

On threats to Lake Turkana (Kenya)

Thank You Madam Chairperson:

I am speaking on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples Forum on World Heritage.

We commend the Committee's draft decision to inscribe Lake Turkana Parks (Kenya) as a World Heritage property in danger, because such inscription on the Danger List is the **last hope for preservation of this property** through urgent implementation of a plan to achieve the desired state of conservation.

The Lake Turkana has been degraded through long-term non-compliance with decisions of the World Heritage Committee. The requirement that state parties of Kenya and Ethiopia should carry out a comprehensive Strategic Environmental Assessment before any further water infrastructure developments on the Omo River, has not been fulfilled since 2012, and the recommendation to halt development was not implemented either.

We must also bring to your attention the proposed Gibe IV and V hydropower dams to be constructed downstream of the Gibe III. The negative consequences of this cascade of dams on the Lower Valley of the Omo and Lake Turkana **will potentially aggravate the impacts already felt from Gibe III dam.**

We therefore urge the Committee to require that no further dams should be built on the river, especially in consideration of the devastating effects on Lake Turkana documented in Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda. We also call on the Committee not to ignore its own policy instruments, in particular the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy, the UNESCO Policy on Indigenous Peoples, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These instruments which have all been adopted by State Parties, stipulate that the operations of the Convention should obtain the free prior and informed consent of potentially affected indigenous peoples, and require appropriate prior impact assessments.

Thank you