

REC 3.114 Conservation of dugong *Dugong dugon*, Okinawa woodpecker *Sapheopipo noguchii*, and Okinawa rail *Gallirallus okinawae* in Japan

RECOGNIZING that only a small, isolated population of dugongs are present in Japan, that these inhabit exclusively a limited habitat around Okinawa Island, and that the Okinawa woodpecker and Okinawa rail are endemic land birds with small populations confined to the Yambaru woodland of Okinawa Island;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that all three species are classified as endangered¹ by Japanese authorities: dugong – Critically Endangered (CR) according to the Mammalogical Society of Japan, 1997, Okinawa woodpecker – Critically Endangered according to the Ministry of Environment, Japan, 2002, and Okinawa rail – Endangered according to the Ministry of Environment, Japan, 2002;

CONCERNED that growing threats may accelerate the extinction of these three species – for the dugong, plans for constructing a joint United States military/Japanese civilian airport on landfill in one of their critical habitats, together with entanglement in fishing nets; for the Okinawa woodpecker and Okinawa rail, plans for constructing seven United States military helipads and connecting roads in their habitat area together with predation by introduced mongoose and feral cats;

RECALLING Recommendation 2.72 *Conservation of Dugong (Dugong dugon), Okinawa Woodpecker (Sapheopipo noguchii) and Okinawa Rail (Gallirallus okinawae)* adopted at the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000), which urged completion of an environmental impact assessment of construction of the United States Marine Corps facility and of military exercises, and implementation of appropriate measures to ensure the survival of these three species; and

WELCOMING that the Government of Japan has conducted surveys for the conservation of, and has taken some measures for the rescue of, the dugong, Okinawa woodpecker and Okinawa rail, and has decided to make utmost efforts to avoid substantial impact on the natural environment in construction of the joint military/civilian airport and US military helipads and roads in their habitat;

NOTING that the Government of Japan has started the environmental impact assessment in accordance with Japanese law; and

ALSO NOTING the warning of extinction in the report *Dugong Status Report and Action Plans for Countries and Territories* published in 2002 by the United Nations Environment Programme/Department of Early Warning and Assessment (UNEP/DEWA);

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. URGES the Government of Japan to:

(a) in conducting the environmental impact assessment for the joint military/civilian airport planned in dugong habitat, consider several alternatives including a zero option, and also include pre-construction activities such as underwater drilling and seismic reflection surveys as items to be assessed;

¹ Based on IUCN Species Survival Commission *Red List* categories and criteria for assessing status of species.

(b) undertake an environmental impact assessment that considers several alternatives including a zero option for the construction of United States military helipads and roads in the habitat of the Okinawa woodpecker and Okinawa rail; and

(c) immediately establish protected areas and draw up action plans for the conservation of the dugong, the Okinawa woodpecker and the Okinawa rail; and

2. URGES the Government of the United States of America to:

(a) confer with the Government of Japan with a view to protecting the environment and conserving species in relation to the construction of United States military facilities in the habitat of endangered species in Okinawa, based on US military environmental management standards; and

(b) cooperate, if requested, in the environmental impact assessments carried out by the Government of Japan for military base site construction.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, provided the following statement for the record:

The Government of Japan has been taking active measures for the conservation of natural environment in the areas referred to in this Recommendation.

The Government of Japan has decided that, with regard to construction of a Futenma relocation Facility (referred to in the text as “a joint United States military/Japanese civilian airport”) and the relocation of Helicopter Landing Zone in Northern Training Area (referred to in the text as “seven United States military helipads”), the Government will make efforts for minimizing negative impact on the natural environment, while having in mind the important function which US facilities/areas in Okinawa are performing. The Government is now working for relocation of Futenma Airport from the present populated area, with a view to relieving the uneasiness in the neighbouring communities as soon as possible.

The Government of Japan has decided that it will make the utmost efforts to prevent substantial impact on the natural environment in construction of these facilities. And the Government is now conducting environment impact assessment in accordance with, or in line with domestic laws and regulation on environment impact assessments, and will continue to do so regardless of whether a new recommendation before us is adopted or not.

Moreover, in order to avoid serious impact on the environment in conducting underwater drilling and seismic reflection surveys, the Government of Japan is taking measures for the environment protection, although such measures are not required by the Environmental Impact Assessment Law.

The Government of Japan and the sponsors of the recommendation had intensive consultations in the Contact Group to find compromised languages for the recommendation, and I personally thank the sponsors for showing to us a spirit of cooperation. My thanks also go to the skilful guidance by facilitators from IUCN at the Contact Group. But unfortunately, we could not come to an agreement on the languages for the recommendation. Therefore, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, as State member of IUCN will abstain from voting for the present draft recommendation.

The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record:

Considering the intent of this Recommendation, concerning the conservation of the Dugong, the Okinawa Rail and the Okinawa Woodpecker, the United States supports efforts to conserve these and other endangered and threatened species. We respect and share the concern the sponsors of this motion have shown for the continued survival of these three species.

We remain committed to a comprehensive and transparent environmental impact assessment on the proposed Futenma relocation. We are prepared to cooperate in an environmental impact assessment for the area in question conducted by the Government of Japan, if requested by the Government of Japan.

The United States has committed publicly to making all efforts to protect the environment in Japan, consistent with relevant laws and regulations. In the course of these efforts, we welcome dialogue with those concerned.

State and agency members United States abstained during the vote on this motion.

Save the Dugong Campaign, Okinawa, provided the following statement for the record:

Japanese Environmental Impact Assessment Laws do not require a zero option. In other words, the Government has not included the option to cancel these projects if it finds that these projects cause unreasonable environmental damage. As the Government has not included related underwater drilling and seismic reflection surveys, drilling is now taking place at 63 sites on the coral reef without any assessment. We urge the Japanese Government to include a zero option, and the related surveys in its EIA. We also urge the US Government to recognize its responsibilities and to cooperate in the process of EIA.

Responding to this statement, the Ministry of Environment, Japan, noted that:

'Zero Option' can be required based on the results of EIA, according to the Japanese domestic EIA laws.