

19.36 Global Biodiversity Forum

AWARE of the rapidly growing interest and commitment of States, NGOs, and communities to save, study and sustainably use their biodiversity and biological resources, as manifested most significantly by the negotiation, signature and entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

RECOGNIZING that the successful implementation of the Convention will depend upon the full involvement of those communities that farm, fish, harvest, industrialize and aesthetically enjoy and appreciate nature and the biological resources contained therein, and that protection, inventory, study, monitoring and use apply not only to protected areas but across entire landscapes and marine regions;

APPRECIATING therefore that such community sectors as science, forestry, fisheries, agriculture, indigenous groups, NGOs and citizen organizations, industry and business are necessary allies and partners for Convention implementation;

NOTING that these sectors and communities have so far had only limited opportunities to involve themselves in policy-making and planning of biodiversity-related action, and to participate in the international debate on issues and options;

RECALLING the pioneering experience led by IUCN, the World Resources Institute (WRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other partners, in holding regional consultations during the formulation of the Global Biodiversity Strategy (GBS); that the GBS called for establishment of an international mechanism to foster broad-based exploration and understanding of biodiversity issues; and that consultations were held by the African Centre for Technology Studies in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 1992, and the Global Biodiversity Forum at IUCN Headquarters, in October 1993 both of which involved a wide range of communities in non-consensus dialogue about selected issues and options for implementation of biodiversity action;

NOTING the ongoing efforts of IUCN to decentralize its Programme and to strengthen its regional networks of members;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources, to convene a continuing series of Biodiversity Forum meetings in the regions, in partnership with members and other organizations, and to establish a Secretariat focal point within the IUCN Biodiversity Programme to facilitate the organization of meetings and provide continuity while maintaining the minimum organization and administration possible;
2. ADVISES the Director General that the Forum series should:
 - (a) analyze and debate critical ecological, economic, institutional and social issues to further the development and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Biodiversity Strategy;
 - (b) promote ratification and implementation of the Convention;
 - (c) promote incorporation of the proposals of the Global Biodiversity Strategy in international, national and local plans and activities;
3. URGES those organizing Forum sessions:
 - (a) to involve individuals from those communities that live within, utilize, depend upon, or otherwise care for wild habitats and wild or domesticated plant, animal and microbial life, building upon existing networks where these exist;
 - (b) to facilitate dialogue among these communities regarding critical issues as determined by them in that particular region, and regarding options for action, cooperation and partnership;
 - (c) to foster understanding and appreciation of the distinct perspectives and experience of the various communities, in an effort to promote evolving mechanisms for collaboration and action, without pressure to negotiate a consensus of views;
 - (d) FURTHER CALLS UPON IUCN members and supporting agencies and institutions to work with the Secretariat in the design, organization, hosting and funding of future Biodiversity Forum sessions to ensure that this mechanism will achieve the widest possible involvement of all levels of government, independent sector groups, and international organizations, around the world;
 - (e) REQUESTS the Director General to convene Global Biodiversity Forum sessions in conjunction with future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.