

WCC-2020-Res-111-EN

Protection of Andes-Amazon rivers of Peru: the Marañón, Ucayali, Huallaga and Amazonas, from large-scale infrastructure projects

RECALLING Resolutions 1.51 *Indigenous Peoples, Mineral and Oil Extraction, Infrastructure and Development Works* (Montreal, 1996) and 2.34 *Multilateral and bilateral financial institutions and projects impacting on biodiversity and natural features* (Amman, 2000), as well as Resolutions 2.19 *Responding to the Recommendations from the World Commission on Dams* (Amman, 2000), 19.29 *Dam Construction, Irrigation and Water Diversions* and 19.44 *Water Regimes of Rivers, Floodplains and Wetlands* (both adopted in Buenos Aires, 1994);

CONSIDERING that eight major Andean Amazon river basins, of which five are in Peru (Madre de Dios, Ucayali, Marañón, Napo and Putumayo), have some of the longest free-flowing river stretches in the world, contain high levels of sensitive biodiversity, and are critical for connectivity, sediment and water flow for the highly productive ecosystems in the lowland Amazon, including the floodplains in the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve and the largest and most complex wetland in Peru, the Abanico del Pastaza;

AWARE that the Amazon Basin is home to over 2,400 known species of freshwater fish, of which nearly half are endemic, and that the fragmentation of Andes-Amazon connectivity could particularly impact migratory freshwater fish that are a vital source of protein for people in the Amazon Basin;

RECOGNISING that in Peru these rivers support over 14 indigenous ethnic groups, comprising over 424 communities that depend on these rivers and associated ecosystems for their livelihoods and culture, with local people consuming up to 500g of fish a day, and therefore these rivers play a key role with regards to local populations' food security;

NOTING that several Peruvian cities and local communities in the Amazon Basin, depend on the resources from these rivers and associated ecosystems for food and economic activities;

CONCERNED that an increasing number of infrastructure projects in Peru, including dams and connectivity (Amazon Waterway) proposals based on dredging these rivers, are being carried out with very low environmental and social standards, poor citizen participation mechanisms, a failure to identify and incorporate ancestral knowledge of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge of local communities, insufficient technical studies on the justification of these projects and their negative social and environmental impacts, including impacts on biodiversity and fish migration patterns, toxicological impacts from the disturbance of sediments, and impacts on indigenous peoples and local communities;

CONCERNED that 20 hydro-dam sites in the Marañón river were declared in 2011 of national interest, for which five proposals have been granted concessions, of which one is already in operation, two have expired, and two have valid concessions and could begin construction; and

CONSIDERING that there is local and indigenous opposition to major infrastructure projects, including opposition to the Amazon Waterway Project by the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESP) and Peru's main indigenous peoples' federations *Organización de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente* (ORPIO), ORPIO, *Coordinadora Regional de los Pueblos Indígenas de San Lorenzo* (CORPI-SL) and *Organización Regional Aidesep Ucayali* (ORAU), and considering that the environmental impact assessment received over 400 observations from governmental institutions and civil society, and that the agreements regarding the prior consultation of indigenous communities had not been fully complied with; and ALSO CONSIDERING the opposition to the Chadín II hydro-dam project by the local communities of Tupén Grande and Mendán;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. CALLS ON the Director General to:

- a. send a letter to the President of Peru conveying the appeal in operative paragraph 3 of this Motion regarding the importance of maintaining the free-flowing nature (current connectivity status) of the Marañón River and of compliance with Peru's environmental and social standards for large infrastructure projects, as well as the importance of creating a legal framework for the protection of emblematic free-flowing rivers in Peru; and
- b. offer, as far as possible, technical support to Peruvian organisations that are IUCN Members, as well as to the Peruvian Government, in relation to the content of this Motion;

2. URGES the Republic of Peru to:

- a. Re-evaluate the prioritisation of the Amazon Waterway Project in the current technical conditions, from the list of projects in the National Infrastructure for competitiveness Plan and to prioritise sustainable alternatives for promoting safe and improved Amazonian river transportation without dredging, through the creation of a space for technical and multicultural dialogue that includes the participation and proposals of indigenous peoples and local communities; and
- b. communicate to the communities that would be directly and indirectly impacted by the Chadin II and Veracruz hydroelectric dams that the environmental licenses of the projects have expired, and that without a valid environmental license, the concessionaires cannot exercise any rights;

3. ENCOURAGES the Republic of Peru to:

- a. create a framework for protecting Peru's free-flowing rivers;
- b. take all necessary steps to ensure that aquatic and riparian ecosystems and territories of the local populations of the Amazon rivers are not significantly affected by the development of infrastructure projects in this region, including the Amazon Waterway Project and Marañón hydro-dams;
- c. lead a South American regional effort for sustainable transboundary water management for the Amazon Basin that establishes issues such as common conservation goals and maintaining Andes-Amazon connectivity, sustainable use, information exchange and conflict resolution; and
- d. respect standards set by International Labour Organization Convention No. 169, ratified by Peru in 1994 and Law 29785 (*Ley de Consulta Previa de Perú*), in relation to Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Prior Consultation rights, as a condition for the development of infrastructure projects that affect the rights of indigenous peoples;

4. CALLS ON bilateral and multilateral funding bodies to strengthen their safeguards for infrastructure projects affecting the biodiversity of Amazon rivers, including the need for requiring their clients to undertake rigorous studies based on scientific and local knowledge of the conditions of those rivers in order to understand their complexity and their relationship to the forests, land and ecosystems of the region; and

5. URGES United Nations agencies to support the countries of the Andes-Amazon region in generating knowledge, strategies and mechanisms to ensure the conservation of aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity of Amazon rivers in the face of infrastructure activities in the Amazon Basin, such as the Amazon Waterway Project and the Marañón hydro-dams.