

# NOTES, NEWS & COMMENTS

## World Charter for Nature\*

### I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Nature shall be respected and its essential processes shall not be disrupted.
2. The genetic viability on the Earth shall not be compromised; the population levels of all life-forms, wild and domesticated, must be at least sufficient for their survival, and to this end necessary habitats shall be maintained.
3. All areas, of both land and sea, shall be subject to these principles of conservation; special protection shall be given to unique areas, representative samples of all ecosystems, and the habitats of rare and endangered species.
4. Ecosystems and organisms, as well as land, marine, and atmospheric resources, which are utilized by Man, shall be managed to achieve and maintain optimum sustainable productivity, but not in such a way as to endanger the integrity of those other ecosystems or species with which they coexist.
5. Nature shall be secured against degradation caused by warfare or other hostile activities.

### II. FUNCTIONS

6. In the decision-making process, it shall be recognized that Man's needs can be met only by ensuring the proper functioning of natural systems, and by respecting the principles of this Charter.
7. In the planning and implementation of social and economic development activities, due account shall be taken of the fact that the conservation of Nature is an integral facet of those activities.
8. In formulating long-term plans for economic development, population growth, and the improvement of standards of living, due account shall be taken of the long-term capacity of natural systems to sustain populations and settlements, recognizing that this capacity may be enhanced through science and technology.
9. Allocation of areas to various uses shall be planned; due regard shall be paid within the planning process to the physical constraints, to the need for biological productivity and diversity, and to the natural beauty, of the areas concerned.
10. Natural resources shall not be wasted, but used with a restraint appropriate to the principles of this Charter, as follows:
  - (a) Living resources shall not be utilized in excess of their capacity for regeneration;
  - (b) The productivity of soils shall be maintained or enhanced through measures which safeguard their continuing fertility and the process of organic decomposition, and which prevent erosion and other forms of degradation;
  - (c) Resources, including water, which are not consumed as they are used, shall be reused or recycled; and
  - (d) Non-renewable resources which are consumed as they are used shall be exploited with restraint accord-

ing to their abundance, the efficiency with which they can be converted to use, and the compatibility of their development with the functioning of natural systems.

11. Activities which might have an impact on Nature shall be controlled, and the best available technologies that minimize significant risks to Nature or other adverse effects shall be used. In particular:
  - (a) Activities which are likely to cause irreversible damage to Nature shall be avoided;
  - (b) Activities which are likely to pose a significant risk to Nature shall be preceded by an exhaustive examination; their proponents shall demonstrate that expected benefits outweigh potential damage to Nature, and where potential adverse effects are not fully understood, the activities should not proceed;
  - (c) Activities which may disturb Nature shall be preceded by assessment of their consequences, and environmental impact studies of development projects shall be conducted sufficiently in advance, and if to be undertaken, such activities shall be planned and carried out so as to minimize adverse effects;
  - (d) Agriculture, grazing, forestry, and fisheries, practices shall be adapted to the natural characteristics and constraints of given areas; and
  - (e) Areas degraded by human activities shall be rehabilitated for purposes in accord with their natural potential and compatible with the human well-being of affected populations.
12. Discharge of pollutants into natural systems shall be avoided:
  - (a) Where this is not feasible, such pollutants shall be treated at the sources, using the best practicable means available; and
  - (b) Special precautions shall be taken to prevent discharge of radioactive or toxic wastes.
13. Measures intended to prevent, control, or mitigate, natural disasters, infestations, and diseases, shall be specifically directed to the elimination of the causes of these and avoid adverse side-effects on Nature.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION

14. The principles set forth in this Charter shall be reflected appropriately in the law and practice of each State, as well as at the international level.
15. Knowledge of Nature shall be broadly disseminated by all possible means, particularly by conservation education as an integral part of general education.
16. Conservation strategies, inventories of ecosystems, and assessments of the effects on Nature of proposed policies and developments, shall be essential elements of planning; all of these should be disclosed to the public by appropriate means in time to permit effective consultation and participation.
17. Funds, programmes, and administrative structures, necessary to achieve conservation objectives, shall be provided.
18. Constant efforts shall be made to increase knowledge of Nature by research, and to disseminate such knowledge unimpeded by restrictions of any kind.
19. The status of natural processes, ecosystems, and species, shall be monitored to enable early detection of degradation or threat, ensure timely intervention,

\* Adopted by UN General Assembly on 28 October 1982.

- and facilitate the evaluation of conservation policies and methods.
20. Military activity damaging to Nature should be avoided.
  21. States and, to the extent that they are able, public authorities, international organizations, individuals, groups, and corporations, shall:
    - (a) Cooperate in the task of conserving Nature through common activities and other relevant actions, including information exchange and consultation;
    - (b) Establish standards for products and processes that may adversely affect Nature, as well as agreed methodologies for assessing their effects;
    - (c) Implement the applicable international legal provisions for conservation of Nature and environmental protection;
    - (d) Ensure that activities within their jurisdictions or control do not cause damage to natural systems located within other States or in the areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction; and
    - (e) Safeguard and conserve Nature in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
  22. Taking fully into account the sovereignty of States over their natural resources, each State shall give effect to the provisions of this Charter through its component organs and in cooperation with other States.
  23. All persons, in accordance with national law, shall have the opportunity to participate, singly or with others, in the process leading to the formulation of decisions which directly concern their environment, and shall have access to means of redress when their environment has suffered damage or deterioration.
  24. Each person has a duty to act in accordance with the provisions of this Charter; acting alone, in groups, or through the political process, each person shall strive to ensure that the objectives and requirements of this Charter are met.

#### Tasmania's Proposed Dams in Its South-West Wilderness

The alarm caused by the Hydro-electric Commission's plan to flood the Franklin and other valleys in South-West Tasmania has now spread to the whole of Australia and is keenly felt in conservationist circles all over the World. The wilderness of South-West Tasmania contains one of the few remaining temperate rain-forests of the globe that are still relatively undisturbed, and the portion of it that holds the greatest interest for scientists is precisely the valleys where, owing *inter alia* to very high moisture, the flora is exceptional. Besides the many interesting plants which are endemic to the Central Plateau and western and South-West Tasmania, a list of some thirty species has been drawn up (including the well-known Huon Pine, *Dacrydium franklinii*) which are unique to the region.\*

It is always difficult, when practical interests are involved, to obtain a hearing for arguments along such general lines as the protection of the Biosphere or even

\* These include the 23 listed by Kedar N. Baidya on page 60 of this issue as 'likely to be endangered through inundation by the [Franklin] dam impoundment'—See that article for further details, and a longer paper from another source for which we hope to find space in an early issue.—Ed.

for pressing appeals from the world of science. The irritation felt by some Tasmanians at any intrusion into what they feel to be their private affairs is perhaps understandable, and it is unfortunate that the problem was allowed to become a political one instead of being confined to dispassionate discussion among men of good will. One can only pray that the efforts made by the Federal Government to find a reasonable, negotiated solution satisfactory to all parties will be successful, thus preserving a region which UNESCO recently declared to be an essential part of the 'World Heritage'.

ROGER DE CANDOLLE, *President  
International Dendrology Society  
41 Chemin du Vallon  
Chêne-Bougeries  
1224 Geneva, Switzerland.*

#### New Director-General for IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has elected as its new Director-General Dr Kenton R. Miller, who will assume the post in the World Conservation Centre, at Gland, Switzerland, in July 1983. Dr Miller is currently Director of the Center for Strategic Wildland Management Studies and Associate Professor of Natural Resources at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is Chairman of the IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas\*\* and a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission as well as of the Union's Programme Planning Advisory Group.

Dr Miller has spent more than twenty years in the exacting field of conservation, and has worked with various international bodies—including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with whom in Rome, Italy, he was responsible for national parks and wildlife management. Later, in Santiago, Chile, he developed and directed FAO's Wildlands and Environmental Conservation Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. He has carried out missions and consultancies for international organizations—including FAO, UNESCO, and UNEP—in various parts of the world. Most recently, he has served as a consultant to UNEP on the development of the World Charter for Nature<sup>+</sup> and on environmental policy to the World Bank.

Recently (in October 1982) Dr Miller was the Secretary-General of the World National Parks Congress, held in Bali, Indonesia<sup>++</sup>, which brought together over 500 experts from 70 nations to define the expanded role for protected areas *inter alia* in implementing the goals of the World Conservation Strategy. Dr Miller has also carried out field-work very widely in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, and is the author of numerous articles and books—including a textbook on concepts and techniques for the management of wildlands.

\*\* As such he contributed, with the Commission's Executive Officer Jeffrey A. McNeely, the key paper on 'IUCN, National Parks, and Protected Areas: Priorities for Action' which is published on pp. 13–21 of this issue.—Ed.

<sup>+</sup> Printed on pp. 67–8 of this issue.—Ed.

<sup>++</sup> See the account by Raisa Scriabine on pp. 78–9 of this issue.—Ed.