

RECWCC3.102 Conservation of Mediterranean-type ecosystems

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CONSIDERING that the five regions of the world with Mediterranean-type climates characterized by mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers are extraordinarily rich in biodiversity, covering only 2.25 percent of the earth's land surface but, for example, containing 20 percent of its named vascular plant species;

RECOGNIZING that the environments of these regions, found in parts of Australia, Chile, and South Africa; in the California floristic province of the United States and Mexico; and in and around the Mediterranean Basin, face greater immediate threats per unit of area than any other species-rich regions on earth;

NOTING that rampant urbanization is the main threat to biodiversity in these regions, and a major threat to the health and wellbeing of the people who live in them;

FURTHER NOTING that these regions share many problems related to their climate, including sensitivity to climate change and desertification, air pollution, overdrawing of groundwater, degradation of freshwater resources, marine pollution from urban runoff, and catastrophic fires along the urban-wildland interface;

RECOGNIZING that public policies and education in these regions are often based on locations with very different climates and fail to take into account the limits of their natural systems;

AWARE that the *Malibu Declaration on Cities and Conservation in Mediterranean-type Ecosystems*, adopted on 13 April 2004 following a workshop held in Malibu, California, by the Task Force on Cities and Conservation of the World Commission on Protected Areas, calls for increased attention to conservation of these regions;

AWARE that the *Malibu Declaration* was endorsed on 30 April 2004 by the International Society of Mediterranean Ecologists, a scientific body concerned with the world's five Mediterranean-type regions, at its 10th MEDECOS Conference held in Rhodes, Greece;

ALSO AWARE that the *Malibu Declaration* was noted in the *Declaration of Naples* adopted on 22 June 2004 by the IUCN Mediterranean Members Meeting held in Naples, Italy; and

CONCERNED that the importance of, and threats to, Mediterranean-type ecosystems are inadequately recognized by governments, intergovernmental organizations, and the conservation community;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. CALLS ON political leaders, governments at all levels, citizens, and the private sector to:

(a) expand and improve systems of protected areas to safeguard and restore natural areas in Mediterranean-type regions in the face of urban sprawl and climate change;

(b) provide urban residents in Mediterranean-type regions with access to nature, and educate citizens who live in these regions about the distinctive character of their surroundings and the many benefits they derive from natural resources; and

(c) promote sustainable cities in these regions and adopt a comprehensive approach to decision-making that recognizes the interdependence of cities and larger environments;

2. ENDORSES increased international cooperation on conservation in Mediterranean-type ecosystems, including exchange of information and experience, training, and development of improved policies and tools for management and public education; and

3. URGES governments and appropriate intergovernmental organizations to proclaim a Decade of Action to focus attention on and to protect these ecosystems.