

4.083 Industrial agrofuel production

RECALLING that the Mission of IUCN is to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable";

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation 2.94 *Climate change, mitigation and land use* adopted by the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000), which, among other actions, calls for "involvement of relevant stakeholders including local communities and indigenous peoples in the design and implementation of projects"; and "sustainable development activities that provide economic benefits to local communities, and recognize the rights of indigenous peoples";

AWARE of the serious global problems created by the exponential growth of industrial agrofuel production - biofuels produced by intensive industrial agriculture, generally as monocultures, often covering thousands of hectares, most often in developing countries;

ALSO AWARE that traditional and local biomass production is conducted to meet basic needs, while industrial agrofuel production is destined to fuel cars and airplanes to which the majority of the world's poor do not have access;

CONCERNED that industrial agrofuel production is:

- (a) forcing people off their lands and eliminating their ability to grow the food they need to survive;
- (b) preventing the use of common lands needed by settled people for gathering uncultivated foods;
- (c) closing off the option of mobile pastoralism in lands where indigenous and non-indigenous communities have lived mobile lifestyles for millennia; and
- (d) increasing greenhouse gas emissions through deforestation, forest degradation, soil disturbance and land conversion of other natural systems;

CONCERNED that industrial agrofuel production is a major cause of the worsening world food crisis, with more people than ever experiencing chronic hunger and famine;

FURTHER CONCERNED that industrial agrofuel production damages biodiversity and soil productivity, consumes scarce water resources, increases water pollution from soil and chemical runoffs, encroaches on wildlife habitat, and threatens the survival of some species;

ALARMED that so-called 'sustainable' industrial agrofuel production provides incentives to expanding the agricultural frontier and destroying forests and pasture areas;

FURTHER ALARMED that industrial agrofuel production is currently receiving significant incentives, including tax breaks, subsidies and financing through carbon-trading mechanisms, international development aid or loans from international finance organizations, while at the same time more sustainable alternative crops have been generally neglected and should be considered;

AFFIRMING that, when properly implemented, bioenergy production can be part of a democratic, decentralized framework of land use where communities have a voice in deciding what crops will be grown and where and how projects will be implemented; and

FURTHER AFFIRMING that industrial agrofuel production, because of energy and chemical inputs as well as related deforestation and soil disturbance which releases sequestered carbon dioxide, does not appear to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions, does not mitigate global warming, and can actually cause serious added harm to people and ecological systems;

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

1. CALLS ON governments to:
 - (a) put in place appropriate regulatory structures, and prior to this to carry out analyses of the potential social, environmental and human rights impacts,

including life-cycle analyses of existing and new large-scale biofuel production;
and

- (b) immediately suspend all incentives for agrofuels and agroenergy from industrial monocultures;

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. CALLS ON the Director General to:

- (a) collaborate with the IUCN Commissions on a report that describes how biomass production and use might be effectively, sustainably and equitably integrated into local agricultural and pastoral food and livelihoods systems;
- (b) share this information with other fora, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which have concerns about this issue; and
- (c) promote and support environmentally sustainable and pro-poor strategies to produce and use biomass in a sustainable manner, that provide more opportunities for the rural poor, women and indigenous peoples, and that increase the resilience of agro-ecosystems to climate change.

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.