

1.83 Forest Ecosystems of Africa

CONSIDERING the economic, ecological, social and cultural importance of the forest ecosystems of Africa, as well as their extent and their great biological diversity;

CONSIDERING the vital role played by forest ecosystems in the life of rural populations, who form the majority of inhabitants in the region;

CONSIDERING that the forest ecosystems of Africa constitute the second largest area of forest in the world;

CONSIDERING that by their importance these ecosystems constitute a heritage for all humankind;

CONSIDERING the pressures of demography, poverty, debt and timber extraction on those ecosystems, and their effects through degradation and destruction of the environment;

CONSIDERING that the sustainable use of natural resources is dependent on prevailing ecological, social, political and economic conditions;

RECOGNIZING the institutional shortcomings of and the need for technical and financial support to most of the States concerned;

EMPHASIZING the growing role of NGOs and the private sector in the management of forest resources;

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

1. URGES the Governments of African countries to continue giving the highest importance in their development programmes to the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources, in particular the sustainable utilization of forest products, including the implementation of voluntary, independent timber certification policies adapted to the situation in the region;
2. STRONGLY ENCOURAGES NGO members of IUCN, civil society and the private sector to contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of all the forests of Africa;
3. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN, within available resources, to continue the efforts made since 1995 in Africa, and in particular to ensure a substantial, appropriate follow-up to the recommendations of the Conference on the Tropical Rainforest Ecosystems of Africa.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State member Germany indicated that it had not participated in discussion of the Recommendation nor would it have participated in any voting. The delegation of the State member United States indicated that had there been a vote the delegation would have voted against.