

Statement of the Government of the United States of America:

The State member United States of America provided the following statement for the record during the 6th Sitting on 11 October 2008:

“Mr President, the United States welcomes the opportunity to renew our commitment to IUCN. The United States recognizes the importance and the value of IUCN with its broad and determined membership dedicated to protecting the natural world. Let me extend our congratulations to the IUCN secretariat and to all those many members who made this Forum so valuable and successful. But our work as members of IUCN really begins now with the Assembly. As a member of IUCN, it is our responsibility to engage fully and actively; be assured the United States takes this responsibility seriously.

We are very interested in learning more about the perspectives and priorities of IUCN members, particularly the non-governmental members, as reflected in the 125-plus motions put forward for consideration by this Congress. We recognize and believe that IUCN as an organization has an important contribution to make to the international environment dialogue.

This motions process remains a challenging one for us as a government. Building on our experience in Bangkok and in Amman, we have continued to reflect on how best we, as a State member, can participate in the motions process. Because of the high priority we place on IUCN’s programs which contribute significantly to the conservation goals we share, we have concluded that, in keeping with our approach at the past two Congresses, we should focus our attention on those motions that deal with issues related to IUCN as an institution, its governance and its broad programmatic issues.

We greatly appreciate the outstanding efforts made by the Resolutions Committee to review and provide guidance on all motions and to identify their relevance to the proposed IUCN quadrennial Program and their cost implications. We found the procedures of screening motions to avoid duplication and repetition to be a valuable and welcome approach and applaud the Resolutions Committee, particularly its Chair, and the IUCN secretariat for their efforts. There are, however, motions that we believe do in fact duplicate previous motions and would ask that when it comes time to prepare for the next Congress and Assembly, stricter attention might be paid to this. In addition, we ask that greater efforts be made to reduce the number of motions. Further, we believe we should consider changing the deadline for submission of motions to two weeks prior to the start of the Assembly to allow members sufficient time for review.

We would note, however, that a number of motions reflect the strong views of a small number of members on what actions State members should take nationally, regionally or internationally on complex and often controversial issues.

We remain convinced that there are some types of resolutions on which it may not be appropriate for us, as a government, to engage or negotiate.

Among these is a group of motions directed primarily to a single government or group of governments on national, bilateral or regional issues. We often lack sufficient factual information about such issues and believe that responses to these motions are best left to the country, countries or regions affected. We will not take a position as a government on such motions, except as they have direct implications for the U.S. Government. In such instances, we may provide a statement for the record to help clarify the issues raised and provide our perspective.

A second group of issues are those focused on global issues that we agree are important but that are topics of ongoing international policy debate in other fora, such as, for example,

climate change or human rights. We respect the interest of members in issues of global concern and we share many of these interests. However, we do not intend to take national government positions on the particular views presented in motions here or to vote on the outcome.

We will provide you with a list for the record of those resolutions on which the U.S. Government will refrain from engaging.

We would request that this statement be entered in full for the record in the report of this Congress.”

Chief Rapporteur’s note: In a letter to the IUCN Director General dated 21 October 2008, the US Department of State provided details of the US Government’s position on individual Motions, requesting that these positions be recorded in the record of the meeting and at the end of the final text of each adopted Motion.