

17.56 NAM CHOAN DAM, THAILAND

REMINDING the Government of Thailand that the 5000 km of tropical forest in the Thung Yai and Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries, and especially the lowland riverine forest, are of regional importance for the conservation of threatened and endangered species, such as the banteng, gaur, tiger, elephant, green peafowl and many species of plants, and that these forests are of national importance for watershed protection;

AWARE that the area has been proposed for inclusion on the World Heritage List;

FURTHER AWARE of the proposed construction of the Nam Choan Dam on the Kwai Yai River, which could severely disrupt the ecology of the area;

RECOGNIZING:

- a. Thailand's need to achieve energy self-sufficiency;
- b. The efforts of the Thai Government to bring an end to forest destruction and maintain 40 per cent of Thailand's land area under forest cover;
- c. The progress that has been made in establishing a comprehensive system of protected areas;
- d. That large dams have often failed to achieve the benefits used to justify their construction and have sometimes resulted in serious environmental costs;

RECALLING the concern expressed elsewhere by this General Assembly with regard to the impacts of development assistance on genetic and other natural resources, and that these impacts can be beneficial or adverse depending on how well conservation and development are integrated;

The General Assembly of IUCN, at its 17th Session in San Jose, Costa Rica, 1-10 February, 1988:

1. RECOMMENDS to the Government of Thailand that:
 - a. A complete assessment be made of the impact that the Nam Choan Dam would have on the environment, archaeology, geology and social systems of Thung Yai and Huai Kha Khaeng Sanctuaries and the western region of Thailand;
 - b. An assessment be made of energy producing options that would not endanger the biological integrity of the Thung Yai and Huai Kha Khaeng Sanctuaries;
 - c. An assessment be made of the real costs of the construction and maintenance of the Nam Choan Dam to reflect accurately the considerable loss in socio-economic values of the Thung Yai and Huai Kha Khaeng forests, wildlife, plants, their importance as a major watershed, and their significance as an integral part of the diminishing natural heritage of Thailand;
 - d. A decision to construct the Nam Choan Dam should not be taken until the results of these assessments are carefully considered by the Thai people.
2. RECOMMENDS to multilateral, bilateral and private funding institutions that they withhold support for the Nam Choan Dam project pending satisfactory completion of these environmental impact studies.