

2.84 Unexploded ordnance contamination in sites of United States military activities in the Republic of Panama

AWARE that the presence of the United States in Panamanian territory during the 20th century left a worrisome environmental legacy that includes unexploded ordnance, chemical weapons, toxic wastes, and other very serious sources of pollution in Panamanian territory;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the traditional friendship and cooperation between the peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of Panama have been effective sources of peaceful conflict-resolution between those two countries;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that the Panama Canal and the contiguous areas have rendered a priceless service to the international community, especially in the promotion of peace and cooperation, international trade, and friendship between nations;

ASSERTING that legal, moral, political, diplomatic, economic, technological, and ethical obligations exist to clean up and mitigate the environmental impact of the affected ecosystems in the Republic of Panama, as stated by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997, the various human rights Covenants adopted by the United Nations, and the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977; and

NOTING that the 5th Mesoamerican Forum, held in Guatemala City (3–7 October 1999), adopted a comparable motion;

The World Conservation Congress at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan, 4–11 October 2000:

1. ENCOURAGES the Governments of Panama and the United States to negotiate in a friendly and conscientious manner the environmental restoration of the damaged and polluted ecosystems in the Republic of Panama resulting from military wastes and activities;
2. CALLS ON IUCN's organizational and State members to provide technological assistance and human resources to facilitate the negotiations and clean-up efforts required to restore the affected ecosystems to an acceptable state.

This Recommendation was adopted by a show of hands. The delegations of the State members Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and Panama, and State and Agency members United States abstained from adoption of this Recommendation. The delegation of the United States made a formal Statement for the Record noting that the US agreed with Panama that reducing the risk of injury or loss of life should be the focus of efforts to manage the former US military range lands in Panama and that the US and Panama had made progress toward agreement on this issue and were continuing to work together through diplomatic channels to bring the matter to resolution.