

2.3 An IUCN Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Global Thematic Programme

NOTING that arid and semi-arid ecosystems occur in many continents, occupy almost half of the Earth's terrestrial surface, and are inhabited by millions of people;

RECOGNIZING that arid and semi-arid lands witnessed the earliest human occupation and activities implying that these lands have been subjected to severe degradation and deterioration of their biodiversity;

BELIEVING that arid and semi-arid ecosystems play an important role in the lives of millions who suffer from drought and deterioration of natural resources;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that arid and semi-arid regions support distinctive ecosystems and species constituting an important component of global biodiversity, and include animals, plants and other organisms of economic importance;

ACKNOWLEDGING that there is a great need for international research and practical cooperation in order to restore large areas of degraded arid and semi-arid habitat and to achieve the sustainable management essential to the future of the inhabitants of these regions; and

AWARE that IUCN has the capacity to contribute significantly to the solution of problems in arid and semi-arid lands;

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

1. REQUESTS the IUCN Council to constitute a Task Force of arid land specialists including representatives of appropriate IUCN Commissions;
2. PROPOSES that this Task Force should:
 - (a) in cooperation with the Director General, formulate proposed objectives, organizational plans and key tasks for an IUCN Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Global Thematic Programme for approval by Council;
 - (b) consider how appropriate Commissions can advance this proposed Programme;
 - (c) take account of IUCN's past, current, and planned work on arid and semi-arid lands;
 - (d) review existing international and regional institutions and teams working on arid and semi-arid lands and consider the ways in which IUCN should cooperate with them;
 - (e) in particular, consider how the proposed IUCN Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Global Thematic Programme can best support implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant conventions;
 - (f) evaluate the resources required for an effective IUCN Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Global Thematic Programme, and how they might be sourced; and

(g) make proposals to Council by August 2001;

3. REQUESTS the Director General:

- (a) to provide appropriate support to the proposed Task Force;
- (b) to negotiate with funding agencies to secure the financial resources necessary to support the proposed IUCN Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Global Thematic Programme; and
- (c) to inform IUCN members of the outcome of the deliberations of the Task Force, the consideration of these outcomes by Council, and of the steps taken to establish the proposed Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Global Thematic Programme.