

### **1.38 Ecological Networks and Corridors of Natural and Semi-Natural Areas**

HAVING REGARD to the shared responsibility in conserving the Earth's biological diversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals are making important efforts to conserve this biological diversity but that it is still under serious threat from the continuing loss and fragmentation of habitats and the deterioration in environmental quality;

REAFFIRMING the need for government policies to be sustainable and to be developed and implemented on the basis of collaboration and a common understanding of problems, needs and priorities;

RECOGNIZING that there is a growing body of experience being gained around the world by farmers, foresters, indigenous groups, public agencies, and other interested stakeholders, who are seeking institutional mechanisms that will encourage, enable and empower them cooperatively and voluntarily to manage their bioregions in ways that ensure their livelihoods and lifestyles, while building stewardship for the bioregion's biodiversity and protected areas;

REAFFIRMING the importance of incorporating coherent ecological objectives into all policies, and particularly those in the fields of nature conservation, environmental protection, agriculture and land-use planning;

RECOGNIZING the scientific underpinning from the field of conservation biology that emphasizes the importance of large bioregions in which national parks and other protected areas are linked by broad connecting habitat or conservation corridors to accommodate climate change impacts and wide-ranging species;

NOTING also that parts of or entire mountain ranges still offer good opportunities to create wildland bioregional-scale corridors, extending over hundreds or even thousands of kilometers, such as the southeastern Australia Great Dividing Range, the Rocky Mountains from Yellowstone to Yukon, and the Andean Bear corridor from Venezuela to Ecuador;

RECOGNIZING that ecological networks to conserve, restore and complement valuable protected and non-protected natural and semi-natural habitats are being developed in many countries around the world as a means of achieving these objectives, such as the Pan-European Ecological Network (EECONET), the Central American Biological Corridor, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, the East Asian-Australian Shorebird Reserve Network and the network of flyway areas under the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement;

NOTING that these ecological networks often contain core areas, buffer zones, corridors and rehabilitation areas, are adapted to the needs of many kinds of ecosystems, habitats and species, are applied at different scales, and can accommodate compatible sustainable land uses and provide various forms of protection;

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

1. CALLS UPON all IUCN members to further the development of ecological networks at national, regional and intercontinental level as a means of strengthening the integrity and resilience of the world's biological diversity;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources:
  - a) to review experience in developing and applying ecological networks;
  - b) to promote cooperation in the further development of ecological networks at regional and international level, with a special focus on ecosystems and species that extend across national frontiers;
  - c) to report on these issues to the next World Conservation Congress.