

## **18.57 Tehri Dam Project, India**

RECOGNIZING that the Himalayas are one of the world's zones of intense seismic activity owing to stresses which are constantly building up by the movement of the Indian Plate against the Asian Plate;

CONSIDERING that such build-up of energy has been released with earthquakes of magnitude 8 or more on the Richter Scale, in three zones covering the North Western, Central and Eastern Himalayas, in the years 1905, 1934 and 1950 respectively;

CONSIDERING also that the proposed Tehri Dam is located near a major fault in the seismic gap where stresses have not been released for the past 200 years, thus greatly increasing the likelihood of an earthquake of greater than magnitude 8 in the foreseeable future, near the area where the Tehri dam site is located;

CONSIDERING that the Tehri Dam has been designed to withstand an earthquake of only magnitude 7.2 on the Richter Scale;

AWARE that the Environmental Appraisal Committee of the Ministry of Environment, Government of India, had declined environmental clearance for the Tehri Dam on grounds of safety, environmental destruction of the ecologically rich Bhagirathi Valley, and dislocation of 80,000 villagers;

GRAVELY CONCERNED that the top seismic experts of India, USA and other countries have expressed the opinion that the present design is unsafe as it does not provide for an earthquake of magnitude 8 or more;

APPREHENDING that the Government of India is proceeding, despite the above risk, with the construction of the Tehri dam;

GRAVELY CONCERNED that a resultant failure of the proposed dam would wipe out the cities of Hardwar and Rishikesh, with potential loss of millions of lives downstream of the dam, and that, if built, the dam would dislocate and pauperize 85,600 indigenous people due to land submergence, destroy 4,705 hectares of natural forest, the habitat of 12 rare and endangered species of flora, and 2,862 hectares of prime agricultural land, against a benefit of only an estimated 40 years' life of the dam for peak power generation;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

CALLS UPON the Government of India, the Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Government of the USSR, which is giving financial and technical support for the project of the Tehri Dam, to refer the safety issue of the Tehri Dam to the top recognized seismologists of the world, and experts in plate tectonics, before giving clearance for the construction of the Tehri Dam.

