

#### **4.084 Mining exploration and exploitation in and near Andean protected areas**

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that protected natural and cultural areas and sites already exist or are in the process of being created in the South American Andean zone, including Natural and Cultural World Heritage Sites; Biosphere Reserves; national, provincial and municipal parks and reserves; natural monuments; Wetlands of International Importance ('Ramsar sites'); special sites for migratory and other species;

RECOGNIZING that the preservation of these highly fragile ecosystems constitutes the basis for the conservation of high Andean ecological corridors and the survival of endemic species of flora and fauna;

CONSIDERING that the majority of Andean countries have legislation that protects against the negative environmental impacts of mining exploitation, but not exploration, and that the international norms that give rise to international protected area categories (e.g. Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites, Ramsar sites) often establish in their articles protection and prevention measures that countries must comply with in conducting mining activities;

AWARE that mining engineering has currently advanced to such a degree that exploration and exploitation can sometimes be conducted with low environmental impact; that impact alleviation and mitigation measures have already been developed and that these are effective if implemented correctly from the beginning of each stage of the various types of exploitation; that the implementation costs of these measures are minimal compared to the profit margins the mining industry derives and that such measures should be included in overall cost structures;

ALARMED that authorizations for open-pit mining exploration and exploitation have increased;

ALSO CONCERNED that current environmental impact studies do not, for the most part, consider either the possible medium- and long-term negative effects of prospecting and closure of the exploitation, or the implementation of remediation and restoration measures, including service roads from the sites of mining interest to the ports of departure of materials and finished products;

RECOGNIZING that exploitations carried out with open-pit methods are preferred by mining companies because these exploitations have less financial risk, require less economic investment and initial infrastructure, and also require fewer skilled personnel for their operation;

AWARE that mining companies encourage local governments to authorize such methods, claiming that they are investing in and creating job opportunities in these marginal areas, and also often requesting that the local government authorities make exceptions to the obligation to implement all of the basic health and safety infrastructure for both the personnel and the environment, obtaining the relevant authorizations even against local public opinion;

OBSERVING that open-pit exploitations, as they are currently conducted, generate many solid particles (some toxic) in atmospheric suspension in arid and semi-arid areas, and that these particles remain in suspension for months, only later, due to climatic effects such as wind and rain, being deposited on bodies of still water, watering places, lagoons and other water bodies, and therefore effectively limiting the reproduction of benthic, phyto- and zooplankton resources, thus reducing and at the same time polluting the trophic chain, and directly affecting: (a) aquaculture, (b) the terrestrial fauna and avifauna that feed and drink at these sites, (c) the inhabitants for whom these water sources constitute their only sources of drinking water, and (d) the native flora which may be eliminated by harmful chemicals;

FURTHER OBSERVING that groundwater is overexploited, not being recycled or purified and being dumped on the surface, thus increasing even further the negative impacts;

AWARE that if measures are not taken quickly to prevent these negative actions, the magnitude of the problem will become chronic and irreversible; and

NOTING Recommendation 2.82 *Protection and conservation of biological diversity of protected areas from the negative impacts of mining and exploration* adopted by the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000), which provides the context for the present Resolution;

**The World Conservation Congress at its 4<sup>th</sup> Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:**

1. CALLS ON the countries in the Andean zone to act to reverse the current negative situation and to take the necessary preventive measures so that the granting of permits for open-pit mining exploration and exploitation within or directly impacting on protected areas can be prevented in the future; and

2. URGES IUCN's members in the Andean zone to:

(a) support local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations from the countries to prevent the use of open-pit mining exploitation and exploration methods and environmentally aggressive mining exploration; and

(b) communicate the current situation and future risks of openmining and warn local communities about these risks and alternative mining exploration and exploitation methods that are less harmful;

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

3. ASKS the Director General to work to support the application of precautionary approaches established for different categories of protected areas.

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.