

## 1.49 Indigenous Peoples and IUCN

RECALLING that indigenous peoples of the world total approximately 300 million people and that they mainly inhabit the areas rich in biodiversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the present biodiversity in the regions inhabited by indigenous peoples has been maintained by those peoples through management that was generally wise and sustainable, and that ensured sources of food and other basic resources for the survival of indigenous peoples;

RECALLING that nature constitutes an important part of the societies, cultures and history of indigenous peoples;

RECALLING that indigenous peoples continue to claim the control of their lands or territories and the right to use their natural resources in accordance with their own cultures and development processes;

RECALLING that many conservation initiatives in the world have been established over the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their consent;

CONCERNED that some conservation policies on biodiversity do not give enough consideration to the rights and interests of indigenous peoples;

ACKNOWLEDGING that IUCN is making a considerable effort to include the interests of indigenous peoples in its initiatives;

CONSCIOUS of the need to increase and consolidate the institutional space and financial resources to guarantee the participation of indigenous peoples in the conservation initiatives and the development of policies within IUCN;

CONVINCED that the participation of indigenous peoples in conservation initiatives, in their lands or territories, either through joint activities, or exclusively by themselves, is a necessary condition to consolidate and advance towards the achievement of the conservation and management of biodiversity;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ILO Convention No 169 and the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the role of indigenous peoples in the management, use and conservation of biodiversity, recommendations and guidelines established in Agenda 21, and the principles proposed in the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the UN General Assembly in 1994 proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, calling for the establishment of a "New Partnership" with indigenous peoples;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that *Caring for the Earth* highlights the role of indigenous peoples in relation with sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity, as well as their rights in the management of natural resources;

RECALLING the Resolutions from the 18th Session of the IUCN General Assembly and Resolutions and Recommendations 19.20, 19.21, 19.22, 19.23 and others from the 19th Session, which referred to indigenous peoples and conservation of biodiversity and natural resource management;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General to consider the following measures:
  - a) to ensure a greater participation of indigenous peoples in IUCN conservation initiatives and policy development;
  - b) to recommend that IUCN Regional and Country Offices establish institutional mechanisms to enable indigenous peoples to participate in regional programmes;
  - c) to recommend that IUCN Commissions facilitate the participation of indigenous peoples in their activities;
  - d) to obtain as much as possible of the funds necessary to continue supporting the processes initiated at regional level, for example, in the Southern Africa Region with the Network on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (SARNIKS); in Meso-America with the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas; in the

Amazon with the agreement with the Confederation of Organizations of Indigenous Peoples from the Amazon Basin (COICA) for the development of conservation policies in the Amazon in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples; and in other regions where there is an interest to develop activities;

2. CALLS UPON IUCN members to:
  - a) facilitate effective participation of indigenous peoples in their programmes;
  - b) consider the adoption and implementation of the objectives of ILO Convention No 169 and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and comply with the spirit of the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as adopt policies, programmes and laws which implement Chapter 26 of Agenda 21;
  - c) promote and support the objectives of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

*Note. This Resolution was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained. In the case of New Zealand, this was because their country had not adopted or ratified ILO Convention 169 because of the special position accorded to the Maori people by the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840. In the case of the United States, it was considered the Resolution used the term "indigenous peoples" without clarifying its implications with regard to the right of self-determination and the right to sovereignty over natural resources, and that this usage does not correspond with that used in many international instruments and fora. The delegation of the State member India dissociated itself from this Resolution because the Government of India does not recognize indigenous peoples as distinct from other social groups.*

*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.*