

17.19 WASTES

AWARE that, although the management of wastes, and especially of hazardous wastes, is one of the most pressing and difficult challenges facing humankind, international and domestic laws have been largely ineffective due to their failure to address the linkages between air, water and land;

CONCERNED that environmentally sound methods of disposing of wastes, whether by recycling or by the development of alternative technologies (including biotechnologies, recovery techniques and high temperature destruction), are subject to institutional and regulatory obstacles;

RECOGNIZING HOWEVER that important international steps have been taken by the North Sea Ministers (November 1987) and the Contracting Parties of the London Convention (October 1986) to end ocean incineration and ocean dumping of radioactive wastes, respectively;

CONCERNED that the economic costs imposed by the present treatment of wastes and residues are disguised in current accounting practice in that:

- environmental costs are frequently not paid by polluters;
- activities undertaken to repair pollution damage are treated as a component of economic growth and development under present systems of calculating Gross Domestic Product; and
- the capital loss represented by reduced life supporting capacity or genetic diversity is nowhere accounted for;

AWARE that developing countries need assistance and information from industrialised countries to enable them to make better use of waste management technology and that developed countries have compounded these problems by exporting wastes to developing countries;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 17th Session in San Jose, Costa Rica, 1-10 February 1988:

1. URGES States to give priority to policies aimed at reducing waste and at promoting the development and commercial availability of recycling methods and environmentally sound waste disposal procedures.
2. FURTHER URGES State members of IUCN and other States Parties to international (including regional) conventions to consider means by which those conventions may be used to promote a comprehensive system of waste disposal, to institute practical measures to promote the development and use of environmentally sound technologies for this purpose, and to introduce these objectives into their domestic laws .
3. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN, subject to the resources available, to engage in dialogue with international organizations concerned with the protection of the environment against pollution, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and organizations outside the United Nations system such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the objective of promoting actions that will, in furtherance of sustainable development:
 - a. Ensure that all costs and benefits accruing from waste production, dispersal and ensuing pollution are quantified;
 - b. Ensure that they are accounted for;
 - c. Ensure that polluter-pays mechanisms are available in public accounting procedures;
 - d. Promote strategies to recycle wastes in the short term and eventually eliminate waste production, wherever possible, in the long term;
 - e. Ensure that environmental hazards are not created by the export of wastes to developing countries;And that, in the process, there is an examination of how Gross National/Domestic Product, economic growth and development, may be redefined (or supplemented) so that the new definitions take into account short and long term environmental costs and benefits, and truly reflect real improvement of human societies' standard of living and fulfilment of their aspirations.
4. SUGGESTS that IUCN's Commission on Environmental Policy, Law and Administration assist, as appropriate, in the preparation of guidelines on the polluter-pays principle, in a manner that takes full account of the costs of damage to, and rehabilitation of,

the environment.

5. ENCOURAGES industrialised countries to provide greater assistance and information on waste management technology, and URGES the governments of developing countries to facilitate the introduction of this technology.
6. RECOMMENDS that IUCN endorses and participates in the current activity of UNEP on the establishment of a global convention seeking the environmentally satisfactory disposal of toxic wastes.