

1.104 Conservation of Kakadu World Heritage Site, Australia

RECALLING Recommendation 19.87 from the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly;

RECOGNIZING that Kakadu has been described as one of the more important national parks in the world, and has been inscribed on the World Heritage List for its natural and cultural values;

NOTING that all wetland areas in Kakadu National Park are listed under the Ramsar Convention;

NOTING that the sites of the three uranium deposits, Ranger, Jabiluka and Koongarra, are located on land owned by Aboriginal people, were never included in Kakadu National Park and are surrounded by the Park;

AWARE that the independent scientific authority established to monitor the impact of the Ranger mine has detected no adverse impact on Kakadu National Park or its World Heritage values;

NOTING that, subject to the appropriate approvals, the Ranger site will be included in Kakadu National Park following rehabilitation;

NOTING, however, that mining in Jabiluka or Koongarra has the potential to damage the natural and cultural values of Kakadu;

RECOGNIZING that the Aboriginal Traditional Owners have the right to make decisions about the use of their land, including whether mining takes place, and that the issue is now being discussed among the Traditional Owners, some of whom support mining while others oppose it;

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

1. URGES the Government of Australia, if the Traditional Owners and Northern Land Council should ever approve mining of the Jabiluka or Koongarra sites, to:
 - a) ensure that any proposal to mine is subject to a public process of stringent environmental assessment;
 - b) ensure that any mining activity is subject to a standard of monitoring, supervision and regulation, sufficient to ensure the continued absence of any detectable impact on Kakadu National Park;
2. URGES the Government of Australia to prevent the development of Jabiluka and Koongarra uranium mines should it be shown that such mining would threaten the Park's World Heritage values;
3. URGES the Government of Australia to facilitate inclusion of the Jabiluka and Koongarra areas in Kakadu National Park when and if requested by Traditional Owners and the Northern Land Council.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Australia stated that since the Recommendation deals with matters about which the Australian Government is forming a view, it was inappropriate for their delegation and that of the Northern Territory Government Agency member to support or object to the Recommendation. Had there been a vote the delegations would have abstained. 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 delegations of the State members Norway, Sweden and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained.