



Second Standing Committee
Sustainable Development,
Finance and Trade

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THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

***Preliminary draft resolution prepared by the Co-rapporteurs
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The 111th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

(1) *Recalling* the:

- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), 1971;
- Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972;
- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972;
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979;
- United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 1982;
- World Charter for Nature, 1982;
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982;
- International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, 1983;
- Report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, 1987; and
- Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992,

(2) *Recognising* that the intrinsic value of biodiversity – the variability within and among living organisms and the systems they inhabit – is critical to the survival of the planet and the species that inhabit it,

(3) *Also recognising* that the conservation of biodiversity is a necessary condition for sustainable development in so far as it contributes to poverty alleviation, food security, the provision of fresh water, soil conservation and human health,

(4) *Recalling* that biodiversity loss is increasing at an unprecedented rate due to human activity,

- (5) *Recognising* that the Convention on Biological Diversity is the principal international instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,
- (6) *Concerned* that the term, "biodiversity", as used in the Convention on Biological Diversity, has been considered vague and ambiguous to the extent of being too global and impractical for use in some national and local conservation strategies,
- (7) *Noting* that the Convention on Biological Diversity does not categorically refer to the core causes of biodiversity loss,
- (8) *Aware* that under the Convention on Biological Diversity, States have sovereign rights over their biological resources, but also aware that such resources could as well be intra-state or international resources,
- (9) *Recalling* the commitments of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity aimed at reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010,
- (10) *Recalling* in particular the adoption of the programme of work on protected areas by the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,
- (11) *Recalling* that *in situ* conservation efforts in protected areas are, by themselves, insufficient,
- (12) *Noting* that the goods and services provided by ecosystems are undervalued by economic systems,
- (13) *Recalling* in particular paragraph 44 of the Plan of Implementation of the last World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, aimed in particular at enhancing synergy and mutual supportiveness between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the policies and international trade agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO),
- (14) *Considering* the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety,
- (15) *Reaffirming* that the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources is one of the central objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and *noting to that end* the decision of the last Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to engage in negotiations to establish an international regime on access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits,
- (16) *Concerned* that the commercialisation of biodiversity may perpetuate historically inequitable relationships between the developed and developing countries (including States with tropical forests),
- (17) *Noting* that providers of genetic resources and traditional knowledge have no mechanism by which to prevent their misuse by multinational corporations,
- (18) *Observing* that while a number of Member States require assistance to save their remaining biodiversity reserves (through the maintenance of seed banks), only a few (ten) have to date called upon the services of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI),

(19) *Concerned* that world leaders have neither given political priority to biodiversity nor mandated and adequately funded an international organisation, such as UNEP, to coordinate the current scattered collection of environmental treaty instruments, including the Convention on Biodiversity,

1. *Calls on* governments to take more effective action in implementing the Convention in order to reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010;
2. *Urges* governments to focus their efforts on the immediate implementation of the programme of work on protected areas, with a view to establishing, by 2010 in terrestrial areas and by 2012 in marine areas, a functional network representing all national and regional ecosystems;
3. *Recommends* that governments take into consideration the shortcomings of the Convention, especially by clarifying the definition of "biodiversity" and by emphasising the main causes of biodiversity loss;
4. *Further recommends* that the aspect of sovereignty over biological resources in the Convention be resolved in order to allow an international body to act in areas where resources transcend national borders. To this end, *urges* all Member States of the United Nations to authorise and adequately fund UNEP for the purpose of upgrading it to become the focal organ in biodiversity;
5. *Recommends* that all Member States do their utmost to save the remaining biodiversity reserves, and where appropriate, apply for the assistance of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI);
6. *Calls on* governments to take more effective action in general in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, apart from the specific domain of protected areas, by:
 - Fostering the ecosystems approach developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity as a key concept for the management of soils, water and living organisms; and
 - Incorporating the objectives of biodiversity conservation in sectors such as agriculture, forest management, water management and transportation;
7. *Encourages* governments to commit themselves actively to the establishment of an international regime on access to resources and the sharing of benefits, which takes into account in a balanced manner the interests of countries providing genetic resources and of the countries utilising them, while respecting the rights of indigenous and local communities;
8. *Invites* governments which have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
9. *Urges* governments to give full consideration to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol in trade policies;

10. *Calls on* governments to strengthen their efforts at all levels for the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol, in particular through increased allocations of the human, financial and technical resources required both in developed and developing countries;
11. *Undertakes* to take action in the respective parliaments aimed at:
 - Assessing the economic benefits associated with the sound management of ecosystems, so as to incorporate the economic and social value of goods and services provided by biodiversity in decisions involving public finance, policy, planning, and natural resource management;
 - Standardising economic and social incentives to foster the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
 - Eliminating or reducing policies and practices that produce incentives leading to biodiversity loss or deterioration, or reducing harmful incentives.