

4.125 Protection of the peatlands of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that Tierra del Fuego possesses the most southerly concentration of peatlands in the world, bringing together species, associations of species and types that do not exist in any other place, and that they have been recognized by experts of the International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG) as unique in the world due to their diversity and abundance;

CONSIDERING that peatlands fulfil fundamental functions for hydrology and in the regulation of local, regional and global climate, and constitute geochemical archives and paleoarchives, with the capacity to capture carbon and conserve it for extensive periods;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that peatlands function as paleoclimatic records of up to sixteen thousand years, evidence of the enormous importance that their conservation for scientific purposes has for the international community in the face of the extremely serious problems of global warming and climate change;

OBSERVING the broad expanse of pristine peatlands in Tierra del Fuego, their imposing landscape and the importance that the local community places on them in social, cultural, environmental and economic spheres, and that their protection is indispensable for present and future generations;

NOTING that peatlands are wetlands specifically protected by the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as a Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971), and as such there is good reason to move ahead with their protection within the framework of other important international agreements such as those on climate change and biodiversity;

AWARE that the lack of environmental regulation of land use in the Province of Tierra del Fuego, that could establish peatland protected areas and other areas designated for the sustainable use of peatlands, prevents appropriate peatland preservation; and

CONSIDERING that a local declaration, elaborated in a participatory manner, has promoted the updating of peatland inventory, regulation, and the designation of areas for peatland conservation through a specific law, and the definition through regulations of the sustainable use aspects of such a law;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:

1. REQUESTS the Government of Argentina and national and international organizations to support the Province of Tierra del Fuego in actions aimed at protecting local peatlands;
2. URGES civil society, scientific and educational institutions, and all sectors with an interest in the protection and sustainable use of peatlands to participate actively in the environmental regulatory process for the territory and in defining guidelines that make possible their sustainable use; and
3. REQUESTS the Government of the Province of Tierra del Fuego to define environmental legislation for peatlands, which establishes specific areas for protection, and which consolidates this protection through the participatory formulation of the necessary regulations.

State and agency members of the 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 U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.