

WCC-2012-Rec-150-EN

Protecting Mavrovo National Park, Macedonia (FYR)

NOTING that Mavrovo National Park ranks among the three national parks in Macedonia (FYR), classified as Category II by IUCN;

ALSO NOTING that Mavrovo National Park is an internationally Important Plant Area, a Globally Important Bird Area, a Key Biodiversity Area and an Emerald Network Site; it contains thirteen European threatened habitats and numerous locally endemic and/or threatened plant and animal species listed on the annexes of the Bern Convention;

FURTHER NOTING that these threatened species include the only remaining breeding population for the Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx* ssp. *balcanicus*, Buresh 1941), recently assessed as Critically Endangered according to IUCN categories and criteria (unpublished thesis), and a significant population of the European Brown Bear;

FURTHER NOTING that Mavrovo National Park contains one of the last remaining major stands of pristine beech forest in Macedonia and in the Balkan region;

CONCERNED that the Macedonian (FYR) authorities are planning to build two major hydro-electric power plants, dams and associated infrastructure within Mavrovo National Park, at Boshkov Most in the south of the Park and at Lukovo Pole in the north;

FURTHER CONCERNED that several other small hydro-electric power plants are also planned for development within Mavrovo National Park;

ALARMED that the hydro-electric power plant development of Lukovo Pole will be placed in the most biologically sensitive region of the Mavrovo National Park containing the most threatened biodiversity, and will destroy a biological corridor within the European Green Belt which is crucial for the survival of the Balkan Lynx;

FURTHER ALARMED that there is no Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Strategy for Renewable Energy Use within Macedonia covering these developments, and that the Environment Impact Assessment conducted for one of the projects does not accurately reflect the views of the distribution and importance of biodiversity in Mavrovo from international, regional and national experts, and therefore fails to adequately assess the risks posed to the populations of important species;

AWARE that these developments contravene international commitments that the Macedonian authorities have ratified, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), especially Aichi Targets 11 (conserving networks) and 12 (extinction of threatened species prevented) of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* and the CBD's *Global Strategy for Plant Conservation*, and the Bern Convention; and

NOTING that correspondence from IUCN to the Macedonian authorities on this issue (December 2011) has not been answered to date (May 2012);

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. EXPRESSES strong concern to the Macedonian (FYR) authorities about the potential damage of the proposed hydro-electric power plants to biodiversity within Mavrovo National Park, and about insufficient compliance with national law and international commitments;

2. CALLS on the Macedonian (FYR) authorities to properly implement its existing international commitments and adhere to the non-regression principle, and thus to abandon plans to develop hydro-electric power within Mavrovo National Park;
3. FURTHER CALLS on the World Bank to comply with its operational policy OP4.04 and on the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to comply with its policy PR6, with regard to the Boshkov Most and Lukovo Pole hydro-electric power plant developments, and to undertake thorough and full consultation with biodiversity experts in the field;
4. REQUESTS the Director General of IUCN to write to the World Bank and the EBRD to strengthen the implementation of policy OP4.04 and PR6; and to request the Macedonian (FYR) government to guarantee the protection of Mavrovo National Park and to abandon the projects because they are conflicting with national law and international commitments; and
5. REQUESTS that, to the extent possible within available resources, the Director General, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) undertake an independent assessment of the existing and planned hydro-electric power plants and the impact they have on biodiversity with Mavrovo National Park.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.