

WCC-2012-Res-102-EN

Human rights and access to natural resources in Latin America

HIGHLIGHTING the fact that although Latin America is a region extremely rich in natural resources, the availability of and access to natural resources for human use are not always equitable;

RECOGNIZING that, despite substantial progress, water resources are at risk of pollution through the mismanagement of wastewater, and, according to the State of the Region Report for Central America (2011), the lack of regulation of productive activities;

HIGHLIGHTING the fact that access to water and land are basic requirements for food safety, especially for the most deprived communities;

CONSIDERING the growing number of social and environmental conflicts resulting from disputes over access to water and land, through the development of activities such as open-pit metal mining, oil and gas production, and due to large-scale hydroelectric and tourism projects;

CONCERNED about the data generated by the Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America, which up to 2011 recorded a total of 35 mining conflicts in Mesoamerica, involving 42 communities;

CONCERNED by the large number of hydroelectric projects planned or in construction within binational basins, protected or indigenous areas, and in areas rich in biodiversity and agricultural production;

HIGHLIGHTING the fact that mining, oil and gas, and hydroelectric projects have made or will make considerable impacts on key ecosystems and have led to substantial movements of thousands of peasants and indigenous peoples in the Latin American region;

RECOGNIZING the importance of electricity generation, oil and gas production and metal production projects throughout the world, but also the high biodiversity in the Latin American region and its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and the high risks of natural disasters;

RECALLING Resolution 4.056 *Rights-based approaches to conservation* adopted by the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress (Barcelona, 2008);

REITERATING THE SUPPORT for the *Rio Declaration* and *Agenda 21* approved by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), of 1992; and for the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007; and the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples with regard to the sustainable development objectives in the United Nations Development Group *Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues* of 2008; and

HIGHLIGHTING Principle 10 of the *Rio Declaration*, which states that, "Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided";

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. CALLS ON government and non-government Members, and on the IUCN Commissions and the Director General to:
 - a. promote among the IUCN Commissions and international cooperation, assessments of the impact of mining, oil and gas, and hydroelectric projects on human populations, livelihoods and ecosystems, especially in tropical zones that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and social and environmental disasters; and
 - b. produce tools and support activities for monitoring the soil and water at a community level, with a view to attaining the abovementioned objectives;
2. URGES Latin American governments to guarantee the human rights of both the indigenous peoples and settlements with regard to access to water and land, carrying out the necessary evaluations over a wide area in connection to possible mining, oil and gas or hydroelectric projects in order to provide information for decision making, giving priority to the use of natural resources for human well-being and food safety; and
3. CALLS ON the Director General to:
 - a. identify possible donors interested in supporting the development of skills in Latin American countries through workshops and the production of educational material covering subjects such as:
 - i. national and international regulations regarding human rights and their link to the environment, including Principle 10 of the *Rio Declaration*;
 - ii. the possible impacts of mining, oil and gas, and hydroelectric projects and best mitigation practices, thereby supporting the consultation and assessment/approval processes for these projects; and
 - iii. the key, comprehensible contents that the Environmental Impact Assessments of mining and hydroelectric projects should contain; and
 - b. promote the exchange of information and experiences among the communities affected or potentially affected by mining, oil and gas, or hydroelectric projects through media such as networks, blogs and regional meetings.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.