



# Position Statement

on sustainable use of wild living resources





# POSITION STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILD LIVING RESOURCES

## ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY Annex 2

Approved at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Amman, October, 2000

**RECALLING** Resolution 1.39 'Sustainable Use Initiative' adopted by the 1st Session of the World Conservation Congress, requested the Species Survival Commission's (SSC) Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG) to develop urgently a short position paper on sustainable use for written comment from IUCN members, and for SSC to take these comments into account in preparing a final draft for presentation at the next World Conservation Congress;

**Citation:** IUCN (2000) **IUCN SSC Position Statement on sustainable use of wild living resources**. IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC). Available at: [IUCN Resources](#)

**Cover photo by:** Atitude Açai

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that, in accordance with Resolution 1.39, the Steering Committee of the SUSG prepared the draft 'Position Statement on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources' that is attached herewith;

**ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING** that successive drafts of this statement were reviewed by members of 14 regional SUSGs, Chairs and members of the SSC Specialist Groups, the SSC Steering Committee, Chairs of other Commissions, heads of IUCN's Thematic and Regional Component Programmes, and IUCN's members;

**RECOGNIZING** that sustainable use is one of the three components of the objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity and that the Convention provides a definition of 'sustainable use';

**NOTING** that Article 3 of the 'Ramsar' Convention on Wetlands obliges its Contracting Parties to implement wise use approaches and that, in particular, the Convention has recently produced a series of Wise Use Handbooks;

**ALSO NOTING** that the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have endorsed the principle of sustainable use in Resolution Conf. 8.3;

**RECOGNIZING** that sustainability and sustainable use are concepts that are now being applied to sectors beyond the scope of this position statement per se, e.g., water, agriculture, soils;



and **NOTING** that most Component Programmes of IUCN work on sustainable use and that there is a need for the principles of sustainable use to be mainstreamed in all pertinent IUCN technical, regional, national, project, and Commission activities;

### **The World Conservation Congress at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan, 4-11 October 2000:**

- 1. ADOPTS** the Position Statement attached herewith and commends the policy to IUCN's members, Commissions, and Secretariat for implementation in the context of its Overall Programme, and in accordance with the objectives of IUCN; and
- 2. CALLS ON** the Secretariat to report on the progress achieved in implementing the terms of the Policy Statement at the 3rd World Conservation Congress.

This Resolution was adopted by a show of hands. The delegation of the State member United States indicated that it had abstained.

## **POSITION STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILD LIVING RESOURCES**

1. Conservation of biological diversity is central to the mission of IUCN, and accordingly IUCN recommends that decisions of whether to use, or not to use, wild living resources should be consistent with this aim.
2. Both consumptive and non-consumptive use of biological diversity are fundamental to the economies, cultures, and well-being of all nations and peoples.
3. Use, if sustainable, can serve human needs on an ongoing basis while contributing to the conservation of biological diversity.
4. At the 18th Session of the General Assembly (Perth, 1990) in Recommendation 18.24, IUCN - The World Conservation Union recognised that "the ethical, wise and sustainable use of some wildlife can provide an alternative or supplementary means of productive land-use, and can be consistent with and encourage conservation, where such use is in accordance with appropriate safeguards".
5. This position was re-affirmed in Recommendation 19.54 at the following session of the Union's General Assembly in 1994 and subsequently in Resolution 1.39 at the 1st Session of the World Conservation Congress in 1996.
6. Analyses of uses of wild living resources in a number of different contexts demonstrate that there are many

biological, social, cultural, and economic factors, which combine in a variety of configurations to affect the likelihood that a particular use may be sustainable.

7. On the basis of these analyses, IUCN concludes that: a) Use of wild living resources, if sustainable, is an important conservation tool because the social and economic benefits derived from such use provide incentives for people to conserve them; b) When using wild living resources, people should seek to minimize losses of biological diversity; c) Enhancing the sustainability of uses of wild living resources involves an ongoing process of improved management of those resources; and d) Such management should be adaptive, incorporating monitoring and the ability to modify management to take account of risk and uncertainty.

8. To increase the likelihood that any use of a wild living resource will be sustainable requires consideration of the following: a) The supply of biological products and ecological services available for use is limited by intrinsic biological characteristics of both species and ecosystems, including productivity, resilience, and stability, which themselves are subject to extrinsic environmental change; b) Institutional structures of management and control require both positive incentives and negative sanctions, good governance, and implementation at an appropriate scale. Such structures should include participation of relevant stake-holders and take account of land tenure, access rights, regulatory systems, traditional knowledge, and customary law; c) Wild living resources have many cultural, ethical, ecological, and economic values, which can provide incentives for conservation. Where an economic value can be attached to a wild living resource, perverse incentives removed, and costs and benefits internalised, favourable conditions can be created for investment in the conservation and the sustainable use of the resource, thus reducing the risk of resource degradation, depletion, and habitat conversion; d) Levels and fluctuations of demand for wild living resources are affected by a complex array of social, demographic, and economic factors, and are likely to increase in coming years. Thus attention to both demand and supply is necessary to promote sustainability of uses.

9. IUCN is committed to ensuring any uses of wild living resources are equitable and ecologically sustainable, and to this end it has established the Sustainable Use Initiative which incorporates regionally-structured Specialist Groups of the Species Survival Commission to: a) Identify, evaluate, and promote the principles of management that contribute to sustainability and enhanced efficiency in the use of wild living resources; and b) Regularly communicate their findings to members and the broader community.