

OPENING SPEECH BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC,
DR. VICTOR H. MARTINEZ

A distinguished thinker, founder of various of the institutions for the protection of the environment which now cover major parts of the world map - Lynton Caldwell - recently defined the difference between the Earth and the World. In the first he included Nature, and the human beings which populate it, all of which constitute a physical reality governed by its own laws of behaviour which overrule the human will. The World, according to this same thinker, is the manner in which humanity, that is to say the entity of human beings, understands and organizes its occupation of the earth.

We are gathered here, men and women from all parts of the earth, representatives of governments and of non-governmental organizations, each one filling a different role. We come from different countries and each one of us brings with him the point of view and the ideological position true to his or her culture and national reality, yet always faced by two realities: the earth and the world of each one of our People.

The increasing demand for human satisfaction by the modern world has led us to disregard the care that the earth asks of us. Thus, we have forgotten that the sine-qua-non condition necessary to carry on satisfying our needs in relation to our utilization of the earth is the very preservation of the intrinsic characteristics which make it what it is. It is for this reason that we should ask ourselves: when is a river a river, or when is it destined to be an open-air sewer; or even when is a school of fish a school of fish? Over and above that, we could ask ourselves whether a forest can carry on being called this when we eliminate a complex ecological system composed of thousands of species of fauna and flora, and replace it by a few commercial species. This, as simple as it may seem, is perhaps the starting point for any future thoughts.

The following questions are those which we must ask ourselves in order to come to an agreement: do we recognize that the earth, the root of our very own life, has its own needs? Do we know that if we do not accept this reality we cannot guarantee any development for the present and the future generations? Once these concepts are clarified we must look at what state our earth is in and in what possible context this development can take place. In this way, with this philosophical attitude, each population can determine the style of its own future and development, working around the compatibility between its culture and necessities and the realities of the earth, unique and absolute for all humanity, whose rules and regulations link us all. Accepting these principles allows us to be united in this field as a brotherhood, so as to face without flag distinction the challenge which we are universally beginning to perceive.

In this context, this meeting has a special significance in that it aspires, through international co-operation, to control commercial activity which depends upon wild fauna and flora, so as to safeguard their regenerative capacities. This implies preserving the quantitative characteristics of wildlife populations, so that they can carry out their ecological role and continue satisfying human necessities. The CITES treaty which today reunites us has an even more singular meaning: fundamentally to try and avoid the illegal international trafficking of wild fauna and flora and their products, third in economic importance after arms and drugs, with the peculiarity that it does not carry the same risks of punishment as do the first two. CITES is trying to be an international instrument sufficiently efficient to comply with the aims of the conservation of species. Argentina, convinced of the

importance of this, ratified the treaty in 1981, and since then has established many resolutions adopted by the government. Among other aspects, its traditionally conservationist policy addresses the problems of endangered species. It supported the inclusion of all cetaceans in Appendix I, forbidding all international trade in this species as of the 1st of January 1986. It is opportune to mention that in our country, since last year, the southern right whale is a "Natural Monument" covered by the maximum protection which the Argentinian law can offer.

Among other important themes, Argentina has supported the world protection of felidae and primates whose populations are considerably affected by the demands of consumer countries. At this meeting, Argentina will support proposals from various African states aimed at the conservation of elephants on that Continent by means of a new control system. The basis of this system is a result of the meeting of the Convention's Technical Committee, of which our country is a member, which took place in Brussels in June of last year. In conclusion, the Argentinian position with regard to CITES has responded to an ethical principle, where, in the case of scientific doubt with respect to the usage of the species in question, the conservation of the species in question prevails.

The effectiveness of the treaty has to be perfected for the good of all, but it will not be possible to improve it if we do not analyse its practice in the light of the North-South relationship. It is out of this relationship that are born the problems whose solution will finally determine the success of CITES. For this reason, it is necessary that they should always be taken into account when governments as well as non-governmental organizations involved with the environment seek the success of the agreement. We can see, for example, that the general economic situation of the countries of the South (and of Latin America in particular) is becoming more difficult, whether it is due to the international financial system that it supports, to the the reduction of its production mechanisms or to the growing poverty of its populations. These reasons, among others, often prevent the time lapse necessary for the recuperation of the renewable natural resources before exploiting them.

