

4.047 Empowering local communities to conserve and manage natural resources in Africa

RECOGNIZING that local people have been managing their natural resources for millennia as an essential part of their livelihoods;

OBSERVING that many natural resource policies of the last century undermined the rights of communities to manage and benefit from their environments;

ACKNOWLEDGING that independent African governments have gone some way towards re-dressing this situation through ‘Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programmes’ which grant limited rights of access to local resources;

CONCERNED that these measures have not gone far enough to restore the essential rights needed to develop the adaptability and resilience of local communities in the face of new emerging threats such as climate change, food shortages and pan-African human and animal health pandemics;

NOTING that robust management institutions can only be realized, and that economic incentives for sustainable natural resource management are only likely to be optimized, when people have full authority and responsibility for their resources;

EMPHASIZING that the strengthening of these rights is a pre-requisite for local peoples to adapt and survive the growing crisis affecting Africa; and

RECALLING Resolution 3.012 *Governance of natural resources for conservation and sustainable development* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004), which “urges IUCN to serve in a leadership role in relation to governance of natural resources for conservation and sustainable development”;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:

1. CALLS ON African governments to confer legal rights on local people to:

- (a) establish institutions for communal conservation and management of natural resources; and
- (b) define the structure and membership of such institutions;

2. CALLS ON local communities or collectives in Africa to establish institutions to conserve and manage the natural resources on which they depend for their security;

3. URGES local institutions in Africa established to conserve and manage natural resources to be given the authority and responsibility, *inter alia*, to:

- (a) take all necessary measures to protect their natural resources;
- (b) take all decisions on use of local resources and collaborate with neighbouring institutions when issues of scale demand a wider consideration;
- (c) retain all income and non-monetary benefits from their management; and
- (d) decide on the distribution of all income and benefits from their management; and

4. URGES all interested IUCN members to:

- (a) advocate the case for such rights to be granted to local peoples and to assist governments with the legal basis for conferring such rights; and

(b) when requested by local communities, to advise and assist them to establish institutions to manage and conserve the natural resources on which they depend for their security;

In addition, the World Conservation Congress, at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the *IUCN Programme 2009–2012*:

5. CALLS ON the Director General, where practicable and within the parameters of the Programme, to advise and assist communities wishing assistance to establish institutions to conserve and manage natural resources; and

6. URGES all IUCN Commission members to advise and assist communities wishing assistance to establish institutions to conserve and manage natural resources.

State and agency members of the United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.