



IUCN
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 999 0000
Fax +41 22 999 0002
www.iucn.org

H. E. Mr Alexander Kuznetsov
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to
UNESCO
UNESCO House
Office MS1.23
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15

20 December 2017

IUCN Evaluation of the Bikin River Valley (as an extension of Central Sikhote-Alin) – Nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List

Progress report on IUCN evaluation and request for supplementary information

Dear Ambassador,

Further to the above nomination to the World Heritage List, I am writing with information on progress with the IUCN evaluation. As noted in previous correspondence, IUCN seeks to develop and maintain a dialogue with States Parties during the evaluation process of all nominations. As per the Operational Guidelines (paragraph 149 and Annex 6 - *Evaluation procedures of the Advisory Bodies for nomination*), this letter also provides the short interim report outlining the status and any issues relevant to evaluations, which is requested to be sent by IUCN before 31 January 2018.

The IUCN World Heritage technical evaluation mission to Bikin River Valley was undertaken by Mr Tilman Jaeger and Mr Chimed Ochir-Bazarsad from 18-26 September 2017. The evaluators greatly appreciated the excellent support and co-operation provided by your colleagues in the preparation and implementation of the mission, and the kind welcome of the State Party throughout the mission. Please convey our sincere thanks to all of the officials, scientists and contributors that assisted the mission.

The IUCN World Heritage Panel is in the course of examining World Heritage nominations for natural and mixed properties, and cultural landscapes. This process will conclude in March/April 2018, following which the IUCN evaluation report will be issued to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. At its first meeting held in the week of 4 December 2017, the IUCN Panel examined in detail each nomination dossier, reports and desktop reviews of field evaluators and external reviewers, as well as other references regarding the nominated properties.

The Panel greatly appreciated the efforts that have been made in relation to this nomination, and will be discussing the nomination again at the second meeting of the IUCN World Heritage Panel, to be held in March 2018. At this stage, the Panel noted a number of points where additional information is required, and we would be grateful for the State Party's response on the following points:

1/ The IUCN Panel considers that a **buffer zone** should be established, surrounding the whole of the extended site, if approved. Such a buffer zone would need to be established consistent with Russian national parks legislation and to meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines. Such a buffer zone should address the main threats potentially affecting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, such as fires, logging, poaching and mining. Please confirm the willingness of the State Party to establish such a buffer zone, the timeframes for possible establishment, and the management regime which would operate within such a buffer zone, if it was established.

2/ A **management plan/system** for a serial site is a requirement in the Convention's Operational Guidelines. The management plan for the Bikin National Park should be adopted, with a clear and comprehensive zonation and a linked monitoring programme, with the active participation of affected indigenous peoples and local communities. Please advise on the status and the timeframes for approval/adoption of the management

plan/system for the Bikin National Park, and the overall property that would be formed by its addition to the existing Central Sikhote-Alin World Heritage Site.

3/ Please clarify the **long term vision** for ensuring the connectivity of conservation areas within the wider region, in which the nominated property sits. Please advise specifically if the State Party sees that there could be potential future extensions of the nominated property to incorporate other high conservation value areas, particularly to strengthen Amur tiger habitat at a landscape scale.

4/ Please provide detailed information regarding the approach taken to ensure the full and active participation of **local communities and indigenous peoples** in the management of the nominated property.

5/ The field mission learned that the "Tribal Commune Tiger" (TCT) is making a legal challenge to the establishment of the National Park, which is currently before the court. Please provide full information on this ongoing **court case** to clarify the situation on the ground regarding the status of the National Park, as well as the anticipated timeline for resolution of the court case. Please provide copies of the main original documents (in Russian) that relate this court case, with an English (or French) translation of their key points.

We would appreciate your response to the above points as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the evaluation process, but **no later than the 28 February 2018**, as per paragraph 148 of the Operational Guidelines. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by IUCN in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while IUCN will carefully consider any supplementary information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So we request to keep your response concise and respond only to the above requests.

Supplementary information should be submitted officially in three copies to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in order for it to be registered as part of the nomination. An electronic copy of any supplementary information to both the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (a.balsamo@unesco.org) and IUCN Headquarters (christelle.perruchoud@iucn.org) would also be helpful.

Taking into account your response, IUCN will formulate its final recommendation to the World Heritage Committee which will meet from 24 June to 4 July 2018 in Bahrain.

In the interest of ensuring full transparency and dialogue regarding the IUCN evaluation process, we are happy to respond to any questions you may wish to raise regarding IUCN's work on the World Heritage Convention, including the above points. I am traveling to Paris on a regular basis and could be available to meet if this would be helpful, or would be pleased to organise a meeting via skype or conference call as an alternative. I would also emphasise that both you or your representatives are also most welcome to visit IUCN's headquarters in Switzerland to meet in person if you wish, on this nomination, or on any other matter of interest.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms Christelle Perruchoud, World Heritage Evaluations and Operations Officer (Tel: +41 22 999 0358; Fax: +41 22 999 0002; email: christelle.perruchoud@iucn.org) if you have any questions regarding this request, or if you would wish to arrange a meeting or phone call to discuss this request.

Please allow me to reiterate our thanks for your support of the World Heritage Convention and for the conduct of IUCN's recent mission. We look forward to your kind cooperation in furnishing responses to the abovementioned points.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Badman
Director - World Heritage Programme