

## 2.54 Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

RECALLING Resolutions 15/20 *Antarctica environment and the Southern Ocean* adopted by the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the IUCN General Assembly (Christchurch, 1981), and 16/8 *Antarctica I* adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (Madrid, 1984), as well as Recommendations 17.52 *Antarctica*, 17.53 *The Antarctic: minerals activity* adopted by the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (San Jose, 1988), 18.75 *Antarctica* adopted by the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (Perth, 1990), and 1.110 *Antarctica and the Southern Ocean* adopted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the World Conservation Congress;

ALSO RECALLING Resolutions 16/9 *Antarctica II* adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (Madrid, 1984), 18.74 *The Antarctic Conservation Strategy* adopted by the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (Perth, 1990), and 19.96 *Antarctica and the Southern Ocean*, as well as Recommendation 19.95 *Improved Protection for Wildlife in Subantarctic Island Ecosystems* adopted by the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (Buenos Aires, 1994);

RECOGNIZING the crucial role played by Antarctica in global climate, oceanic circulation, and in the world's biophysical and biochemical systems;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the importance of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, its great value as the world's largest remaining wilderness area, its intrinsic and inspirational values, and its importance for scientific research and monitoring directed to enhancing human understanding of the natural environment and global processes, including those modified by human activity;

APPRECIATING that the governments of Japan and Russia have now ratified the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, permitting its entry into force;

WELCOMING entry into force of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, adopted by the Parties to the treaty in Madrid, 1991, which commits the Parties to the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, designates Antarctica as a "reserve devoted to peace and science" and, *inter alia*, prohibits any activity related to mineral resources other than basic scientific research;

FURTHER WELCOMING the consequent establishment of the Committee on Environmental Protection;

AWARE that the sub-Antarctic islands support distinctive ecosystems and many endemic species, that knowledge of these ecosystems remains inadequate, and that conservation measures for these islands need to be strengthened;

GREATLY CONCERNED about the harmful levels of over-fishing of certain fish species in the oceans around Antarctica;

STRESSING the importance of the conservation of the ocean ecosystems around Antarctica and the urgent need to ensure that all use of their living resources is sustainable according to the

‘ecosystem as a whole’ conservation standard contained in Article II of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);

WORRIED about the continuing deaths of seabirds in large numbers from both legal and illegal long-line fishing operations in the oceans around Antarctica, which threaten populations of albatrosses and petrels;

TROUBLED about the increasing levels and geographic extent of tourism to the region, including use of vessels carrying more than 400 people and the opening-up of previously unvisited areas;

CONCERNED about plans to carry out scientific research in Lake Vostok by drilling through its ice covering, given the absolutely pristine condition of the lake, the high likelihood of its ecosystem containing ancient forms of life, and the risk of contamination from the drilling;

RECOGNIZING the important role of IUCN in providing a forum for the discussion of issues affecting Antarctica’s environment by governmental and non-governmental bodies and in contributing to the work of the components of the Antarctic Treaty System; and

FURTHER RECOGNIZING ongoing associations with IUCN’s Commissions, particularly those for Protected Areas, Species Survival, and Environmental Law;

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

1. CALLS ON all Non-Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, which have not already done so, to ratify the Protocol on Environmental Protection and ensure that its rules are fully honoured by their nationals and entities under their control;
2. URGES all Parties to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to take the steps necessary to:
  - (a) ensure that its provisions are mandatory in the domestic legal context;
  - (b) bring into force Annex V on Protected Areas, which has yet to be ratified by Ecuador, India, Poland, and Russia;
  - (c) complete, as a matter of priority, the elaboration of rules and procedures relating to the liability for damage arising from activities taking place in the Antarctic Treaty area covered by this Protocol;
  - (d) develop a comprehensive network of protected areas pursuant to Annex V of the Protocol, which includes appropriate representation of the principal habitats and biological diversity of the region as well as other values; and
  - (e) establish and enforce stringent regulations governing the conduct of all persons visiting Antarctica, whether scientists, logistical and support personnel, or tourists;

