

2.79 Introduction of alien species

NOTING that both public and private development agencies have deliberately introduced alien species into the wild, with the expectation that they will reproduce in the wild and provide economic benefits, such as pest control, future harvest or use in the wild;

FURTHER NOTING that there have also been deliberate introductions of alien species into the wild for aesthetic or recreational reasons;

AWARE that many introductions of alien species into the wild have had disastrous results, far greater in scale than the intended benefits, and may have extreme and negative impacts on entire ecosystems, including the extinction of native species;

RECOGNIZING that the current state of ecological knowledge makes it difficult to accurately predict the chain of events that will occur as the result of any such introduction of alien species, and hence the positive or negative consequences and impacts; and

RECOGNIZING that the precautionary approach would mitigate against actions that may be expected to interfere with significant ecosystem functions, and have the potential to cause extinction of native species;

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

1. CALLS ON civil society, institutions, and governments not to deliberately introduce alien species into the wild, for the purpose of their reproduction and propagation in the wild, unless supported by an appropriate risk analysis and environmental assessment of the possible consequences of introduction;
2. URGES all bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies and other government agencies not to support programmes involving the deliberate introduction of alien species into the wild, with the purpose of their reproduction and propagation in the wild, unless supported by an appropriate risk analysis and environmental assessment.

The delegation of the United States provided a formal Statement for the Record indicating the commitment of the US to deal with invasive species. The US also noted that “the Recommendation as adopted calls for risk assessments to be conducted before introductions of alien species are permitted, rather than the absolute rejection of the introduction of non-native species, which cannot be scientifically justified at this time, and recognizes that scientific knowledge to predict invasive impacts is uncertain”. The Statement is reproduced in full in the Congress Proceedings.