

RESWCC3.039 The Mediterranean mountain partnership

Congress Reference: CGR3.RES008E-Rev1

NOTING that the mountain ranges of the Mediterranean cover about 1.7 million km² of land, equivalent to 21 percent of the combined surface area of all the countries concerned, and are home to 66 million people, 16 percent of the area's total population;

CONSCIOUS of the fundamental role that mountain systems have played over centuries and play today in ensuring the resources necessary for the development of the coastal areas and their settlements;

RECOGNIZING the direct influence that mountains have on plains and coastal urban areas, home to 60 to 80 percent of the population of the Mediterranean countries, particularly with regard to the stability of hydro-geological cycles and the quantity, quality and availability of water resources;

RECOGNIZING that today the majority of clean freshwater, timber products and agricultural and livestock supplies to the coastal cities of Mediterranean countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa come from the mountains;

CONSIDERING that the Mediterranean biogeographic region is one of the world's richest in terms of biodiversity and at the same time among the most threatened by desertification, climate change and other land transformation processes, and that the highest concentration of biodiversity and endemic species are in its mountain areas;

NOTING that many areas of high biodiversity value are located in the geographical context of the Mediterranean mountains, such as the many Important Bird Areas and Important Plant Areas found in these mountains;

RECOGNIZING that the rich biodiversity in the Mediterranean area is intimately connected to and largely the result of the landscape diversity resulting from the interaction over millennia between environmental conditions and human cultures and identities;

NOTING that existing protected areas in the Mediterranean basin are found mostly in mountain areas;

CONSIDERING the diverse systems of protected areas that cover the Mediterranean mountains (Alps, Apennines, Littoral and pre-littoral Catalan Cordillera, Sierra Morena, Dinaric Alps, Atlas, Taurus, etc.) and that, if adequately coordinated, will promote sustainability of the vast territorial and environmental systems of which they are part;

CONSIDERING that the goal of conserving the biological diversity heritage and particularly that of the Mediterranean mountains is intimately linked to strategies for local development and for the reinforcement of landscape and cultural protection;

RECALLING Chapter 13, *Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development*, of *Agenda 21* of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992), inviting all those countries with mountains to strengthen their national capacity for sustainable development of mountain areas and to prepare long-term action plans for these areas;

CONSIDERING the work in progress through the Mountain Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

RECALLING CBD Recommendation V.6 noted by the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress (Durban, South Africa, 2003), *Strengthening Mountain Protected Areas as a Key Contribution to Sustainable Mountain Development*;

RECALLING the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution adopted in Barcelona in 1976, and that management policies for mountain areas can provide an important contribution to its implementation, tackling at source the problems and key issues affecting river mouths, coastal and marine areas;

RECALLING the final documents of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, both held in 2002, which reinforce the calls to action and the definition of priority actions for sustainable development in mountain areas;

RECALLING ongoing conservation developments in the Mediterranean, such as the *Pyrenees Convention*, the *Alpine Convention*, and other 'system projects' based on protected areas and covering:

(a) the littoral and pre-littoral Catalan Cordillera;

(b) the Sierra Morena in Andalusia; and

(c) the Apennine Park of Europe (APE);

RECALLING the *Naples Declaration*¹ agreed by the IUCN Members' Conference of Mediterranean Countries held in June 2004, in which IUCN and all Mediterranean countries are requested to coordinate their actions aiming to promote strategic plans for the conservation of the most significant environmental systems of the Mediterranean, such as mountain areas, large watersheds, coastal marine systems, islands and the open sea;

NOTING the absence of specific environmental policies for the mountains of the Mediterranean, to promote the sustainable development of investments for access to basic services (particularly education and health care), and for the creation of new employment opportunities based on the promotion of natural, landscape and cultural resource heritage; and

CONSIDERING the importance that the project Mediterranean Mountain can have in promoting policies of cooperation and sharing of responsibilities among national and regional institutions, and friendship and fraternity among communities and peoples still involved in national, cultural and religious conflicts;

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

1. CALLS on national, regional and local institutions to promote national and, where appropriate, transnational plans of action, for each of the major mountain ranges of the Mediterranean for the conservation and improved status of their richness in biological, landscape and cultural diversity;

2. REQUESTS that these action plans provide for an important role for protected areas in implementing actions and policies towards the sustainable development of the environmental and territorial systems in which they are located;

3. URGES that these action plans assist local institutions and communities to be proactive in the promotion and implementation of actions, and to reinforce their capacity for undertaking integrated and coordinated territorial initiatives;

4. REQUESTS that these action plans:

¹ http://www.iucn.org/places/medoffice/members%20meeting/Declaration_final_en.pdf

(a) represent an opportunity for coordination, integration, implementation, application and experimentation of the provisions of projects and initiatives at national and international levels, aiming at the protection and management of the resources, landscapes, and the “commons” of the Mediterranean mountains; and

(b) be recognized as a political and institutional basis for cooperation among national, regional and local institutions, stakeholders and protected area authorities;

5. URGES Mediterranean governments to agree on working towards a partnership for Mediterranean Mountains, including the organization of a forum to be held before the next IUCN World Conservation Congress; and

6. REQUESTS the Director General to promote and facilitate the establishment of this partnership among all relevant parties to implement the above actions.

State and agency members 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 US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.