

## **WCC-2016-Res-053-EN**

### **Protecting coastal and marine environments from mining waste**

WELCOMING the call through United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 for States to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

NOTING Target 14.1 to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities;

ALSO NOTING Aichi Biodiversity Target 8 that "by 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity";

OBSERVING article 210 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that "States shall adopt laws and regulations to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment by dumping";

AWARE that the objective of the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention) and its Protocol is to promote the effective control of all sources of marine pollution, and that Contracting Parties shall take effective measures to prevent pollution of the marine environment caused by dumping at sea;

ALSO AWARE that the dumping of mining waste on the sea floor (submarine tailings disposal – STD), and the marine and coastal depositing of mining-related wastes may significantly harm the marine environment – for example by contamination of water and air through heavy metals, distribution of contaminants through submarine currents, destruction of marine and coastal habitat and biodiversity, modification of the coastal line, loss of natural and cultural heritage, sedimentation of bays and ports – and may negatively affect human health and activities;

EXHORTING all States to restore all their coastlines affected by mine waste, whether old or recent, whilst ensuring that this restoration process does not affect the environment, human health, human activities and the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage;

OBSERVING that most nations have moved away from the practice of STD due to its harmful effects on the marine environment, and that many good alternatives of backfilling and alternative use of mining waste exist;

CONCERNED that a few countries continue to allow dumping of mining waste in their coastal waters and are continuing to accept proposals for this practice;

ACKNOWLEDGING that if dumping of mining waste had happened from a ship, it would have been regulated by the London Convention and Protocol;

TROUBLED that dumping of mining waste from land with potential significant harmful effects through pollution, smothering of marine life etc. is currently not explicitly covered by any international regulations; and

WELCOMING the collaboration between the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP-GPA), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the London Convention and Protocol to address the problem of submarine tailings disposal;

### **The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:**

1. REQUESTS the Director General to communicate this Resolution to the countries concerned and to discuss with their governments in order to find possible alternatives and stop the destruction and degradation of marine habitats by dumping of mining waste;
2. CONGRATULATES those nations that have implemented regulations against dumping of mining waste in their water bodies;

3. CALLS ON all states to ban marine disposal of mine tailings for new mines as soon as possible, and to plan a stop to ongoing marine disposal sites;
4. AFFIRMS that to fulfil Target 14.1 of the SDGs, as well as the objectives of UNCLOS and the London Convention and Protocol, regulations should be put in place to regulate and ultimately stop the use of marine disposal of mining waste; and
5. ASKS UNEP-GPA and IMO to recommend regulation of submarine tailings disposal from land- based activities in the same manner as in the open sea, applying the general principles of the IMO, and the London Convention and Protocol.

**State and agency Members of the United States** abstained during the vote on this motion for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.