

1.54 Indigenous Peoples and Conservation in Meso-America

RECOGNIZING that the indigenous peoples of Meso-America have played an important role in maintaining biological diversity in the region;

BEARING IN MIND that the greatest concentration of biological diversity in the region coincides with the areas inhabited by indigenous peoples;

AWARE that despite their age-old skill in the management and use of natural resources the indigenous peoples of the region have not been invited to participate in national conservation strategies;

CONSIDERING the terms of ILO Convention No 169 and the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, regarding the rights of indigenous peoples with respect to the management, use and conservation of biodiversity;

CONSIDERING the recommendations and guidelines established in Agenda 21;

CONSIDERING the principles established in the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

CONSIDERING the emphasis placed in *Caring for the Earth* on the role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development and their rights in the management of natural resources;

MINDFUL of the recommendations of the 18th Session of the IUCN General Assembly, and Resolutions and Recommendations 19.20, 19.21, 19.22, 19.23 and others of the 19th Session that refer to indigenous peoples, specifically Resolution 19.19 on Support for the Implementation of *Caring for the Earth* in the Meso-American Region;

RECALLING that in its initiative on indigenous peoples and conservation IUCN supported the establishment of the Meso-American Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas;

CONCERNED that most conservation actions at the regional level fail to consider the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples regarding natural resources;

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

REQUESTS the Director General, the Secretariat and technical programmes, Commissions, members and Councillors of IUCN, within available resources, to endorse, support, participate in and advocate the development of a clear policy in favour of protected areas based on the following principles:

- a) recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples taking into account the terms of ILO Convention No 169, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the principles proposed in the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- b) recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to make use of natural resources on their lands or territories in an equitable and ecologically sustainable way;
- c) support for the development and consolidation of the Meso-American component of the Indigenous Peoples and Conservation Initiative;
- d) the establishment of mechanisms for effective participation by indigenous peoples in the identification, design, planning, implementation and monitoring of conservation initiatives in the region;
- e) support for the implementation by indigenous peoples of management and regional development plans on their territories.

Note. This Resolution was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained, in the case of New Zealand and the United States for the reasons given under Resolution 1.49. The

delegation of the State member India dissociated itself from this Resolution for the reasons given under Resolution 1.49.

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.