

RES 3.006 Protecting the Earth's waters for public and ecological benefit

RECOGNIZING that water is fundamental for life and a finite natural resource which belongs to the earth and all species for all time;

AWARE that readily available freshwater represents less than one-half of one percent of the world's total water stock;

CONCERNED that many countries currently face severe water shortages;

ALARMED that unsustainable practices lead to depletion of aquifers, falling water tables, and pollution of ground and surface water;

RECOGNIZING the assertion of customary rights by indigenous and local communities over the management of their water resources; and

TROUBLED, however, that some indigenous and local communities have had the waters on which they depend polluted and exploited;

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

CALLS ON the IUCN Director General and the governmental and non-governmental members of IUCN to promote actions consistent with the following principles:

- (a) all water resources, including the oceans, must be protected as a public trust so that use of water does not diminish their public or ecological benefits;
- (b) as access to clean, sufficient and affordable drinking water is necessary for human health and survival, government policies and international agencies should ensure access to safe and adequate quantities of water resources for all people and wildlife on the planet and ensure the sustainability of these resources;
- (c) all members of society, including local civil society organizations, citizens' associations, environmental groups, indigenous and local communities, farmers, women, workers and others, should be afforded the opportunity for meaningful participation in decisions about the conservation, protection, distribution, use, and management of water in their communities, localities, and regions;
- (d) an ecosystem approach must be central to national and transboundary governance structures related to water resource management; and
- (e) governments should ensure that multilateral, regional or bilateral trade and investment agreements preserve the ability of governments to protect water for people and nature.

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.