

## **2.88 Establishment of an Ecological Corridor in the Americas**

NOTING that the mountain chain running the length of the Western Hemisphere is considered to be one of the regions with greatest biodiversity in the world;

RECOGNIZING that the Wildlife Conservation Society has proposed the creation of a programme called Ecological Corridor in the Americas, which would form a hemispheric system of protected areas and other wild areas joined with areas subject to sustainable management extending along the continental mountain chain from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego;

AWARE that the proposed ecological corridor in the Americas is to conserve biodiversity, maintain ecological viability and evolutionary processes, and provide environmental services through the formation of a conceptual framework for joint action that supports and brings together local, national, and regional conservation efforts along the corridor;

MINDFUL that the primary aim of the proposed ecological corridor in the Americas is to protect all rain forests and other types of forests and natural vegetation found along the corridor, as public or private parks or reserves, or to be exploited on the basis of sustainable management because of their extreme hydrologic and biological importance;

BEING AWARE that the proposed ecological corridor in the Americas would provide many benefits to society along the corridor in the hemisphere, such as permanent provision of clean water, promotion of ecotourism, prevention of natural disasters, soil conservation, production of new medicines and other chemical substances, storage and capture of carbon dioxide, and creation of opportunities for scientific research and artistic inspiration;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Governments of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama have already created the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, which would be part of the Ecological Corridor in the Americas;

RECOGNIZING that the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, currently being implemented, constitutes one of the most successful examples in the world of a regional corridor and has similar objectives to those proposed for the Ecological Corridor in the Americas;

OBSERVING that several initiatives for local corridors on the continent along the mountain chain are being carried out and could be connected to form an almost continuous hemispheric corridor; and

EMPHASIZING that in several international fora the idea has been proposed to create a corridor for conservation in the Americas, or a trans-hemispheric corridor, as part of a worldwide network of regional biological corridors extending through Europe, Asia, and the Far East;

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

1. RECOMMENDS that the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the United States of America, and Venezuela explore the concept of the continental initiative to create the Ecological Corridor in the Americas;

2. REQUESTS national and regional institutions and organizations in the above-mentioned countries, multilateral institutions, and public and private organizations to cooperate in exploring this concept;
3. RECOMMENDS that international institutions and organizations develop projects for conservation and sustainable management of forests and other types of natural vegetation along the mountain backbone of the Western Hemisphere and coordinate their efforts with organizations and institutions that already participate and that will continue to participate in exploring the concept of the proposed Ecological Corridor in the Americas.

*The delegation of the United States made a formal Statement for the Record recognizing the importance of ecological corridors in preserving biodiversity and providing important ecological services, welcoming the initiative to create a Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, and noting that the proposed expansion of this corridor to create an Ecological Corridor for the Americas [Editor's note: as had been called for in the original Motion text) would need further exploration by governments.*