Thus, the situation in which wild fauna and flora is to be found, especially in developing countries, is one in which furtive over-exploitation occurs due to major human subsistence needs. This reality is aggravated if one considers, with regard to the effects of smuggling, the huge expanses of national frontiers poorly guarded by government institutions which lack political as well as economical support. In this way, the situation is taken advantage of by the international smugglers of wild species, who form a true "chain of corruption". These, made up of commercial links, as much in the "producer" countries as in the "consumer" countries, make use of this sad reality to respond to the demands of fashion which is becoming more and more sophisticated in the richer countries. Therefore, there are extremely important financial gains for some economic groups who, presumably, do not incorporate in their annual balance the loss for humanity that their practices bring about, nor the recuperation costs that it means for governments.

Thus, and notwithstanding the existence of CITES, an annual quantity of approximately 2,500,000 yacare skins leave Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil and Paraguay illegally towards the northern countries, exterminating the populations of this species in our region with the sole aim of feeding some of these "international chains of corruption". After saying all of this we ask ourselves: in what other context apart from that of the North-South relationship can an analysis of the effectiveness of CITES be useful? What further co-operation, out of the context of this relationship, could be initiated? Smuggling out of our countries exists, as in the case of drugs, in

as much as introduction into the centres of consumption of the northern countries is allowed. Evidently, the Conference of the Parties to CITES cannot ignore this reality and must initiate a more important and more effective co-operation coming from the countries of the North; for example, with more severe penalties, even if it means putting the penalties on a level with that corresponding to the trafficking of drugs and arms. Once this co-operation, in the form of a more efficient control on the demand for products in the "consumer" countries is guaranteed, the efforts that can be made in a parallel manner by the "producer" countries begin to have a meaning. In this way, inter-regional co-operation of those "producer" countries can be based as much on politics and harmonised legislation for the conservation of commercial species as on joint actions to avoid their illegal trafficking on a regional level. It is for this reason that we are pleased that the Conference has organised regional meetings in order to work out solutions together. This attitude coincides perfectly with the spirit of integration which Argentina promotes in the Latin American world, and which I am sure will help in our being able to jointly perfect the application of CITES in this part of the world.

With this spirit in mind, we would like to add that it would be very useful to explore the possibilities of regional co-operation with the Secretariat of the Convention, for the development of legislation which aims at a better application of CITES in each Party state.

We should not conclude without referring to that which we consider fundamental: the co-operation of the non-governmental organizations with governments in the task of preserving nature. As we have promised to open the meeting that one of these organizations is holding next Friday (26 April) in this same place, as a parallel activity to this meeting, we shall reserve a few considerations with respect to this until then.

Finally, we wish to take this opportunity to reiterate the appeal to the people, parliaments and governments of the world to lend their support to the declaration of peace and disarmament of New Delhi, made jointly by the Group of the Six, one of which is President Alfonsín of Argentina, whose motto, "Preservation of Life", is shared by the said group and by the world's environmentalists.

In this context, for love of life and love of peace, I wish to pass on the welcome to each one of you, congratulating you for your efforts and joining you in the spirit of co-operation which has so often characterized the CITES meetings. I declare open the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

It was my proud privilege to address the opening session of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties held at Gaborone exactly two years ago. I deem it a rare honour to have the same privilege today as I rise, on behalf of the CITES Standing Committee, to extend a warm welcome to everyone present here on this occasion, which marks the start of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

At the outset, may I say how deeply beholden we are to His Excellency Dr. Victor Martinez, Vice-President of the Argentine Republic, who has so kindly agreed to be with us and to deliver the inaugural address. This is a measure of the importance which His Excellency attaches to the objectives of CITES and the purposes of this meeting. We are equally delighted that the honourable Ministers and other dignitaries of the Argentine Government and members of the diplomatic community have found time to join us this morning, and I thank them all warmly on behalf of all the Parties to CITES.