3. ENCOURAGES Parties to the Treaty to establish a permanent Secretariat as a matter of urgency, which is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the Antarctic Treaty and the Protocol on Environmental Protection;
4. CALLS ON governments, including but not restricted to Parties to both the Antarctic Treaty and CCAMLR, to take urgent steps to stop the illegal fishing for toothfish (*Dissostichus* spp.) in the oceans around Antarctica, to ensure that all fishing allowed follows prudent rules that will support conservation of these ecosystems, and to implement the 'Dissostichus Catch Documentation Scheme' adopted at the 1999 meeting of CCAMLR parties;
5. ENCOURAGES Parties to the Antarctic Treaty to enhance inspection provisions so as to enforce the provisions of the Protocol on Environmental Protection;
6. URGES the governments concerned to adopt and enforce measures necessary to ensure the conservation of sub-Antarctic island ecosystems, especially the eradication wherever practicable and the adoption of quarantine measures against the further introduction of alien species;
7. STRONGLY RECOMMENDS to Parties to the Antarctic Treaty that they give special protected status to Lake Vostok in order to maintain it in its present pristine state for future generations and that they defer for the foreseeable future any decision to allow scientific drilling into the Lake;
8. REQUESTS the Director General:
  - (a) in consultation with Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and IUCN members, Commissions, and Council, to seek to ensure, subject to availability of resources, a balanced and effective set of IUCN Antarctic-related activities, and in particular to support actively:
    - (i) establishment and management of new forms of Antarctic protected areas, with special emphasis given to marine sites,
    - (ii) conclusion of negotiations to elaborate rules and procedures relating to liability for damage arising from activities taking place in the Antarctic Treaty area covered by this protocol; and
    - (iii) more steps to ensure that cumulative environmental impacts are understood and taken into account in decision-making within the Antarctic Treaty System;
  - (b) in consultation with IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, to ensure that the entire area to which the Protocol on Environmental Protection applies should be considered for inclusion in future versions of the list of protected areas produced by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre;
  - (c) in consultation with IUCN's members, Commissions, and Council, as well as Parties to CCAMLR, to promote new measures and enforcement of existing measures in order to ensure the viability of ecosystem management of Antarctic marine ecosystems, and in particular to stop illegal and other forms of over-fishing in the region;

- (d) to participate in meetings of Antarctic Treaty System components where such participation will contribute to achieving the objectives referenced above;
- (e) to continue and strengthen the capacity of the Antarctic Advisory Committee to advise the IUCN Council, Director General and Commissions, including with additional funds and Secretariat support; and
- (f) to designate the Antarctic Advisory Committee as an inter-Commission Task Group which will allow formal links to be established with all relevant IUCN Commissions, thereby enhancing effective communication and collaboration with IUCN members who have expertise concerning the Antarctic region;

9. RECOMMENDS that the Antarctic Advisory Committee of IUCN should:

- (a) continue to develop and put forward policy advice, especially on:
  - (i) effective implementation of the Protocol on Environmental Protection;
  - (ii) negotiation of rules and procedures relating to liability for damage arising from activities taking place in the Antarctic Treaty area and covered by this Protocol;
  - (iii) stopping illegal fishing in the oceans around Antarctica and improving CCAMLR's legal and enforcement systems; and
  - (iv) preventing seabird mortality as by-catch in long-line fisheries;
- (b) develop more effective collaboration with IUCN members and other bodies and organizations who have relevant experience concerning the Antarctic; and
- (c) contribute to raising public awareness about Antarctic and sub-Antarctic conservation issues, through seminars, technical sessions, and publications;

10. CALLS ON IUCN members to mobilize the resources needed to enable this Resolution to be implemented.

*This Resolution was adopted by consensus. State and Agency members United States abstained from the adoption by consensus of this Resolution.*