUESTS the Australian and Northern Territory Governments to investigate alternative options for urban development in order to maximize the area of mangroves conserved.**

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.