Addressing the Gaborone meeting, I had referred to it as 'historic' for more than one reason. I now feel that this meeting is also making history for reasons more than one. First of all, this meeting marks the start of the second decade of CITES, the period of maturity. During the last couple of years, it has been said often that 'CITES has come of age'. This second decade will demonstrate whether this claim is really deserved or not. The maturity of 87 nations who today collectively stand for CITES will be on real test during this period.

This meeting is significant for yet another reason: it is taking place in a region which is not only a major producer of wild fauna and flora but also represents a dozen states, all of whom are now Parties to CITES. This is a development worthy of note since the first meeting of the CITES Parties held in 1976, when only four states of this region were adherents of CITES. This is a distinction unique for a region having so many countries and representing cultures, facets and interests which are as diverse as they are rich. May I take this opportunity to compliment the peoples and governments of all these states, for their wisdom is coming forward in such a manner as to strengthen the Convention, and for giving explicit recognition to the principle that it is only through mutual help and international co-operation that the full and continuing benefit of natural living resources can be secured for the larger good of humankind.

In this respect, our hosts, the Government of Argentina, are in the forefront in this part of the world. Though this state joined the CITES movement rather recently, it has taken significant strides by not only adopting the CITES controls but also undertaking a major revision of its wildlife laws, including a list of native species that are protected and whose products are prohibited from import and export. It is well known that Argentina is one of the granaries of the world. It also has a rich and diverse heritage of wildlife, whose preservation in perpetuity is of great importance to mankind in general. It is only appropriate that this meeting is being hosted in such a country, whose people and government have displayed determination in carrying forward the message of CITES in intent and by example. Needless to add that this determination is evident in ample measure in the excellent arrangements made for this meeting. I am sure I am expressing the sentiments of all the Parties and the participants to this meeting in felicitating our hosts and thanking them warmly for this effort, which should surely place one more firm and lasting slab on the edifice of CITES.

Much water has flown, no doubt, since the last such meeting at Gaborone in 1983. The agenda of the meeting covers a review of the progress made and we will have ample opportunity to attend to the major issues in the next few days. However, two aspects stand out and deserve special mention on this occasion.

The first relates to positive steps taken to strengthen regional co-operation during the last couple of years. This is best exemplified by the regional seminars held at Washington, Brussels and Kuala Lumpur, which helped, for the first time, in bringing together most of the Parties of Latin America, Africa and Asia, thus strengthening regional understanding and co-operation as well as increasing the effectiveness of CITES implementation. I have no doubt that these regional seminars have been very useful and similar efforts deserve to be encouraged in future.

The second important development is the move for the setting up of a strong and separate CITES Secretariat, bearing in mind the increase in the number of Parties and the need for providing better services to Parties. This move was initiated prior to the Gaborone meeting, but it is during the last two years that some concrete steps have been taken. As a result, fresh arrangements have been made with UNEP and the CITES Secretariat is now located in new premises at Lausanne in Switzerland. This move was supported and overseen by the Standing Committee on behalf of the Parties and rendered possible with the active help and co-operation of UNEP and IUCN, with whom CITES has a long and abiding association and partnership. Let me add, however, that this is only a step forward in the direction we have chosen. The logical culmination lies in the adoption of the financial amendment to the Convention, which will hopefully be accomplished in the near future.

The intellectual, technical and scientific links with the IUCN remain as strong as ever. This is as it should be, considering that the Convention is as much the result of an IUCN initiative, the role played by IUCN in the elaboration of the Convention text, and the support provided by IUCN, in co-operation with UNEP, for the administration of the Convention as well as the calls made by the Parties, from time to time, for the provision of technical and other expertise by the IUCN and its components. The presence of the Director General of IUCN at this meeting is itself an indication of the continuing and close relationship between CITES and IUCN in the larger cause of world conservation.

