

1.68 Development of Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Natural Heritage Significance

RECOGNIZING that the World Charter for Nature, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 28 October 1982, established the fundamental rights of nature and the requirement for humans to respect it; noted that conservation of nature is an integral part of social and economic development activities; and called on authorities, individuals, organizations and groups to cooperate in the task of conserving nature through common activities and other relevant actions;

MINDFUL that there is great potential benefit in a clearly defined process for making decisions about managing land and water for the conservation of nature in both protected and unprotected areas;

RECOGNIZING that there is an increasing need to encourage communication, information transfer and a common language between countries and between land-managers, landowners, professionals and community sectors concerned with the management of areas with natural heritage significance;

NOTING that over the last two years an Australian Natural Heritage Charter for the conservation of places of natural heritage significance has been developed within Australia through a process involving wide consultation with all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, local communities, professional associations and other interested groups and individuals;

NOTING that the Australian Natural Heritage Charter contains a statement of ethos, a set of concise definitions, a statement of conservation principles and processes and a statement of conservation practice which outlines a logical process for conserving any place of natural heritage significance;

NOTING that the Australian Natural Heritage Charter is a voluntary document with no requirement nor intent that it should be implemented by statutory means;

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

1. COMMENDS the organizations in Australia who have developed the Australian Natural Heritage Charter as a practical, do-it-yourself guide for the conservation of places of natural heritage significance;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, through the various components of IUCN, to encourage other countries to develop similar, appropriate guidelines to assist everyone with an interest in the significance and conservation of natural heritage to make soundly based conservation decisions;
3. RECOMMENDS that, in developing these guidelines, countries undertake a wide participatory approach which includes all sectors with an interest in the conservation of natural heritage.