

1.57 Southern African Regional Network on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (SARNIKS)

CONSIDERING that the majority of the peoples of southern Africa are indigenous to the region;

RECOGNIZING the accelerating degradation of the natural resources and impoverishment of the peoples of Africa and elsewhere;

RECOGNIZING also the close links between development and environmental conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources as noted by Agenda 21, *Caring for the Earth*, etc.;

NOTING the importance of social, cultural, economic pressures on natural resources in the region;

REFERRING to the initiatives of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) started by a number of concerned citizens and institutions in southern Africa over the last several years;

GUIDED by the spirit and the resolutions by people from the region assembled at a number of fora in the region;

IN RECOGNITION of the vibrancy of IKS in the majority of the communities in southern Africa;

IN RECOGNITION especially of the marginalized indigenous peoples of the region;

NOTING the significant dependence of the communities on the use of IKS;

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

CALLS ON governments in southern Africa:

- a) to adapt legal systems to protect IKS and promote and protect ownership rights over natural resources including equitable sharing of benefits with local communities;
- b) to formulate policy frameworks that make IKS an integral part of national development and biodiversity conservation and utilization strategies;
- c) to make available adequate resources to enable communities in southern Africa to document, and undertake research towards enhancing, their indigenous knowledge systems.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained.

The use of the term “indigenous peoples” in this Recommendation shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to that term in international law.