With UNEP, our relationship is closer than ever before. This is obvious considering the requirements of Article XII of the Convention, which call upon the Executive Director of UNEP to provide the Secretariat to the Convention and the active support and involvement of UNEP, from the very beginning, in promoting the cause of CITES and particularly in managing the Trust Fund. I have no doubt that these bonds will be strengthened further in the future. I am particularly happy that the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP and his colleagues are with us to lend support to the long and abiding relationship between the two organisations.

It is well recognised that the main objective of CITES is the protection, through international co-operation, of wild fauna and flora against exploitation through international trade. CITES is, therefore, mainly a conservation convention which requires the co-operation of both importing and exporting countries for an effective implementation of trade controls. This involves the 'consumer' as much as the 'producer' states. While this philosophy is now widely understood and CITES has a large coverage on a world-wide basis, significant gaps still remain in geographical coverage and deficiencies as well as inadequacies in implementation and enforcement are

continually being noticed. There is also the problem of a lack of financial commitment by some Parties, which places a heavy burden on the contributing Parties and threatens the smooth operation of the Convention. It is obvious that the effectiveness of CITES can be secured only if all concerned work together in concert to remove the gaps and inadequacies and if each Party makes its contribution, financial or otherwise, in fully promoting the cause of CITES.

In a world beset with acute problems of hunger, want and dwindling natural resources, the only hope lies in mutual help and co-operation and the Gandhian ethic of restraint and frugal use of natural resources. To this end, let a powerful call go out from this Conference of the Parties for creating deeper understanding and acceptance of such principles among all people and nations of the world.

Ultimately, it has to be understood that CITES is only a means to an end: the end being human survival and well-being. Conventions like CITES and documents like the World Conservation Strategy and the World Charter for Nature are, in effect, only instruments to awaken the human conscience, on a world wide basis, for this ultimate purpose. Therefore, the significance and success of this meeting will eventually lie in the contribution it makes in arousing the conscience of the world community specifically for the purposes of CITES and generally for the larger cause of international conservation.

In this task, the non-governmental organizations have a special role, and I am happy that so many of them from different parts of the world are present here to lend their support. I might emphasize that the active involvement of NGOs is a unique feature of CITES, which has, in a way, set a precedent for other international conventions to follow. At Gaborone, I had called upon all NGOs to redouble their efforts in spreading the gospel of CITES. May I repeat this call today in recognition of the important role which they have in this respect and recognizing that the need for this is greater now than ever before.

Before concluding, I would like to quote the Late Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who became a legend in her own time as a dedicated champion of nature conservation and whose sudden and most tragic demise six months back is a great loss to the world conservation movement. I would like to recall what she had said while addressing the plenary session of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972. I quote:

"One cannot be truly human and civilized unless one looks upon not only all fellow-men but all creation with the eyes of a friend."

"It has been my experience that people who are at cross purposes with nature are cynical about mankind and ill-at-ease with themselves. Modern man must re-establish an unbroken link with nature and with life. He must again learn to invoke the energy of growing things and to recognize, as did the ancients in India centuries ago, that one can take from the Earth and atmosphere only so much as one puts back into them. In their hymn to Earth, the sages of the Atharva Veda chanted:

'What of thee I dig out, let that quickly grow over, Let me not hit thy vitals, or thy heart.'

So can man himself be vital and of good heart and conscious of his responsibility." (Unquote).

Let this be the central message coming out of this conference.

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, MR. JOSEPH C. WHEELER

Mr. Vice-President, Mr. Chairman of the CITES Standing Committee, Director General of IUCN, Excellencies, Members of the Government and Diplomatic Community, delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a very special honour for me to be here today to represent UNEP at the beginning of this important meeting. At the same time, I very much regret that UNEP's Executive Director, Dr. Mostafa Tolba, has been told by his doctors not to travel this month because I know how much he was looking forward to being here himself. For Dr. Tolba CITES is one of the most important examples of international co-operation in the field of conservation and environment.

