

2.95 Drought and flood mitigation strategies

RECALLING that the 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio called on all countries to develop and put in place effective National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD) by the year 2002;

NOTING that these strategy documents can play a pivotal role not only in addressing the on-going problems of environmental degradation but also in anticipating future problems and catastrophes and, in so doing, help to incorporate preventative measures that either reduce the risk or frequency of occurrence;

RECOGNIZING that the increase in irregular climatic changes often ascribed to the El Niño or La Niña effect is something that is likely to further perpetuate incidents of natural disasters such as droughts and floods;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the frequency and severity of these disasters, unless checked, will only serve to undermine sustainable development initiatives;

NOTING that the effect of the present drought in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and many parts of Africa on human and animal life, vegetation, and local ecological systems is just one illustration of the devastation that can occur;

FURTHER NOTING that the same is true for the recent floods in Mozambique, parts of China, and South America;

ACKNOWLEDGING that strategies that promote proactive approaches to prevent or expedite responses to problems can significantly reduce the size and the severity of a disaster;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that it is reasonable to assume that had such strategies existed, particularly in the countries affected by drought and floods, much of the devastation being witnessed could have been significantly minimized; and

NOTING that it would be both logical and appropriate for national strategy documents to take cognizance of the potential threats of droughts and floods and include strategies that could help to combat the devastating effects of droughts and floods where possible;

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

1. CALLS ON all IUCN State members, especially those prone to incidents of drought or floods to develop, incorporate, and implement specific strategies aimed at reducing the social and ecological degradation resulting from droughts and floods as part of their national strategies for sustainable development;
2. URGES IUCN State members to adopt a participatory approach for the development, articulation, and implementation of such strategies, whereby men and women from different tiers of society and public and private institutions and citizen groups are encouraged to actively contribute to this process;

3. REQUESTS the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), that has been entrusted with the development of guidelines for national strategies for sustainable development, to refine, revise, and/or develop additional guidelines that help member States to incorporate the essence of this Recommendation in their respective National Strategies for Sustainable Development;
4. ASKS IUCN to work with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the OECD to lobby for the establishment of a rapid reaction fund and force to handle drought and flood catastrophes.

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).