

4.071 Forest fire recovery and national park protection

DISTRESSED that fires in forests adjacent to and in the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park in central Georgia (IUCN Category II; granted a WWF PAN parks certificate in 2006) on 15 August 2008, burned 1,000 hectares of conifer, mixed and sub-alpine forests, including the habitat of endangered species included in the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, such as endemic Caucasian Spruce *Picea orientalis*, Caucasian Squirrel *Sciurus anomalus*, Caucasian Salamander *Mertensiella caucasica*, Caucasian Viper *Vipera kaznakovi*, Western Barbastelle Bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, and other species;

GRATEFUL for the contribution by Turkey, beginning on 18 August 2008, of Turkish fire-fighting aircraft to assist in extinguishing these forest fires, materially helping the fire brigades of local authorities and national park staff in Georgia;

AWARE that the World Bank, on 21 August 2008, noted with grave concern the reports of forest fires in the Borjomi area and, as a longstanding international partner supporting improved environmental and forestry management throughout the South Caucasus region, encouraged the urgent arrangements needed to "facilitate access to the area of the necessary equipment and other resources to bring these fires under control";

NOTING the international legal instruments that guide states and civil society in addressing issues of armed conflict and environmental protection; and

RECOGNIZING the importance of international cooperation for building sustainable patterns of nature conservation and ecotourism in the Caucasus and in facilitating the recovery of the forest and mountain ecosystems following the fires;

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

1. CALLS UPON all international donors to support environmental rehabilitation in and around damaged protected 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*:

2. REQUESTS the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the Director General to recommend appropriate measures to restore the biodiversity and other environmental values of the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, using the findings of the Joint Needs Assessment led by the World Bank, and the Joint Environmental Assessment Mission to Georgia conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other relevant assessment studies and undertakings;
3. REQUESTS the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) and the Director General to address how to build the capacity and legal concepts for coordinating humanitarian law and environmental law;
4. DIRECTS the Director General to communicate the results of these IUCN undertakings to the members of IUCN; and
5. MANDATES the Director General to work with members, international organizations, states, GOs and universities to identify recommended best practices for effective management of protected areas and natural resources, including in post-conflict situations.

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.