

2.51 Conserving the Panama Canal Watershed

RECOGNIZING that the Panama Canal Watershed contains one of the most important artificial wetlands in the Latin American region;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Panama Canal Watershed provides important products and environmental services, such as timber, non-timber forest products, fisheries, opportunities for ecological tourism, and conservation of biodiversity, both inside and outside the protected areas that are present in this watershed;

HIGHLIGHTING that this inter-ocean watershed is located within the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and therefore possesses one of the region's better-conserved examples of biodiversity, and that the area's population has a rich socio-cultural and ethnic mix;

RECOGNIZING that it provides water for the transit of national and international shipping between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, with approximately 12,000 ships per year using 3,020 million cubic metres of water; and

AWARE of the global commercial needs that require deeper drafted ships to pass through the Panama Canal, and the growing demand for freshwater for human consumption by the Panamanian population; and

FURTHER AWARE that the Government of the Republic of Panama has determined the necessity for carrying out studies to consider the possibility of enlarging the Panama Canal;

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

1. URGES the competent Panamanian authorities for the Panama Canal Watershed, Panamanian organizations, and communities to set up an open and participatory process, to carry out the studies on possible enlargement of the Panama Canal and to guarantee satisfactory implementation of necessary mitigation measures in such a way that these joint efforts succeed in minimizing the environmental and social impacts of the proposed work;
2. REQUESTS the Director General to:
 - (a) promote an International Forum in the Republic of Panama, with the participation of the World Commission on Dams and other relevant bodies identified by IUCN, to contribute to improving baseline information and decision-making on the proposed concept for enlarging the Panama Canal, with the participation of communities within the watershed, civil society, international organizations, and the competent Panamanian authorities;
 - (b) encourage the development of funding proposals to strengthen the studies and initiatives underway in the Panama Canal Watershed; and
 - (c) contribute through IUCN's Global and Regional Freshwater initiatives to the investigation, analysis, and dissemination of the rich potential of the Panama Canal Watershed.

This Resolution was adopted by consensus. The State member Panama, and the State and Agency members United States, abstained from the adoption by consensus of this Resolution.