

Press Release

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Renewables Yes! Big Hydro No!

260 Citizens Groups Demand Large Hydro Be Excluded from Renewables Initiatives

(Bonn, Germany) International Rivers Network today released a declaration calling for large hydropower to be excluded from efforts to promote clean and renewable energies. The declaration is being released on the first day of the landmark inter-ministerial “Renewables 2004” conference, hosted by the German government in Bonn.

The declaration, “12 Reasons to Exclude Large Hydro from Renewables Initiatives” is endorsed by 260 citizen’s groups, networks and coalitions from 61 countries.¹

“The 260 groups that have endorsed this declaration are saying no to the large hydro lobby’s attempts to hijack concern over poverty and climate change to promote their destructive technology,” says Patrick McCully, Campaigns Director of IRN. “Ensuring that large hydro is barred from support under any initiatives announced in Bonn is key to the success of the conference in boosting the global spread of clean and renewable energy.”

The declaration states that funds to reduce the climatic and other environmental impacts of energy production and consumption, to advance sustainable development, and to increase energy security should be used for the promotion of “new renewables.” The most important new renewables are modern biomass, geothermal, wind, solar, marine energy, and small hydro (10 MW or less) compliant with the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams.²

(over)

The 12 Reasons to Exclude Large Hydro are:

1. Large hydro does not have the poverty reduction benefits of decentralized renewables
2. Including large hydro in renewables initiatives would crowd out funds for new renewables
3. Promoters of large hydro regularly underestimate costs and exaggerate benefits
4. Large hydro will increase vulnerability to climate change
5. There is no technology transfer benefit from large hydro
6. Large hydro projects have major social and ecological impacts
7. Efforts to mitigate the impacts of large hydro typically fail
8. Large hydro promoters oppose measures to prevent the construction of destructive projects
9. Large reservoirs can emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases
10. Large hydro is slow, lumpy, inflexible and getting more expensive
11. Many countries are already over-dependent on hydropower
12. Large hydro reservoirs are often rendered non-renewable by sedimentation

Ends

1. 247 organizations endorsed the statement, which is a shortened version of a longer paper copublished by IRN and 12 other organizations.
2. See “The Future is Renewable: Declaration for the International Conference for Renewable Energies” published by Citizens United for Renewable Energy and Sustainability (CURES). www.cures-network.org.

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