

1.7 An IUCN Strategy for the Arctic

RECALLING with concern that Recommendation 19.97 of the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly, on protection of the Arctic environment, has not been acted upon;

RECOGNIZING the achievements of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, the voluntary programme of work of the eight circumpolar Arctic States;

WELCOMING the creation of an Arctic Council on 19 September 1996 as a high-level forum to address Arctic environmental protection and sustainable development issues;

NOTING that all eight circumpolar States represented in the Arctic Council and the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy are State members of IUCN;

AWARE that the role of the Arctic in global environmental processes, including the Earth's climate, is of interest to a broader array of nations;

RECOGNIZING the vital interests of indigenous Arctic peoples in Arctic conservation and sustainable development, and their central role as stewards of the Arctic environment;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that non-governmental organizations participating in the work of the Arctic Council can provide valuable expertise and assistance in helping to protect environmental quality and to guide sustainable development in the Arctic;

MINDFUL of the valuable role that IUCN including its Commissions could play in working with its members to promote and support the objectives and goals of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and the Arctic Council;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to apply promptly for observer status for IUCN in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and the Arctic Council;
2. REQUESTS IUCN members and offices in the Arctic States, in close cooperation with the Director General, Commissions and Arctic specialists, to work together to develop and implement an action plan for Arctic conservation and sustainable development which will implement Recommendation 19.97 and will:
 - a) define a specific role for IUCN in the work of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, especially its Working Groups on Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment and on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna;
 - b) promote the development of conservation strategies and sustainable development plans that take into account the particular requirements and concerns of indigenous Arctic peoples;
 - c) address the particular threats and conservation concerns in the Arctic, including, *inter alia*:
 - i) impacts from the development of offshore oil and gas resources;
 - ii) impacts from the development of circumpolar maritime transport routes;
 - iii) impacts to the marine environment from land-based activities, including the threats to the ecological and human health in the region resulting from the presence of bio-accumulating persistent organic pollutants in the Arctic food chain, impacts from deforestation and impacts from terrestrial oil and gas development;
 - iv) priorities for conserving Arctic flora and fauna, including the designation of a representative system of parks and protected areas;
3. CALLS UPON IUCN members to mobilize resources to help implement this Resolution.

Note. This Resolution was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State member Norway indicated that had there been a vote the delegation would have abstained.

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