

2.71 Cooperative regional action plan for the conservation of river dolphins (*Platanista* spp. and *Lipotes* spp.) in the South Asian region

CONSIDERING that there are only four species of freshwater dolphin found in the world, out of which the Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), Indus River Dolphin (*Platanista minor*) and Yangtze River Dolphin (*Lipotes vexillifer*) are found exclusively in the Asian region;

REALIZING that freshwater dolphins are indicators of the quality of their freshwater ecosystems;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Yangtze River Dolphin is already on the verge of extinction and that populations of the other two Asian river dolphins are rapidly declining;

CONSIDERING that the distributions of the Ganges and Indus River Dolphins stretch across political boundaries in various river systems;

RECOGNIZING that as a consequence of its distribution, the Ganges River Dolphin is part of the natural heritage and resources shared by four nations, i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal;

CONSIDERING that many river dolphin populations have come under serious threat because of habitat destruction, excessive fishing, pollution, direct killing for oil, and dangers arising from dams and other impediments along rivers;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that river dolphins are elusive and relatively little is known about their ecology; and

EMPHASIZING that conservation of river dolphins requires a coordinated approach for optimum effectiveness;

The World Conservation Congress at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan, 4–11 October 2000:

1. URGES governments in the South Asian region, namely the Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, to jointly develop and implement action plans for the conservation of the Ganges River Dolphin and the Indus River Dolphin;
2. CONCLUDES that the success of these conservation action plans will depend on protection of the two species and also of their habitats;
3. ENTREATS all governments to take measures against excessive fishing, direct killing, and habitat destruction;
4. ENCOURAGES the efforts taken by the Indian River Dolphin Committee (IRDC) and Asian River Dolphin Committee (ARDC) in the conservation of river dolphin species.

This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. State and Agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this Motion and took no national government

position on the Recommendation as adopted, for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process (see p. 76).