

1.99 Forests of Oceania

ACKNOWLEDGING the exceptional biodiversity of the forests in the Oceania region, in particular the megadiverse rainforests, and the importance of these forest resources to the livelihoods of local communities;

CONCERNED at the destruction of the forests of Oceania and the continuing threats to their future, which appear to be the result of short-term economic benefits overwhelming consideration of the long-term benefits of protection and the importance of sustainable forest management;

NOTING the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly Article 10 on sustainable use of the components of biological diversity;

RECALLING Resolutions and Recommendations 18.30, 18.31, 18.32 and 19.43 adopted by the 18th and 19th Sessions of the General Assembly;

AWARE of the South Pacific Forum held in 1994 and the Agreement by the Prime Ministers of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to work towards a common code of conduct governing logging and of the need to increase urgently the monitoring of logging and of the export of timber;

MINDFUL of the potential for addressing the problem by implementation of the Action Strategy for the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific;

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

1. EXPRESSES concern at the rate of destruction of the forests, and particularly the rainforests of Oceania, with resultant loss of biodiversity, ecological sustainability of forest use and economic sustainability of local communities;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources:
 - a) to include the issue of forest conservation in Oceania within the IUCN Programme as a matter of urgency;
 - b) in conjunction with IUCN's partners, to:
 - i) communicate the urgency of this matter to governments in the region, and to donor countries and agencies;
 - ii) support IUCN's Memorandum of Understanding with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme to facilitate the implementation of the Action Strategy for the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific;
 - iii) support and assist local forest owners and users to conserve biodiversity, to use forests in an ecologically and economically sustainable manner (including non-timber use), and to reforest degraded areas with indigenous species;
 - c) report progress to members in the region no later than twelve months after this Congress.

Note. This Resolution was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State members Australia, Sweden and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained. The delegation of the State member Germany indicated that it had not participated in discussion of the Resolution nor would it have participated in any voting.