

1.10 IUCN's Work in the Mediterranean

CONSIDERING that over the next thirty years human pressure on the Mediterranean and its perimeter will steadily increase, whatever policies are adopted by coastal States, because of the increase in the occupation and use of coastal areas with consequent severe ecological impacts;

AWARE of steadily growing pressure on the marine, coastal and insular ecosystems of this almost closed sea, which represents a world asset of biological, aesthetic and cultural diversity of such importance that collective action is required to preserve its essential components while ensuring its sustainable development;

RECOGNIZING the disastrous effects of the increasing pollution of the Mediterranean through discharges from adjacent catchments, coastal settlements, industry and other activities;

RECOGNIZING that in the Mediterranean coastal regions are a priority because of their great ecological, economic and social importance;

CONSIDERING the importance of the islands in the Mediterranean and the need to establish a network of cooperation among island communities;

ALSO CONSIDERING the extreme fragility of the numerous small islands in the Mediterranean and the urgent attention which needs to be paid to their conservation;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the importance of the terrestrial biological diversity in areas with a Mediterranean climate is generally underestimated;

GIVEN that the initiatives undertaken by the Mediterranean Action Plan Office in Athens, pursuant to the Barcelona Convention's Mediterranean Action Plan, and the new opportunities available through the adoption of a broader protocol on the protection of biological diversity implemented by the Tunis Centre (especially the creation of Specially Protected Areas Important to the Mediterranean), must be reinforced and better taken into account by political decision-makers at all levels;

CONVINCED that the situation in the Mediterranean requires a response from IUCN that meets expectations, and concerned by the limited effectiveness of the measures taken to date by the Union;

RECALLING Recommendation 19.17 introduced by the Spanish delegation at the 19th Session of the IUCN General Assembly advocating the establishment of a new operational region and IUCN office for the Mediterranean;

ALSO RECALLING the recommendations of the working group entrusted with defining IUCN's role in the Mediterranean, showing that IUCN's strengths and weaknesses are characterized in particular by the division of the area into four statutory regions, whereas in fact the Mediterranean is a single biogeographical zone;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to implement, within the IUCN Programme, the recommendations of the 19th Session of the General Assembly and the working group entrusted with defining IUCN's role in the Mediterranean, in particular with respect to island biodiversity, the conservation of Mediterranean coastal systems, the impact of tourism, the sustainable use of marine and terrestrial species, the protection of wetlands and water resources;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, within six months, to implement the Programme by means that meet the needs identified by the working group, and specifically:
 - a) to establish a network of Mediterranean members;
 - b) to secure coordination and liaison among the members;
 - c) to assess the costs involved and continue raising funds;

3. REQUESTS the Director General, within the limits of the available resources and those which Spain has indicated it would be willing to provide for this purpose:
 - a) to establish an IUCN Office in the region while considering:
 - i) member support and interest;
 - ii) the adequacy of liaison structures;
 - iii) funding, specially the offer from Spain;
 - iv) estimated costs;
 - b) to assign the following responsibilities and activities to IUCN's Mediterranean Office:
 - i) to be present at all levels;
 - ii) to establish networks and ensure communication between the field, the policy level and relevant actors;
 - iii) not to interfere in areas where members are in the best position to take actions, unless value can be added;
 - iv) to implement the Programme which must be led and evaluated by members;
 - v) in its actions, to take advantage of the unique composition of IUCN's membership (NGOs, government agencies, States);
4. RECOMMENDS that the Director General promote measures to implement the Programme set out by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Action Plan;
5. RECOMMENDS that the Director General ensure that the activities of regional programmes and the Mediterranean Programme complement each other.

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