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H. E. Mr Ahmad Jalali
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20 December 2018

IUCN Evaluation of the Hyrcanian Forests – 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 2019.

The IUCN World Heritage technical evaluation mission to the Hyrcanian Forests was undertaken by Mrs Susanna Lindeman and Mr Hervé Lethier from 22 to 30 October 2018. 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 2019, following which the IUCN evaluation report will be issued to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. At its first meeting held in the week of 3 December 2018, 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 2019. 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) Please could the State Party clarify the legal protection status of each one of the different component parts of the nominated property, and, in particular, whether each component is legally protected in areas where their boundaries do not overlap with existing protected areas;
- 2) In the nomination dossier, it is not fully clear if the species listed occur within the nominated component parts or in the wider landscape. Please could the State Party therefore confirm which species are recorded inside the component parts of the nominated property, in order to allow for a better understanding of the rationale for the inclusion of the 15 nominated component parts as the basis for the nomination. Please also note any species of conservation significance which have significant populations located outside the boundaries of the nominated property and/or use the areas surrounding nominated property as part of their range;

- 3) Please could the State Party provide clear maps at appropriate scale indicating the current road network in or near the existing components, as well as maps indicating planned infrastructure (including both planned new infrastructure, and planned upgrading of existing roads or other existing infrastructure);
- 4) Please could the State Party confirm the status, plans and timeline to close the highway in the buffer zone between components 1 and 2 in Golestan National Park, and that this will take place within three years;
- 5) Please could the State Party confirm its commitment to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment for the upgrading of the road outside the nominated property, around the outer border of Golestan, which will replace the current highway;
- 6) Please could the State Party also confirm the plans and timeline to develop a comprehensive plan for developing sustainable tourism in Golestan National Park.

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 2019**, 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 two 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 30 June to 10 July 2019 in Azerbaijan.

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. We 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 also note that from 1 January 2019 there will be a change in World Heritage arrangements in IUCN. Peter Shadie will be taking over the role of Director, World Heritage Programme for 2019-20, and I will be moving to manage a new assignment in IUCN. Peter Shadie will be available for any discussions required on this letter, or any other matters regarding IUCN's evaluation of the nomination.

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) 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

cc. Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, Dr Hojatollah Ayoubi, Secretary-General
UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Mr Feng Jing and Mr Alessandro Balsamo
IUCN Asia Regional Office, Ms Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director