RES 3.031 Cherishing volunteers

NOTING that IUCN's Statutes expect its Commissions to be networks of expert volunteers entrusted to develop and advance the institutional knowledge, experience and objectives of the Union;

APPLAUDING the fact that, largely through the Commissions, volunteers have made a unique, distinguished and dedicated contribution to the achievement of IUCN's mission and the enhancement of its reputation with a wide range of partners;

ACKNOWLEDGING that, while electronic media facilitate exchanges of material within expert networks, they add to the time pressures faced by volunteers in a situation where academic and other funding arrangements allow little scope for non-contracted work;

RECOGNIZING that lack of funding also constrains the ability of volunteers to attend face-to-face meetings, which remain vital for building confidence and reaching consensus on difficult issues;

ACCEPTING the generally recognized principle that while volunteers agree to donate some of their time to IUCN, they should not personally incur out-of-pocket expenses as a result of their voluntary activity, over and above the time they donate, unless they so choose;

WELCOMING with appreciation the valuable collection and analysis of information contained in the 2001 Species Survival Commission (SSC) report on voluntarism (*Voluntarism in the Species Survival Commission*), which demonstrates both positive and negative experiences of volunteers and staff under existing arrangements; and

BELIEVING that significant unrealized potential for IUCN's work could be harnessed by an overhaul of the way that it uses and manages the goodwill and expertise available to it through both Commission members and other volunteers;

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

1. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General, in consultation with Commission Chairs to design and implement a 'Volunteer Initiative' which will:

(a) add value to IUCN's delivery of its Mission and Intersessional Programme;

(b) integrate the expertise and commitment of volunteers into its operational structures more effectively; and

(c) increase the professionalism and efficiency of interactions between employed staff and consultants on the one hand and volunteers on the other;

2. FURTHER REQUESTS that those undertaking the 'Volunteer Initiative' take into account the recommendations of the SSC report *Voluntarism in the Species Survival Commission*, to:

(a) develop basic criteria for recognizing the various types of voluntary involvement such as Commission experts, office and administrative assistants, and interns;

(b) set out in a signed, standard document, for each recognized volunteer, a statement that their contribution will be valued, what IUCN expects of them, and what it will do for them;

(c) enhance direct communication with Commission members by mail or e-mail to ensure that at least once a year they are informed about, and therefore feel part of, the wider IUCN community;

(d) promote the use of assessments by expert groups as an input to decision-making at all levels of IUCN, including the participation of such experts in IUCN teams at appropriate meetings;

(e) assist expert groups to network with other groups and organizations, to produce maximum synergy and to avoid resource-wasting duplication of effort;

(f) seek funding for Commission or *ad hoc* expert networks, especially their chairs, to function effectively, on the condition that such networks contribute timely and defined outputs within IUCN's programmes;

(g) arrange capacity building for and by volunteers as needed, not least in data management, communication and presentation of expert findings; and

(h) foster regular transparent audits of the scientific capacity and integrity of Commission networks along with measures to increase their national and international reputation.

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

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