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Sustainable development: harmony with Nature

Letter dated 17 August 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you a statement of the Presidium of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus regarding the construction by Poland of a border barrier across Białowieża Forest, a transboundary United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 20 (i).

(Signed) Valentin **Rybakov**



Annex to the letter dated 17 August 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Statement of the Presidium of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus regarding the construction by Poland of a border barrier across Białowieża Forest

The Presidium of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus expresses its indignation and condemnation at the unilateral actions taken by Poland to build fencing along the Belarus-Polish border. Part of that fencing will run through the territory of Białowieża Forest, which has special protection in Belarus and Europe, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Due to its size and vast untouched areas of old-growth forest, Białowieża Forest is a unique environmental conservation area protecting biodiversity.

Artificial division of what is a single natural reserve is a serious threat to the existence of the unique natural environment of Białowieża Forest.

Unless urgent action is taken, Europe's largest area of primeval forest may see the disappearance not only of rare but also of common species of animals and plants.

The actions of the Polish authorities contradict the principles of management of the specially protected nature reserve, and violate the provisions of many international treaties and international obligations assumed by Poland.

We call on international organizations and the world environmental community to take action to urge Poland to hold consultations, stop the construction and dismantle the barrier structures already installed, in order to prevent negative consequences for the ecosystems of Białowieża Forest.

We firmly believe that in this situation the existing international environmental preservation mechanisms will protect the biodiversity of the world-famous nature reserve that is Białowieża Forest and will protect the environmental security of the European region as a whole for future generations.

Minsk, 27 June 2022
