

RES 3.015 Conserving nature and reducing poverty by linking human rights and the environment

RECALLING that Principle 1 of the *Stockholm Declaration (Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972)* recognizes “man’s fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being”; and Principle 1 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) which proclaims that human beings are “[e]ntitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature”;

FURTHER RECALLING Resolution 2.36 *Poverty reduction and conservation of environment* adopted by the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000), through which IUCN and its members adopted the policy of simultaneously addressing poverty reduction and environmental rehabilitation;

CONSCIOUS that the *Millennium Development Goals*, including the goal to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the health-related goals, and the goal to ensure environmental sustainability, can be achieved by affirming human rights;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT paragraph 138 of the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* that identifies respect for human rights as essential for sustainable development;

NOTING that economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights that are embodied in internationally-binding legal instruments and internationally guaranteed as human rights are essential to combat poverty;

CONVINCED that steps to reduce poverty and protect health must be taken in conjunction with environmental conservation using a human rights approach;

RECOGNIZING that public access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice, highlighted in Principle 10 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, are essential human rights that can ensure greater participation, empowerment, and accountability of all persons, and comprehensive solutions to poverty and environmental degradation;

ACKNOWLEDGING the progress made in implementing Principle 10 by the adoption of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus, 1998);

NOTING Decision 2004/119 *Science and Environment* of the 60th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (Geneva, 2004);

MINDFUL that IUCN’s Mission aims to ensure that “any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”; and aware that social equity cannot be achieved without the promotion, protection and guarantee of human rights;

AWARE that during the 2003 IUCN Mesoamerican Committee meeting, held in El Zamorano, Honduras, a resolution was adopted recognizing the links between human rights and the environment and urging that the resolution be submitted to the present Congress for adoption;

WELCOMING the identification of human rights issues as cross-cutting themes within the IUCN Environmental Law Programme’s Component Programme Plan for 2005–2008;

FURTHER WELCOMING the mandate of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) for 2005–2008, which includes as one of its objectives “engaging its legal and policy expertise to

innovate and promote new or reformed ethical and legal concepts and instruments that conserve nature and natural resources and reform patterns of unsustainable development”; and

ADDITIONALLY RECOGNIZING that the CEL has established an Environmental Law and Human Rights Specialist Group;

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

1. DECIDES that IUCN should consider human rights aspects of poverty and the environment in the context of its overall mission, under the leadership of the IUCN Director General;
2. FURTHER DECIDES to assess the implications of the use of human rights-related legal resources and actions to protect the environment and the rights of those who defend it, especially through existing international human-rights protection systems;
3. ENCOURAGES IUCN’s State members, in cooperation with its non-governmental members, to analyse legislation in the field of human rights and the environment in their respective countries and regions with the aim of providing effective access to justice in the event of the violation of those human rights;
4. REQUESTS the CEL to provide additional legal research, analysis and resources, and contribute to building the capacity of members in the enforcement of environmental laws, in close collaboration with IUCN members; and
5. FURTHER REQUESTS the CEL to provide a progress report to future World Conservation Congresses summarizing legal developments in human rights law and litigation that are pertinent to IUCN’s Mission, with an emphasis on human-rights tools that may be used by IUCN and its members in pursuit of the Mission.

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

State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.