

1.37 Marine Protected Areas

RECOGNIZING the commitment of IUCN to establishing a global representative system of marine protected areas, including those on the high seas and polar waters, as expressed in Recommendation 19.46 of the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly;

AWARE that there has been considerable progress, as expressed in the report *A Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas* prepared jointly by IUCN, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the World Bank;

CONVINCED that marine protected areas represent an important method for conserving marine biodiversity and contributing to the sustainable use of living marine resources;

CONSCIOUS that the use of marine resources and the rate of degradation of the marine environment are increasing;

CONCERNED that human activities which over-harvest resources and those which alter habitat have the potential to degrade ecosystems and may make species vulnerable to extinction;

COMMITTED to the adoption of integrated coastal management as an essential means of achieving sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems and of maintaining biological diversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that there is an urgent need to ensure that a substantial portion of all ecosystems is conserved in an unexploited condition to act as reference, replenishment and refuge areas and that marine protected areas within integrated coastal management programmes can perform this function;

RECALLING Resolution 19.38, Targets for Protected Areas Systems, of the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly, as well as Recommendation 16 of the IVth World Parks Congress which urged governments to ensure that protected areas should cover a minimum of 10 per cent of each biome by the year 2000, and that some countries have found the adoption of percentage targets a useful way to help plan their protected area systems;

NOTING that the *IUCN Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories* identify a range of protected area types, including more strictly protected areas in Categories I and II, to be used in the marine and terrestrial environment, and that systems of protected areas in the marine environment should be complemented by systems of integrated coastal management and by use of protected areas in other categories;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23, October 1996:

1. URGES all coastal States to move quickly to establish national systems of representative marine protected areas, in cooperation with local communities and resource users, so as to safeguard the biodiversity of each of their marine ecosystems, and also to set a percentage target for such representation where this would be useful and appropriate;
2. RECOMMENDS that coastal States, as part of their overall programmes of marine protected areas, establish viable marine protected areas which meet the protection criteria for IUCN Categories I and II, so as to safeguard a representative proportion of marine ecosystems in a natural state and thus help maintain sustainable use and biodiversity throughout their marine ecosystems;
3. RECOMMENDS that, as part of the IUCN Marine and Coastal Programme, the World Commission on Protected Areas develop guidance on the application of the *IUCN Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories* in the marine environment.