We observe today the 10th Anniversary of the coming into force of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. And what better place to do so than the vast and beautiful country of Argentina, a land graced with a panorama of animal and plant habitats, ranging from the magnificent sub-tropical forests of the North, to the rich soils of Pampa, to the steppes of Patagonia, and to the Tierra del Fuego.

From this geographic and climatic diversity originates a rich animal life, ranging from primates, spotted cats, crocodiles and parrots in the North, to the sea elephants, seals and penguins of the South, and to the camelidea and rhea in between. This richness of wild fauna is intimately linked with a flora of equivalent importance and variety. Together they constitute Argentina's irreplaceable natural heritage.

The anniversary we celebrate today marks ten years of effort to preserve that natural heritage here and everywhere in the world. We recognize that the creatures we use for the enrichment of our lives are a renewable resource, but also that their supply is not unlimited when they are utilized unwisely or indiscriminately. When well-managed, all species serve mankind; but recognizing the limit to their supply and enforcing measures to ensure that this limit is not breached is the reason for the existence of the Convention.

The cause of rational use of wildlife resources has once again brought numerous groups under one roof: a full range of NGOs, representatives from trade associations, officials from governments, scientists, administrators, diplomats, lawyers and representatives of industries. Under other circumstances it might be expected that such a gathering would produce nothing but frustration and disagreement. But as we have discovered so often in UNEP when we are involved with international accord on environmental issues, the differences that might account for such frustration take a back seat to the true priority at hand.

Argentina provides a good example of the importance of CITES, as well as some of the constraints countries face when attempting to put the Convention into effect. The application of CITES at a national and international level is a challenge for the Argentinian authorities. They must face numerous conflicts arising from the international trade in wild fauna and flora, and must cater to these with unavoidable economic and social realities in mind.

The value of CITES is that it encompasses both the need to protect endangered species, and the imperatives of national economies. It is much the same in other environmental fields such as industrial pollution or protection of regional seas: one weighs the costs of an environmental protection measure,

understanding that many enterprises can never truly be termed "profitable" if they result in irreversible damage to our resources. And what could be more permanent or irreversible than the extinction of a species?

I think all of us recognize the limitations of any conservation convention. Just as we cannot propose a ban on all air pollution or all water pollution or all harmful chemicals, we cannot propose a total ban on the trade in species. This would be a purely sentimental and an entirely unrealistic approach to the problem. But neither can we allow commercial interests alone to guide our use of wildlife resources, just as we would be mistaken to let them guide policy regarding pollution, chemical manufacturing, or agriculture. The answer to this dilemma is in the preamble of the Convention, which calls for a proper balance between conservation requirements and economic considerations.

In the last ten years our understanding of the working of the Convention has evolved, and now a real recognition exists of the legitimate commercial value of trade in certain species, and the right of developing countries to that trade. In other words, the evolution of CITES has paralleled the evolution of conservation from an implication of protection to one of rational utilization. This is in accord with the policy of conservation for development prescribed by the World Conservation Strategy. What we seek is a balance between trade and the real threat to species. It is by no means an easy balance to strike, but we must try.

The answer lies in compromise. Everyone recognizes, in one way or another, the vital importance of wildlife resources. The conservation and rational use of these resources cannot be achieved if compromises - or, if you prefer sacrifices - are not made: sacrifices from the exporting countries which must assume their responsibilities as guardians of the world's wildlife heritage; sacrifices from the importing countries, which have to set aside economic interests when these are seen to conflict with the imperative of conserving nature; sacrifices from NGOs, which have to recognize that the first objective of conservation is the welfare of human beings; sacrifices from traders who must limit their level of exploitation to one where nature's capital is not threatened; and finally sacrifices from supporting organizations which have to adjust to CITES decisions and needs.

