

19.96 Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

RECALLING Recommendations 18.75, 17.52 and 17.53 and Resolutions 15.20, 16.8, 18.9 and 18.74 of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Sessions of the General Assembly;

RECOGNIZING the critical role played by Antarctica *in* global climate and oceanic circulation, the importance of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, its vital role in the world's biophysical and biochemical systems, its great value as the world's largest remaining wilderness area, its intrinsic and inspirational values, and its importance for monitoring and other research directed to understanding the natural environment and global processes, including those modified by human activity;

NOTING that world opinion has now turned firmly against the exploitation of minerals in Antarctica and expects impeccable standards of environmental performance by all who operate there;

WELCOMING the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, adopted by the Antarctic Treaty Parties in Madrid, Spain, in October 1991, which commits the Parties to the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems, designates Antarctica as a nature reserve devoted to peace and science and, *inter alia*, prohibits any activity relating to mineral resources other than scientific research;

APPRECIATING that the Governments of Argentina, Spain, France, Peru, Ecuador and Norway have now ratified the Protocol on Environmental Protection;

AWARE that the Subantarctic Islands support distinctive ecosystems and many endemic species, that knowledge of these islands and their ecosystems remains inadequate and that it is important that conservation measures in these island groups are strengthened;

EMPHASIZING the importance of the conservation of the ecosystems of the circum-Antarctic seas, and the need to ensure that any use of their living resources is sustainable;

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

1. CALLS UPON all Parties to the Antarctic Treaty who have not already done so to ratify the Protocol on Environmental Protection as a matter of urgency, so ensuring its early entry into force;
2. URGES Parties to the Protocol:
 - (a) to revise their domestic legislation and procedures promptly to comply with the Protocol;
 - (b) to negotiate the Annex on liability for damage mandated by the Protocol as soon as practicable to ensure that clear, legally binding obligations

are imposed on Parties who administer or conduct activities in the Antarctic;

3. CALLS UPON all Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and all organizations active in Antarctica to pay particular attention to:
 - (a) minimizing environmental impact;
 - (b) establishing and safeguarding a comprehensive network of protected areas, including adequate representation of the principal habitats and the biological diversity of the Antarctic region;
 - (c) preventing the deposition of wastes and facilitating the removal of wastes which have already been deposited;
 - (d) establishing and enforcing stringent regulations governing the conduct of all persons visiting Antarctica, whether scientists, logistic and other support personnel or tourists;
 - (e) otherwise according priority to conservation in Antarctica as a whole;
4. ENCOURAGES Treaty Parties to establish the Committee for Environmental Protection on an interim basis promptly so that it may function prior to the entry into force of the Protocol;
5. CALLS for a permanent ban on all minerals activity in Antarctica throughout the area south of 60 degrees South latitude;
6. ENCOURAGES Treaty Parties to establish a Secretariat to ensure *inter alia* an effective implementation of the Antarctic Treaty including the Protocol;
7. CALLS ON Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources to take all steps necessary to conserve the marine ecosystems of the Southern Ocean;
8. ENCOURAGES Parties to the Protocol to build upon the inspection provisions in the Antarctic Treaty and Protocol and to develop and implement an environmental inspection system to assist in the effective protection of the Antarctic environment;
9. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources:
 - (a) in consultation with Antarctic Treaty Parties and IUCN members, Commissions and Council, to work for:
 - (i) the establishment and management of Antarctic specially protected or managed areas;
 - (ii) the development of an Annex to the Antarctic Protocol on liability for environmental damage;
 - (iii) an IUCN workshop on the impact and management of human presence in Antarctica;
 - (iv) the elaboration of detailed proposals for the implementation of the Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty;

- (b) in association with relevant Antarctic Treaty Parties and IUCN members, Commissions and Council to produce an integrated strategy for conservation in the Subantarctic Islands;
- (c) in consultation with IUCN members, Council and Commissions and the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), to collaborate on the ecosystem management of the Antarctic marine ecosystems;
- (d) to participate in Antarctic Treaty System meetings where such participation contributes to achieving the above objectives;
- (e) to establish an *ad hoc* committee to advise the IUCN Council and Director General on Antarctic issues in consultation with the IUCN Commissions and members.

Note. This Resolution was adopted by consensus after a proposal to delete Operative Paragraph 5 was rejected by a show of hands. The delegations of the State members Germany, Norway and United Kingdom indicated that had there been a vote, they would have voted against.

