

2.85 Conservation of Middle and Lower Parana River

RECALLING that, with an area of 3.1 million square kilometres, the basin of the Rio de la Plata is the second largest river basin in South America and fourth largest in the world, and that this area includes the whole of Paraguay, together with considerable parts of Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay, including the largest wetland corridor in the world, from the Pantanal in Mato Grosso to Rio de la Plata;

CONSIDERING that the main river of this basin is the Parana and the most important floodplain is that which develops in the Middle and Lower Parana, where riverine wetlands are characterized by seasonal inundation each year;

RECOGNIZING that this floodplain and its wetlands provide fundamental resources (which exceed the regional needs in many cases), such as fresh water, fisheries, tourism and recreation, thus fulfilling essential functions for the development and well-being of riverside villages;

AWARE that the consequences of intensive human activities in the basin (e.g. expansion of the agricultural frontier, infrastructure works, urban development, pollution, inadequate resource management) threaten maintenance of the essential ecological conditions of the area;

NOTING that these impacts are determining factors in the gradual decline in populations of many aquatic species and increased environmental and social insecurity;

CONSIDERING that this region is a case in which the coordinated work of all the involved actors is needed in applying the wise use principle and international cooperation framework established by the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) nearly 30 years ago; and

NOTING that the wise use principle is based on collaboration, exchange of information, and full participation of all sectors (e.g. management organizations, research institutions, NGOs, local community organizations);

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

1. RECOMMENDS that:

- (a) the members of IUCN recognize and support the initiatives of the countries of the Rio de la Plata Basin to promote the conservation and sustainable development of the region; and
- (b) the Government of Argentina grants the highest priority to the implementation of conservation and wise use measures to maintain the essential ecological conditions and processes of the Middle and Lower Parana Rivers;

2. URGES all IUCN members to support the Government of Argentina in this task;

3. CALLS ON all international organizations, including multilateral development assistance agencies, to support the Government of Argentina in the implementation of protection and conservation policies covering the Middle Parana River.

This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. State and Agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this Motion and took no national government position on the Recommendation as adopted, for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process (see p. 76).