But I prefer not to look at these measures as "sacrifices". Is it a sacrifice to ensure that a component of our environment is not destroyed beyond retrieval? Is it a sacrifice when a power plant must cut its profits to install anti-air-pollution scrubbers? Is it a sacrifice when a chemical plant must spend money finding safe ways to dispose of dangerous wastes? Obviously not. It is part of the contribution all of us must make in all walks of life to safeguard resources and protect the earth and its bounty for future generations.

Because of UNEP's close involvement with this Convention from the beginning, we have a strong interest in seeing how it evolves in the near future, say over the next ten years. From our point of view some vital improvements would include: expansion of membership; the commitment to prompt payments by the contracting Parties; a readiness to de-list species once they have been proven to be out of danger - which would be quite consistent with the spirit of this Convention as it has evolved; and most important, stricter enforcement: customs officials in particular must be educated in the guidelines of the Convention, and the public at large must be made more aware that when they bring some types of goods across international borders they may be tampering with an international agreement that forbids such traffic. We could go further and initiate a massive and highly-visible campaign directed at tourists, located at all customs offices, warning them of the danger or illegalities of transporting endangered species.

As you are all aware, in 1984 the CITES Secretariat underwent a major change in its structure. The Standing Committee of the Conference of the Parties thoroughly analysed the previous arrangement, by which the CITES Secretariat was provided by the IUCN under a project contract with UNEP. After the completion of the analysis and following its eleventh meeting held in Gland at the beginning of July 1984, the Standing Committee recommended that direct responsibilities for the Secretariat be established by UNEP and that the Secretariat be located outside of the building occupied by the IUCN and the World Wildlife Fund. UNEP's Executive Director accepted these recommendations, and on November first of last year the CITES Secretariat became a unit of UNEP and, on the same day, moved to its new quarters in Lausanne.

We in UNEP must admit, though, that our decision to agree to the recommendations of the Standing Committee was made with mixed feelings. On the one hand we have been impressed by the tremendous growth of the Convention. Within the last few years CITES has reached maturity and it is natural that this growing process should be reflected in its structure. On the other hand, we were concerned that the benefit of the scientific and technical association with the IUCN might be lost in the transfer. We are now reassured on this point, and we are in the process of completing a memorandum of understanding between UNEP and the IUCN setting out the framework for the legal, scientific and technical co-operation between the IUCN and CITES Secretariats.

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to the IUCN for all its support and devotion in the early stages of the Convention. A great part of the credit for the evolution of CITES rests with IUCN and its membership. The physical separation shall not, in any manner, affect the necessity for close co-operation in the pursuit of our objectives.

I would like to conclude by urging all Parties which have not adopted the financial amendment of the Convention to do so as soon as possible. Non-payment and late payment of the level of contributions that the fourth meeting of the Parties agreed to in Botswana has been a major problem in managing the Secretariat. If the Parties budget for the costs of the Secretariat on the assumption that all Parties will pay their contributions and pay on time and this assumption is found to be invalid, the Trust Fund will run out of cash and the Secretariat will not be able to operate as you plan. This is not a hypothetical situation: this is the situation as it stands today. Your Secretariat does not yet have the money to implement its approved budget for 1985. Even the costs of holding this conference have not been covered by contributions of the Parties up to the time I am speaking. We in UNEP have been issuing money to the Secretariat from hand to mouth from day to day and I have to say this is not how the affairs of the Secretariat should be managed. This is a matter to which your Finance Committee must give the most careful consideration during the conference. They must come up with a forward budget for the 1986-1987 biennium together with a financial plan. We should have the resources necessary to cover 1986 expenditures in the bank by the end of 1985. Your actions here should be designed to achieve this. If you are faced with a situation in which some Parties are not prepared to pay contributions for the maintenance of the Secretariat through the Trust Fund, this must be taken into account at the outset when you approve the structure of the budget and its financing plan.

Looking to the future, let us hope that CITES takes its place among a broad spectrum of international agreements, which will become fixtures of the international scene, not just isolated pockets of concerted effort. In the environmental movement we dream of a day when these critical issues are placed at the forefront of every nation's development agenda - when all concerned are convinced that in the long run to do so is to safeguard resources, human welfare, and development itself.

