

WCC-2012-Res-078-EN
Conservation of marine phytoplankton

RECOGNIZING that the phytoplankton in the oceans of the Earth are primary producers and constitute the foundation of the food web for myriad species, are key indicators of ecosystem integrity and function, and contribute to the socioeconomic welfare of human communities throughout the world;

CONSCIOUS that the vast marine phytoplankton stocks provide essential services for Earth's climate as producers of oxygen and sequestration of carbon dioxide through photosynthesis;

ALARMED that in 2010 a scientific study published in *Nature* reported that phytoplankton populations in eight out of 10 ocean regions had declined over the past century, with a 30% decline globally since 1950;

CONCERNED that human activity on land and at sea further threatens phytoplankton populations and that ocean acidification, land-based pollution of the oceans and other adverse impacts are contributing to the threat of a drastic negative impact upon phytoplankton community structures and species compositions in coming decades;

AWARE that the States party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) have a solemn duty to protect the marine environment and that the United Nations has appointed an Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction;

TROUBLED, however, that there is no international, intergovernmental support to study and care for phytoplankton in areas beyond national jurisdiction; and

CONVINCED of the needs to strengthen international environmental law and international cooperation to mitigate and avert further anthropogenic impacts on phytoplankton;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General, with appropriate scientific advice, to convene a study of legal instruments and approaches to ensure stewardship of marine phytoplankton; and
2. CALLS UPON all States, as far as applicable, to cooperate with the Director General in producing the study and based thereon take all appropriate measures to reverse the decline in phytoplankton globally.

State and agency Members of the United States voted against this Motion.