

REC 3.110 Promoting responsible management of water resources in the Mekong Region

RECOGNIZING the importance of the Mekong River and other sources for potable water, irrigation, transport and a host of other environmental services for the day-to-day wellbeing of the peoples in the Mekong Region, which holds a significant population living in poverty;

RECALLING the priority accorded to water, by Heads of State, in the United Nations *Millennium Development Goals* agreed in 2000, and during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, Johannesburg, 2002), as a fundamental resource for economic growth, health, agriculture, and poverty reduction;

CONCERNED for the peoples of the Mekong Region whose traditional sources of water have been exceedingly polluted and unsustainably exploited;

FURTHER CONCERNED that freshwater habitats are degraded at a significant rate, and that these habitats are home to a number of important aquatic organisms, including freshwater fishes, which are threatened with extinction; and

RECALLING that Decision VII/4 of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Kuala Lumpur, 2004), recommended governments to “establish and maintain comprehensive, adequate and representative systems of inland water ecosystems within the framework of integrated catchment/watershed basin management”;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

RECOMMENDS that Mekong Region States:

- (a) acknowledge and reaffirm the current threats to water resources, and take appropriate action to protect and conserve water for future generations;
- (b) enhance dialogue and cooperation to adopt an ecosystem approach to the management of water resources;
- (c) address issues of sustainable use of their water resources, keeping in mind the pivotal role of water in the day-to-day life of poor people in this region and its contribution to the ecological services in the region; every construction on the mainstream of the Mekong river such as hydroelectrical and irrigation dams should be based on common agreement of related countries; and
- (d) establish a system of freshwater protected areas within the framework of integrated river basin management.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, provided the following statement for the record:

The Delegation of the State Member of China is disappointed with the process followed in considering this motion. It runs counter to the spirit of goodwill and consensus building which is a great value of the Union.

The Delegation has a strong objection to operative paragraph (c) of this Recommendation, which is not consistent with the positive views and understanding expressed by environment ministers of the Mekong Region countries in the high-level roundtable discussion during the WCC in Bangkok.

The Chinese Government wishes to reiterate that China attaches great importance to comprehensive assessment of water resources projects in the Mekong Region, taking into account economic, social and environmental impact and interests of all parties.

China is actively engaged in and stands ready to enhance dialogue and cooperation among all countries on sustainable development in the Mekong Region.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x).

The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record:

State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.