

Decision of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (June 2011) on the Lake Turkana National Parks World Heritage Site (Kenya).

Decision: 35 COM 7B.3

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-11/35.COM/7B.Add,
2. Expresses its utmost concern about the proposed construction of the GIBE III dam on the Omo River in Ethiopia and its likely impacts on Lake Turkana, which is located downstream in neighbouring Kenya and draws almost 90% of its inflow from the above river;
3. Takes note of the African Development Bank's April 2010 study of the GIBE III proposal, "Assessment of Hydrological Impacts of Ethiopia's Omo Basin on Kenya's Lake Turkana Water Levels", which concludes that the construction and operation of the dam is likely to result in a significant drop in the Lake's water levels, cessation of the current seasonal flooding pattern, losses of nutrient and mineral-rich sediments due to the upstream reservoir, rising salinity and the disruption of the lake's chemical balance, among other impacts that have yet to be quantified;
4. Considers that the GIBE III dam is likely to significantly alter Lake Turkana's fragile hydrological regime, and threaten its aquatic species and associated biological systems, which are the basis of its inscription on the List of World Heritage under criterion (x), and that this development may pose an imminent danger to the property's Outstanding Universal Value, in line with Paragraph 180(b) (ii) of the *Operational Guidelines*;
5. Urges the State Party of Ethiopia to immediately halt all construction on the GIBE III dam in line with Article 6 of the Convention requiring State Parties not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage located on the territory of another State Party, and to submit all assessments for this proposal to the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;
6. Also expresses its concern about the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed GIBE IV and GIBE V dams and large-scale irrigation plans on the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and requests the State Party of Ethiopia to submit assessments for all proposed dams and associated irrigation plans on the Omo River;
7. Also requests the States Parties of Kenya and Ethiopia to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to review the impacts of the GIBE III dam on the Outstanding Universal Value of Lake Turkana, and to provide detailed information on plans for other hydro-electric developments and associated large-scale irrigation in the Omo region;
8. Encourages all financial institutions supporting the GIBE III dam to put on hold their financial support until the World Heritage Committee reviews this issue at its 36th session in 2012, and to take account of the Committee's decisions when deciding whether to provide such funding;
9. Further requests the States Parties of Ethiopia and Kenya to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2012**, a report on the course of action taken in response

to this decision for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012, **with a view to considering, in the case of confirmation of the ascertained or potential danger to Outstanding Universal Value in light of the mission's review of the likely impacts of the GIBE III dam on Lake Turkana, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**