RES 3.016 On the role of conservation organizations in poverty reduction and development

AFFIRMING that poverty reduction and the conservation of the world's natural resources are inextricably linked as moral mandates for all humanity, and that conservationists must continue to strive for increased responsiveness to the concerns of the poor who live in and around areas of significance to conservation;

FURTHER AFFIRMING, as stated in Recommendation V.29 *Poverty and Protected Areas* noted by the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress – WPC (Durban, 2003), that "protected areas play a vital role in sustainable development through protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources", and that "protected areas cannot be viewed as islands of conservation, divorced from the social and economic context within which they are located";

RECOGNIZING that, wherever possible, sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation should be pursued jointly, while being aware that this may at times involve trade-offs between conservation and poverty-reduction objectives;

UNDERSTANDING that economic growth and development initiatives on their own have failed to reduce global poverty through the equitable distribution of assets and gains from economic growth, and that conservationists have little scope for broadly redressing these deficiencies on their own;

NOTING WITH CONCERN a shift in bilateral and multilateral donor interest, concomitant with shifts in the interests of governments, away from biodiversity conservation programmes and objectives, a decreasing emphasis towards biodiversity values in development planning, and an unwarranted confidence that development programmes automatically result in sustainable solutions without specific conservation activities being necessary;

CONSCIOUS of the fact that the costs of conservation losses are borne disproportionately by the rural poor who are targeted by global poverty-reduction programmes;

EMPHASIZING that successful development and environmental conservation are inextricably linked, and that ethically the international community needs to find alternative options to those that deplete these resources and deny their benefits to future generations; and

ALARMED that without reshaping poverty-reduction strategies to include equal concern for conservation, global biodiversity will continue to pay an unsustainable tax for growth, which will lead to global conservation loss and extinction;

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

1. URGES IUCN members to:

(a) understand that the poorest populations on earth depend on continued natural resource conservation, and that the failure of conservation will burden the poorest irremediably;

(b) reinvigorate efforts in bilateral and multilateral assistance agencies to incorporate biodiversity conservation priorities in development projects and to improve coordination between development and biodiversity conservation;

(c) remind national development assistance agencies and other key players that sustainability is based on the premise that protected areas, which are integral to biodiversity conservation, can be key components of rural poverty reduction; and

(d) remind all key players that, as stated in WPC Recommendation V.29, "protected areas should strive to contribute to poverty reduction at the local level, and at the very minimum must not contribute to or exacerbate poverty"; and

2. URGES the Director General to build partnerships with development agencies and other key actors, and to reaffirm the core conservation mission and values of IUCN, recognizing that poverty reduction is often closely linked to them.

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.