

IUCN • Commission on Ecosystem Management



Chairman: Mr. Piet Wit, IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management - Rijnbandijk 161, Kesteren, 4041 AV, Netherlands
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Mr. Cristiano E. Zinato

Presidente da Câmara Técnica de Análise de Projetos
Conselho Nacional de Recursos Hídricos
Ministério de Meio Ambiente
Brazil
Email: cristiano.zinato@mma.gov.br

Dear Mr. Zinato,

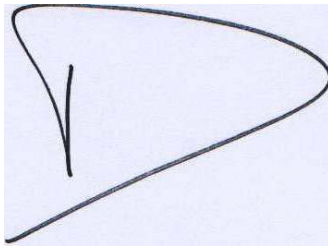
The Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) is one of the International Union for the Conservation Nature's (IUCN) six scientific Commissions. CEM is a network of volunteer experts from around the world working on ecosystem management related issues. CEM and its individual members are involved in a wide range of ecosystem management activities, because the conservation of biological diversity and the well-being of people all over the world depends on the various goods and services provided by ecosystems, including food, fuel, construction materials, clean water and air, and protection from natural hazards. Ecosystems, however, are under increasing pressure from unsustainable use and other threats including outright conversion. To address this concern, CEM promotes the sound management of ecosystems through the wider application of the Ecosystem Approach, as adopted by the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Ecosystem Approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that places human needs at its centre. CEM publishes the Ecosystem Management Series to further best practices in ecosystem management, both at field and policy levels, in support of IUCN's vision of a just world that values and conserves nature.

By means of our distinguished CEM Member, Dr. Débora Calheiros from Embrapa Pantanal, we have been informed about the Brazilian plans to construct over 100 hydroelectric power dams in the Upper Paraguay River Basin/Pantanal Wetland system. This is a matter of serious concern to us, as the Pantanal Wetland system is a World Heritage site (Pantanal Mato-Grossense National Park) and is also considered as Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO (2000). It is the largest wetland under the Ramsar Convention – The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance that promotes the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources - which Brazil has signed.

While understanding the need to address the problem of power generation in remote areas, we are very worried about the potential impacts of the proposed dams on the functioning of the Pantanal wetlands, which is such a rich source of biodiversity of global importance and at the same time delivering ecosystem products and services to the local, national and regional communities.

Therefore, we implore the Brazilian Government to ensure that the planned construction of these dams is associated with objective and thorough scientific assessments of the impacts on the wetland biodiversity and ecosystem processes (hydro-ecological processes). It is important to ensure that the impacts of these dams, as a whole, do not result in irreversible losses of species, habitats, livelihoods and human well-being, to the long term detriment of all Brazilians and indeed of the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a vertical line and a small 'W'.

Mr. Piet Wit
Chairman
IUCN – CEM Commission on Ecosystem Management