

2.82 Protection and conservation of biological diversity of protected areas from the negative impacts of mining and exploration

CONSIDERING that protected areas of various definitions and categories are home to a substantial portion of the Earth's biological diversity, threatened species, indigenous communities, lifestyles, and cultures;

NOTING that protected areas act as an important natural system for the regulation of the world's climate balance;

RECALLING that a large majority of State members of IUCN are signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

ACKNOWLEDGING that many of IUCN's State members have established national systems of protected areas to guarantee the conservation of biological diversity;

CONCERNED by the negative social and environmental impacts associated with the rapid growth of mining and mineral exploration activities worldwide with particular reference to the risks posed to the preservation of biological diversity in protected areas; and

RECOGNIZING that the positive endeavours of States, environmental groups, and threatened communities require strong legislative instruments to strengthen their efforts for nature conservation;

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

1. INVITES all governments and corporations to promote and implement best practice in all aspects of mining and mineral extraction, from first exploration through to decommissioning and subsequent land use;
2. CALLS on all IUCN's State members to prohibit by law, all exploration and extraction of mineral resources in protected areas corresponding to IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories I to IV;
3. RECOMMENDS that:
 - (a) in categories V and VI, exploration and localized extraction would be accepted only where the nature and extent of the proposed activities of the mining project indicates the compatibility of the project activities with the objectives of the protected area;
 - (b) authorization for localized exploration and mining require an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the project and approval by the relevant competent authority and stakeholder groups after public disclosure of the EIA draft document; and
 - (c) authorized exploration and mining projects be subject to strict planning, operating, monitoring, and post-use restoration conditions;

4. URGES that proposed changes to the boundaries of protected areas, or to their categorization, to allow for the exploration or localized extraction of mineral resources, should be subject to procedures at least as rigorous as those involved in the establishment of the protected area in the first place;
5. RECOMMENDS that exploration and extraction of mineral resources and allied infrastructure development work, which is outside of a protected area, but which may negatively affect the values for which the protected areas were established, should be subject to:
 - (a) EIA preparation and approval from relevant competent authority and stakeholder groups after public disclosure of the EIA draft document; and
 - (b) strict planning, operating, monitoring, and post-use restoration conditions.

This Recommendation was adopted by a show of hands. The delegation of the United States made a formal Statement for the Record indicating that it had opposed and voted against the Recommendation, noting that mining policy is an internal matter for sovereign states, and reiterating that, “in the US, management of parks and requirements for environmental assessments are based on domestic laws and regulations, not a global framework. In this context, the US Government has acted strongly to limit mining where it is not appropriate”. The full Statement is reproduced in the Congress Proceedings.