

RES 3.046 Conservation in regions in violent conflict of West Asia – strengthening IUCN’s presence to protect the natural and human environment

NOTING with concern the detrimental impacts of war and violent conflict on natural and human environments;

TAKING into account in particular the use of internationally banned weapons and radioactive material such as depleted uranium, and the erection of segregating walls;

ALARMED at the continued violence, disastrous environmental impacts and loss of human life in West Asia;

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the resulting degradation of land and biodiversity in the region, including globally significant wetland areas and some of the richest sources of world agro-biodiversity, and its severe impacts on the food sovereignty and food security of the people;

AWARE that conflict-related activities (destruction of homes, infrastructure, habitats, forests and agricultural lands and pollution of water) have equally detrimental impacts on ecosystems, including soil, water and biota and seriously compromise the livelihoods and welfare of present and future generations;

RECOGNIZING that socio-economic and political stability are necessary for ensuring environmental security and ecological integrity in the region;

AFFIRMING that only just peace processes lead to opportunities to protect the environment and human life in the region;

RECALLING Principles 23, 24 and 25 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992);

REMINDING of Recommendation 2.98 *To secure the environment of Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Jerusalem* adopted by the 2nd World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000); and

CONSIDERING that the Vision of IUCN is to create “A just world that values and conserves nature”, and that this Vision includes peace and respect for human rights; and

TAKING into account the Observer Status of IUCN within the United Nations;

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

1. REQUESTS the IUCN Director General, in collaboration with relevant IUCN Commissions, members and other partners, to strengthen the influence and activities of the Union in war-torn West Asia through:

(a) arranging a comprehensive and participatory assessment of the environmental impacts of violent conflicts in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, within available resources and the prevailing security situation;

(b) highlighting and disseminating information concerning the consequences of conflicts and occupation on biodiversity, natural resources and sustainable livelihoods in the region, with particular reference to the segregating wall in Palestine, declared as illegal according to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice;

- (c) promoting capacity-building for official conservation agencies and non-governmental organizations, and developing field programmes for the restoration of biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods in the region, in collaboration with interested members and other partners;
- (d) convening relevant actors at local, national, regional and international levels to develop and implement solutions to the problems of transboundary ecosystems in the region;
- (e) appealing to the international community to prevent further deterioration of biodiversity and natural heritage in the region; and
- (f) collaborating with the United Nations and other international organizations to promote respect for human life and environmental principles and to ensure the protection of livelihoods, life-supporting ecosystems and biodiversity consistent with international law; and

2. CALLS UPON donors, specifically those focusing on West Asia, to provide financial support for the above activities as well as for other environmental restoration programmes in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x).

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

The United States believes that the World Conservation Congress should not consider this resolution. Whereas the resolution contains some useful elements related to some very real conservation needs, these elements are unfortunately lost in political rhetoric that is outside the mandate of IUCN. State and agency members United States voted against this motion.