

15/12. PROTECTION OF MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS

WHEREAS the First Report on the Global Status of Mangrove Ecosystems has been prepared by the Commission on Ecology Working Group on Mangrove Ecosystems for the 15th Session of the IUCN General Assembly;

RECOGNIZING that this report has documented the dependence of many millions of people in tropical countries on the food resources, useful materials, and other amenities provided by mangrove ecosystems;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the variety of plants and animals throughout the world which are dependent on mangrove ecosystems for their continuing survival;

NOTING that a substantial portion of the mangrove ecosystems throughout the world are being rapidly degraded or destroyed, often with indirect assistance from international funding and development organizations;

NOTING ALSO that the opportunities to establish protected areas in the last remaining pristine areas are fast disappearing in many countries;

NOTING FURTHER that Unesco has identified mangroves and coastal zones as priority areas of endeavour for the Man and the Biosphere Programme;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 15th Session in Christchurch, New Zealand, 11-23 October 1981:

CALLS UPON all governments with mangrove resources to develop a National Mangrove Plan which ideally should be part of a national conservation strategy. The Plan should:

- (a) define the total national mangrove resource by means of maps and inventories;
- (b) assess peoples' needs in relation to sustainable uses of the mangrove resource;
- (c) assess the significance of the mangrove resource in relation to:
 - (i) birds, including migratory birds
 - (ii) genetic resources (iii) coastal stability (iv) marine species;
- (d) define the criteria which must be satisfied for alternative sustainable uses of the resource, prior to any allocation of the resource to such an activity;
- (e) stop shifting aquaculture which has developed in many areas and is damaging mangrove resources;
- (f) implement rehabilitation and replanting of degraded or destroyed mangrove ecosystems;
- (g) include oil spill contingency measures that aim to prevent contamination of mangrove ecosystems which are known to be particularly vulnerable to oil pollution; and
- (h) allocate clear responsibility to an agency with appropriate skills for the conservation and management of the resource; and

CALLS UPON international funding and development agencies to recognize that greater benefits to human populations may be derived from the proper management of existing mangrove resources, than from their conversion to other uses.