

## 1.72 Climate Change, Biodiversity and the IUCN Programme

RECALLING that the Caracas Declaration and Action Plan from the IVth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas identified climate change as a significant issue concerning conservation of biological diversity and management of protected areas;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 18.22 on Global Climate Change of the 18th Session of the IUCN General Assembly;

FURTHER RECALLING Article 2 of the Framework Convention on Climate Change which provides that the ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would not present dangerous anthropogenic interference in the climate system and that such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner;

FURTHER RECALLING Actions 4.3 and 4.4 of *Caring for the Earth*, and especially that “governments should review their development and conservation plans in light of the most plausible scenarios of climate change and sea-level rise”;

NOTING that the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> are now 30 per cent above the pre-industrial level, having reached 358 parts per million (ppm), and that a warming trend in global mean surface temperature can be detected since 1860;

NOTING ALSO that the past century has been warmer than any for at least 600 years, and that the rate of warming may be greater than any experienced in at least the past 10,000 years;

NOTING ALSO that for the first time in 1996, the IPCC concluded that “the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate” and that “a significant loss of species must be considered as one of the most important impacts of climate change”;

NOTING FURTHER that the Third Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1997 has been charged to adopt strengthened commitments of Annex I Parties with respect to greenhouse gas emissions reductions and limitations and continue to advance the implementation of Article 4.1 commitments by all Parties to the Convention;

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

1. AFFIRMS that climate change represents a major, growing threat to the maintenance of biodiversity and the protection, management and rehabilitation of natural and semi-natural ecosystems;
2. RECOGNIZES the findings of the Second Assessment Report, which indicate that the continued rise of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere will lead to dangerous interference to the climate system, given the serious risk of an increase in temperature, particularly the very high rate of temperature change;
3. ENDORSES the IPCC’s 1990 calculation that long-lived greenhouse gases “would require immediate reductions in emissions from human activities of over 60 per cent to stabilise their concentrations at today’s levels” and its 1996 statement that successful adaptation to climate change will depend “upon technological advances, institutional arrangements, availability of financing, and information exchange”;
4. WELCOMES recent first steps by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) to include climate change issues in their work programmes;
5. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources and in consultation with the Commissions and members, to develop a strategy for IUCN on climate change and to participate in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the work of the Framework Convention on Climate Change as far as there is a direct link with conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, and as part of this strategy, calls upon:

- a) WCPA to take steps to develop new guidelines for protected area management and planning that recommend strategies aimed at minimizing and adapting to the impacts of climate change;
  - b) SSC to examine the feasibility of developing new techniques and predictive tools to evaluate the importance of climate change as a threatening process for particular species in particular areas, understanding that multiple factors may be involved;
  - c) the Commissions in general to assess the implications of climate change for their goals and operations, and then on the basis of the results of these assessments, to develop work programme elements to integrate climate change into their activities;
6. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources and in consultation with members and Commissions, to assist in the development of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.