

4.133 World appeal to prevent the loss of Lake Chapala and Lake Cocibolca, the largest wetlands in Mesoamerica

RECALLING that wetlands are indispensable sites for the conservation of biodiversity and fundamental to the development and the flowering of cultures;

CONCERNED because the two largest wetlands of Mesoamerica, Lake Chapala in Mexico and Lake Cocibolca in Nicaragua, are threatened in their entirety by continual extraction for various purposes and by the input of various pollutants, affecting the health of the ecosystem;

EMPHASIZING the importance that these two lacustrine systems have, not only in terms of fishing and food for the various human and wildlife communities, but also because of a series of values connected with identity, biodiversity, recreation, artistic inspiration, peace and health, as well as the lakes' significance as sacred sites for indigenous peoples;

STRESSING that the loss of Lake Chapala and Lake Cocibolca signifies an irreparable loss of natural and cultural heritage for humanity, and a crisis with unpredictable consequences for Mesoamerica;

HIGHLIGHTING the fundamental role that conservation of these wetlands can play in the development of the Mesoamerican region and the potential importance of potable water in reducing uncertainties and future risks;

CONSIDERING the role of these wetlands in the mitigation of global climate change; and

RECOGNIZING the potential and the importance of the role of IUCN in the conservation and health of ecosystems in order to maintain communities of healthy people;

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

1. URGES the Governments and the citizens of Mexico and Nicaragua to consider the historic importance of stopping and reversing the deterioration of Lake Chapala and Lake Cocibolca as an obligation to humanity; and
2. CALLS ON the Governments of each country, together with the municipalities within these watersheds, to lead the planning and organizing efforts in their territories and to allocate human, technical and economic resources in order to:
 - (a) relieve the pressures and slow the driving forces that are degrading their watersheds;
 - (b) reverse processes of deterioration of these water bodies, thus restoring their lost functions;
 - (c) promote the use of technologies consistent with the rationale of sustainable development and building resilience; and
 - (d) develop educational programmes aimed at fostering appreciation for this resource in its multiple aspects.

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.