



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SUNDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER, 1980

WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The Prime Minister, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, today announced the Commonwealth Government's proposals in relation to World Conservation Strategy. Mr. Fraser recalled that on 6 March, 1980 he had attended the national launching of the Strategy and had accepted it on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

The Strategy, which was jointly developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and National Resources (IUCN), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), seeks to integrate conservation and development objectives. It will require increased dialogue between conservationists and developers - both groups, in the past, have had misconceptions about priorities and objectives which need to be reconciled.

The Strategy acknowledges that economic development and the use of living resources are essential human activities and, further, that conservation is essential if sustainable development is to continue.

Mr. Fraser went on to say that the World Conservation Strategy is only meaningful if the key words "Conservation" and "Development" are clearly defined and understood.

Conservation may be defined as managing our natural resources so that they may produce appropriate benefits to the present generation while not jeopardising the needs of the future.

Development involves the application of resources to satisfy our needs and to improve the quality of life. It must take account of social and ecological factors as well as economic realities.

Mr. Fraser said that the major recommendation of the World Conservation Strategy is that a National Conservation Strategy should be developed in each country. The Prime Minister said that the Commonwealth had concluded a preliminary assessment of the World Conservation Strategy and that the States and the Northern Territory have agreed to collaborate with the Commonwealth in utilising this document to develop a National Conservation Strategy for Australia.

The Australian Strategy will be developed in two phases. First, the World Strategy Objectives and Recommendations will be considered in the context of Australian conditions, allowing for relevant existing and planned activities. Secondly, this will give rise to a draft Australian strategy, developed in consultation with State and Territory Governments taking into account the views of the wider community including industry and conservation bodies.

The Australian Strategy will form the basis for action plans and priority measures for implementation by Governments and non-government bodies.

Mr. Fraser noted that the examination of the World Conservation Strategy had shown that it was, to a significant extent, already being implemented in Australia. Mr. Fraser mentioned that important achievements by the Governments in Australia - Commonwealth, State and Local - include:

- . The establishment of protected areas to preserve unique eco-systems and species - the States, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth have established national Parks in their respective jurisdictions
- . The environmental assessment technique is widely applied to major development projects to ensure that environmental as well as economic factors are assessed when proposals are being considered
- . Arrangements have been agreed between the Commonwealth and the States to ensure that marine living resources are managed effectively - for example, the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have decided on co-operative arrangements to conserve the Great Barrier Reef.
- . The Commonwealth Government has enacted legislation to protect whales and the flora and fauna of Antarctica.
- . Australia is participating in "Bio-mass", an international study of marine living resources in the Southern oceans.
- . Both the Great Barrier Reef and the Kakadu National Park have been nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

Mr. Fraser concluded by noting that the World Conservation Strategy is an important, timely and well balanced document. He went on to say that while Australia's record in this field is outstanding, the Strategy was a valuable document which served to stimulate a more focussed approach to the management of living resources and to provide policy guidelines on how this can be carried out by Governments, conservationists and developers. Mr. Fraser said that he had been in contact with the Premiers and with the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, all of whom had agreed to participate in the development of a National Conservation Strategy in Australia.

Mr. Fraser concluded by noting that he would be advising the States and the Northern Territory of the results of the Commonwealth's preliminary consideration of the World Strategy and that he looked forward to further progress in consultation with the States, industry and with the wider community in implementing the strategy which will meet the particular needs of Australia and Australians.

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