

#### 4.063 The new water culture - integrated water resources management

BEARING IN MIND that water is essential for life and for the functioning of our ecosystems;

CONSIDERING that water facilitates ecological relations in the natural world, and is essential for socioeconomic activities and for achieving sustainable development and its benefits;

OBSERVING that the growing demand for water to satisfy human requirements and those of the developmental model has put a great deal of pressure on our ecosystems and their services, and thus has also had an impact on the water supply;

CONSIDERING that water is a limited resource and should therefore be consumed sustainably, which is why its distribution should be decided on by consensus between the different users, in order to ensure the fulfilment of human needs for decent living conditions, as well as environmental flows as the fundamental basis for health and the proper functioning of ecosystems;

RECOGNIZING that in many regions water supply is insufficient to fulfil developmental needs or even to satisfy the basic requirements of human populations;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that water has become scarcer due to pollution caused by human activities, and this has led to a serious deterioration in the quality of water resources;

AWARE that many of the current forms of water use are unsustainable;

RECOGNIZING that research and the generation of knowledge on the ecosystems that produce and protect water, including their functioning, are essential for the conservation and management of water;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that ecologists and water administrators are trying to apply the Ecosystem Approach to water management, by taking a holistic view of the water cycle as the basis for sustainable water management and that the relations between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, including the role of water and its conservation, are fundamental to this approach;

OBSERVING that, in many countries, different levels of government, both nationally and sub-nationally, have failed to achieve proper coordination, collaboration and integration in the management of water resources; and

WELCOMING the fact that the international community has recognized in many fora and documents, the need to create a 'new water culture', which promotes the sustainable use of this resource and that, in order to achieve this, the concept of integrated water resources management (IWRM) was put forward, based on the above proposals;

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

1. URGES governments:
  - (a) that have not already done so, to keep their promise and adopt a strategy for the implementation of IWRM in line with the 2002 *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* and to support this process;
  - (b) to adopt measures to protect and conserve ecosystems that produce water, designating special protection areas and ensuring they are properly maintained;
  - (c) to create legal, policy and institutional frameworks that improve inter-jurisdictional coordination, collaboration and integration in order to enhance water governance and enable the achievement of sustainable water management;
  - (d) to incorporate IWRM's implicit concept of sustainability in their water regulations; and
  - (e) to design and implement economic instruments to promote the conservation of ecosystems that produce and protect water and to urge the sustainable use of the latter;

2. ENCOURAGES IUCN's members to adopt and promote the IWRM principles and concepts; and
3. ENCOURAGES governmental agencies to:
  - (a) adopt IWRM and include it in their planning processes and in the execution and management of their projects;
  - (b) inform civil society about the new water culture through environmental education programmes; and
  - (c) undertake and promote the restoration and reforestation of watersheds and deforested areas;

**In addition, the World Conservation Congress, at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the IUCN Programme 2009-2012:**

4. ASKS the Director General to:
  - (a) promote the adoption of IWRM, to ensure it is incorporated as one of the main criteria in IUCN's policies related to water and ecosystem conservation; and
  - (b) ensure that IUCN encourages and motivates companies in different sectors related to water, to incorporate IWRM in their plans and management.