

2.58 Ecological management issues relating to large dams

RECOGNIZING that the Mission Statement of IUCN – The World Conservation Union commits the Union to ensuring that any use of natural resources should be ecologically sustainable;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the increasing importance that the international community places on ensuring that any use of natural resources should be ecologically sustainable;

ACKNOWLEDGING that in all societies, riverine ecosystems are valued for their ecological, economic, social, and cultural values by both local communities and wider society;

NOTING that in all societies, large and small dams are built to meet human needs such as drinking water supply, food and fibre production, flood control, and/or energy generation;

ALSO RECOGNIZING that a wide range of ecological, economic, and social costs have accompanied such benefits to society;

FURTHER NOTING that solutions to the many almost irreversible problems, such as the loss of biodiversity and adverse impacts on ecological processes (e.g. site specific impacts on riverine and aquatic ecosystems, water quality, soils), will require major intellectual, economic, and social efforts by governments, land managers, and the wider community; and

ACKNOWLEDGING that there have been increasing worldwide efforts to address the problems arising from inappropriate construction and/or management of dams;

The World Conservation Congress at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan, 4–11 October 2000:

1. CALLS ON all governments to:

- (a) recognize the important role of natural ecosystems in contributing to sustainable development by:
 - (i) ensuring that all major development investment, such as dam construction, will seek to conserve and enhance the ecological services provided by river basin ecosystems; and
 - (ii) avoiding any actions that diminish such values;
- (b) recognize the importance of biodiversity and promote its conservation by ensuring that dam projects will be reassessed if they are shown to have a high probability of having a significant detrimental effect on species diversity or ecosystem integrity;
- (c) recognize the need for the precautionary approach because of the high degree of uncertainty associated with dam development actions affecting river basin ecosystems, dams, and associated land use activities;

- (d) ensure effective public participation in planning, design, and management of dams through open processes that ensure there will be a full sharing of available information, especially with local communities and institutions, including identification of knowledge gaps and confidence levels;
 - (e) adopt an adaptive management approach if, notwithstanding the above reservations, a decision is made to construct a dam, by ensuring that design features will include the capacity for flexible adjustments to meet future environmental needs including environmental flows, water quality, and sustainability of wetlands; and
 - (f) promote the development of national and sub-national, where appropriate, legislative or policy frameworks to ensure that all uses of river basin ecosystems will be ecologically sustainable;
2. REQUESTS the Director General to ensure that the recommendations outlined above are taken fully into account in the development of IUCN's Overall Programme until the next World Conservation Congress.

This Resolution was adopted by a show of hands. In calling for a show of hands, the delegation of the State member China made a formal Statement for the Record indicating its opposition to the Motion on the grounds that it "does not take a comprehensive consideration to coordinate protection of ecosystems and social development. It has the potential to detain any benefits that human beings could get from dams. That deflects the comprehensive objective of IUCN and is against the objective of sustainable development". The Statement of the delegation of China is reproduced in full in the Congress Proceedings. State and Agency members United States abstained from adoption of this Resolution.