

VIII. DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ANIMAL AND PLANT LIFE

- i Each living creature on earth has the right to exist, independent of its usefulness to humans.
- ii Every effort should be made to preserve all species of animal and plant life from premature extinction. Special protection should be afforded to those species whose survival is already threatened.
- iii Suitable living conditions for animal and plant life should be guaranteed in order to safeguard their existence, taking into account the natural ecosystems and necessary minimum populations concerned.
- iv The right to exist of animal and plant life may, in principle, be violated when necessary for the survival of humans. In every human act affecting this right, the need for violation should be carefully balanced against human interests.
- v To guarantee a long-term existence of humans, animals and plant life, humans should regulate their own populations and adapt their patterns of production and consumption with a view to the least possible violation of the right to exist of animal and plant life.
- vi Should control of organisms noxious to humans and their livestock be necessary, nature should be used as an ally wherever possible. Control measures should be taken in such a way as not to affect other species.
- vii Unnecessary suffering of animals caused by humans should be prevented in every possible way.
- viii Wild animals and wild plant life should be left in their natural environment whenever possible. Living conditions of wild animals and wild plant life removed by humans from their natural environment, should correspond as closely as possible to their natural conditions of life. Agriculture, the farming of livestock and fishery should preferably be conducted in an ecologically responsible way.

This text has been framed, with the help of various experts, by Mr. P. van Heijnsbergen, and published by him in Environmental Policy and Law 3 (1977) 85-86, with a brief explanation. Mr. van Heijnsbergen, Volkenrecht, Herengracht 508, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, is an assistant professor of international public law, University of Amsterdam. We are glad to recommend this Declaration to serious perusal; it has many interesting implications. Readers' comments are welcome.