

CENTRAL AMERICAN MEETING ON MANAGEMENT OF  
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, HELD IN SAN JOSÉ,  
COSTA RICA, 19-24 DECEMBER 1974

As a follow-up to a call by the Second World Conference on National Parks, held in Yellowstone and Grand Teton in September 1972, representatives of six Central American countries met in December 1974 with experts from concerned international organizations, to develop an action programme for an integrated regional system of national parks and equivalent reserves. The Meeting was held at the invitation of the Government of Costa Rica, and the six countries participating were Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

IUCN organized the Meeting, which was held under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the other co-sponsors being FAO and UNESCO. Financial support came from UNEP, WWF, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. (A few weeks earlier, a similar regional meeting had been convened by IUCN in East Africa, to arrange for an integrated system of national parks and equivalent reserves in that region.)

Governments of the countries concerned were invited to send one official representative from each of four sectors: natural resources, tourism, cultural resources, and national planning. (Each country had previously been requested to prepare, through adequate consultation among these sectors, a national report on natural and cultural resources, including a list of those areas which could be considered as part of a Central American system.) As a result, there were 24 official delegates from the 6 countries, and some of the countries went as far as to send additional delegates on their own. International organizations, notably FAO, UNESCO, UNDP, OAS, WWF (US National Appeal), Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Peace Corps, and the Tropical Agricultural Centre for Research and Training (CATIE), were represented, bringing the total number of registered participants to about 50.

The six-days meeting was opened at the National Theatre by the Costa Rican Minister of Agriculture, Don Hernán Garrón, and the undersigned was elected Chairman of the Conference. Working sessions were conducted in the Conference room of the National Library, and one day was devoted to a field trip to Volcan Poás National Park at the invitation of Costa Rica's National Park Service and Institute for Tourism.

National reports of the six countries showed similarity in their expression of concern for the degradation of natural and cultural resources, but it was quite clear that, with the possible exception of El Salvador, they still have an amazing display of resources which could be successfully developed as part of an integrated system for the benefit of the region.

Specially commissioned regional reports by Dr J. R. Holdridge, Dr H. Prowse, and Dr K. R. Miller, indicated (1) the areas which have the greatest potential in terms of diversity and rich natural and cultural values, (2) the relationship of such an integrated park programme towards development, job opportunities, and a higher quality of life, and (3) the main techniques, based on appropriate policies, to channel these elements into a successful resource management programme.

The most significant part of the meeting was devoted to the discussion, preparation, and approval, of a basic document with seven Recommendations for an action programme. Directed principally to the Governments of the region, the document is preceded by a Preamble stressing the urgency and unique opportunity presented for promoting this type of development. The Preamble is

followed by an Annex which lists the areas designated by the representatives of the six countries to become part of a regional system.

The first Recommendation emphasized the desirability of an integrated regional system and the urgency of its establishment. The second Recommendation reflected the desire of each country to support its part of the programme by the designation of a pilot national park close to the capital—to serve as a demonstration of how conservation can contribute to development and education. The third Recommendation pinpointed border areas that are particularly well suited to be frontier parks between neighbouring countries, and it was gratifying to see that a relatively large number of areas fit into this category. The fourth Recommendation indicated the urgent need to promote education and training activities by using and strengthening available facilities and by ensuring that the best use is made of Central American expertise. The fifth Recommendation indicated the need to establish a regional commission to coordinate these objectives. The sixth Recommendation stressed the establishment of national commissions or the strengthening of existing ones. The seventh and last Recommendation made a strong plea to the six Governments to request international organizations to help in financing action programmes. In particular it requested the UNDP/FAO to strengthen support of the FAO wildland management and environmental conservation activities in the region or, if necessary, to establish a new and more comprehensive programme along the lines set out in the Recommendation. Other financing organizations, for example the Central American Bank of Economic Integration, were also requested to cooperate in this endeavour.

The Preamble, Recommendations, and Annex, are available in English, French, and Spanish, in a special supplement of the *IUCN Bulletin*, and may be obtained from the IUCN Secretariat in Morges. The full Proceedings will be published in Spanish by IUCN.

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PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: THE FIRST AFRICAN  
PUGWASH SYMPOSIUM, HELD IN CAIRO, EGYPT,  
4-9 JANUARY 1975

The Egyptian Pugwash group organized, in collaboration with the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, the first Pugwash Symposium dealing only with African Problems and attended by Africans under the general title 'Peace and Development in Africa'. One of the seven major topics discussed was The Environment. Some fifty African natural and social scientists, coming from fifteen African countries, attended the Symposium in their personal capacities. Representatives of the Continuing Committee of the Pugwash Conferences as well as delegates from U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and India, were also present, as were observers representing the different African 'liberation' movements.

Out of the twenty-five invited papers that were presented for discussion, five were directly related to the environment and pollution, while a number of others were concerned with various environmental issues. The papers were all distributed in full text and presented in summary during three morning plenary sessions. Four working groups were established to discuss in detail some of the seven major issues that were dealt with in the plenaries. The environment