

WCC-2012-Res-072-EN

Support from IUCN for the sustainable development of wetlands and marine areas in Central and West Africa

RECOGNIZING that wetlands and neighbouring areas provide essential resources, notably fresh water, fishery resources, tourism and leisure activities, thus playing a vital role in the development and well being of local communities;

AWARE that the impact of intensive human activities in wetlands, in particular the expansion of agriculture, urban development, pollution and unsustainable management of resources constitute a substantial threat to ecological and social conditions;

RECALLING Recommendation 17.38 *Protection of the coastal and marine environment*, adopted by the 17th IUCN General Assembly (San Jose, 1988), Recommendation 1.37 *Protected marine areas*, adopted by the 1st IUCN World Conservation Congress (Montreal, 1996) and Recommendation 19.56 *Global fisheries*, adopted by the 19th IUCN General Assembly (Buenos Aires, 1994);

FURTHER RECALLING that Article 197 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea – UNCLOS (1982) asks States to “cooperate on a global basis and, as appropriate, on a regional basis”, etc. “for the protection and preservation of the marine environment, taking into account characteristic regional features”;

FURTHER RECALLING that Decision 7/1 (22) of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development “encourages States to establish and manage marine protected areas, along with other appropriate management tools” “in order to ensure the conservation of biological diversity, and the sustainable management and use of oceans”;

RECOGNIZING the biodiversity of the marine environment, and marine turtles in particular (a resource shared by numerous countries in Central and West Africa), and that it is either under the jurisdiction of coastal States or on the high seas, as defined by UNCLOS, and constitutes an integral part of the world’s natural and cultural heritage;

CONSIDERING that the regions of Central and West Africa are a typical case, where it is important that all the stakeholders combine efforts to apply the principle of wise use and the framework of international cooperation established by the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention), and noting that the principle of wise use involves the collaboration, exchange of information, experience and full participation of all stakeholders; in other words the management organizations, research institutions, NGOs, local community organizations; and

CONCERNED to see that the major contribution made by so many different initiatives has nevertheless not yet led to sufficient improvement in concrete terms in the sustainable development of wetlands and marine areas in Central and West Africa, and that the pernicious phenomenon of the degradation of wetlands and marine areas is increasing;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. ASKS IUCN to provide greater, unflagging support for countries in Central and West Africa and to lead the multilateral organizations in exploring a relevant range of tools, in order to ensure more efficient protection and conservation of the environments concerned, together with their biological diversity, as well as their restoration and sustainable use; and

2. URGES the national governments of the regions concerned, international organizations and the non-governmental community to join the existing multilateral agencies and legal mechanisms in carrying out actions targeting wetlands and marine areas, and to reach a consensus on the conservation and management regimes for ecosystems in these regions.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.