



## PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release:**

25 November 2004

### CALL FOR UN ACTION ON HIGH SEAS DESTRUCTION GAINS MOMENTUM

25 November, Bangkok: The IUCN World Conservation Congress has adopted a resolution calling for United Nations (UN) action to protect the world's oceans from high seas bottom trawl fishing.

The resolution, sponsored by the Costa Rican government and 11 organisations, passed with clear support in both chambers of the congress, achieving a majority of 62 votes in favour to 35 against by governments and 281 to five by non governmental organizations. The resolution calls for the UN General Assembly to impose a moratorium on the destructive practice of high seas bottom trawling.

"This is an important breakthrough in the campaign to preserve the fragile habitats of the high seas," said Matthew Gianni, political advisor to the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition. "The UN General Assembly failed to take decisive action on this issue earlier this month but the support of the IUCN and its government members will bring additional strength to the campaign for a moratorium next year."

The resolution calling for a moratorium was most vociferously opposed by Canada, Japan and Spain. Spain has been the most active nation opposing any limitations on high seas bottom trawling and is responsible for around 40% of the high seas catch. "A few hundred bottom trawl vessels from a handful of countries are roaming the high seas, fishing as they please" said Randall Arauz, of the Costa Rican Sea Turtle Restoration Program, who spoke in favour of the resolution during the plenary debate on Wednesday afternoon (23<sup>rd</sup> November). "The high seas are the world's global commons and yet these few fleets benefit from the fisheries while destroying deep sea biodiversity to the detriment of all humankind."

**Notes to Editors:** The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition is an alliance of nearly 30 international organisations, representing millions of people around the world, which is calling for a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. Scientists increasingly recognise the deep oceans as one of the earth's great reservoirs of biodiversity. Estimates for the number of species inhabiting the oceans depths are as high as 10 million species.

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