Mr. Vice-President, as I have indicated, this is a very important meeting in the life of CITES. On behalf of UNEP, and I am sure on behalf of all of us gathered here today I want to thank your government and the people of Argentina for the facilities and hospitality extended to this meeting of the Parties. We are very happy to be here in this lovely country - a country which above all cares deeply about the issues that are to be discussed in these next two weeks.

SPEECH BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
DR. KENTON R. MILLER

Mr. Chairman of the Standing Committee, Mr. Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Regional Director for UNEP in Latin America, Mr. Secretary General of CITES, Excellencies, Honorable Ministers, distinguished guests, fellow delegates and participants to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES:

I am delighted to address this distinguished gathering as it provides the opportunity for IUCN to renew to the contracting Parties to the Convention our highest expression of support and active involvement in the work of the Convention.

I am also delighted that this meeting is being held in Buenos Aires, where your Argentine hosts will not only provide you with marvellous meeting facilities, but also demonstrate to you the many advances taken by Argentina in the cause of nature conservation.

IUCN has traditionally been asked to address meetings of the contracting Parties to CITES, given our central role in the development and promotion of the Convention and because of our collaboration with UNEP in providing the Secretariat to the Convention. We have been very proud of our history of involvement with CITES and look forward to a continuing fruitful relationship.

It would seem to be useful to recount briefly IUCN's historical linkages to CITES in view of the recent evolution of Secretariat arrangements.

As the contracting Parties are aware, the concept for CITES was first raised as the subject of a Resolution at IUCN's 1963 General Assembly in Nairobi. Soon after, on its own initiative, IUCN developed draft texts for the Convention and took the lead in consulting governments about the texts until the United States sponsored the 1973 Washington Conference, at which time CITES was adopted.

The Convention indicates that the Executive Director of UNEP is to provide the Secretariat; UNEP subsequently decided to contract that assignment to IUCN for reasons of technical expertise and practicality. This arrangement functioned well for the best part of a decade.

As the contracting Parties are also aware, the initial arrangements, though practical at the time of the adoption of the Convention, were no longer appropriate given present conditions with the total costs for the Convention being assumed by the contracting Parties as of the beginning of 1984. Therefore, IUCN offered alternative arrangements for Convention administration to the Standing Committee of the Conference of the Parties, but ultimately the Standing Committee requested the Executive Director of UNEP to place the Secretariat under the full control of the Secretary General, subject to the direct administrative supervision of the Executive Director of UNEP.

The Executive Director of UNEP has consequently requested IUCN to continue to provide scientific and technical services to the CITES Secretariat. This co-operation is the subject of a co-operative agreement being worked out between UNEP and IUCN and with the involvement of the CITES Secretary General.

We believe that this present collaborative arrangement will provide valuable benefits for international nature conservation. IUCN will be pleased to continue to associate freely and closely with CITES and to continue to provide the whole range of technical and policy support which it has given to the Convention in the past, including the involvement of senior IUCN, legal and technical staff at this meeting.

When the CITES Secretariat was moved to Lausanne, I felt compelled to inform the IUCN membership of the background of the matter. I would like to share with you the final paragraph in that note as it remains the key policy of IUCN in regard to CITES and other major conservation conventions:

"Whatever institutional forms conservation's vitally important international agreements may take, one thing is certain: IUCN is always ready to place its scientific and technical knowledge at their disposal and to provide unbiased information, informed analysis and realistic policy support to their Parties to help enable them to fulfill their international conservation commitments."

I would urge all governments to strengthen the partnership which clearly exist, hand in hand with intergovernmental institutions and NGOs (like IUCN); to ensure that the CITES Secretariat can do its work with our fullest support, financial and other forms; in this way CITES will provide an increasingly important components of the global conservation efforts.

I wish you the greatest success in your deliberations here in Buenos Aires.