

**Statement on Behalf of
Non-Governmental Organization Partners
of the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP)**

*Intergovernmental Meeting
Kinshasa, September 5-9, 2005*

The following statement is made on behalf of 32 non-governmental organizations that have been accepted as GRASP Category E Partners under the terms of the draft rules.

The GRASP NGO Partners:

Conscious of the special importance of great apes, not only from a cultural and scientific point of view and as part of our natural heritage, but also as mankind's closest living relatives and as a flagship species for biodiversity conservation on a broader scale;

Considering the commitments made by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by the year 2010 and to establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas;

Concerned that wild populations of great apes in Africa and Asia are threatened by the combined effects of habitat loss caused by disturbance, fragmentation and destruction, poaching for bushmeat and other purposes, disease, and trade in live animals;

Aware that virtually all wild populations of great apes are in decline, that local extinctions of great apes are reported throughout their ranges, that all species and sub-species of great apes are classified as 'Endangered' or 'Critically Endangered', and that, in spite of current efforts, the decline continues;

Recognizing that the majority of people living in and around great ape habitats in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia depend directly on natural resources, including tropical forests, for their daily subsistence and well-being;

Commend the GRASP Partners as a whole for their commitment to great ape conservation; the great ape range states for their existing efforts to conserve great ape populations under frequently difficult circumstances; donor states for their support of great ape conservation; and UNEP and UNESCO for the significant contribution that they provide to GRASP;

Call upon the GRASP Partnership to:

1. Build on the unique strengths of GRASP as an international partnership to design and implement conservation actions at high governmental and intergovernmental level.
2. Strengthen GRASP's role as the principal international advocate and authority on great ape conservation.
3. Capitalize on the international and multi-sectoral character of GRASP to mobilize new sources of funding and financing mechanisms for great ape conservation. This will require GRASP to develop and implement a new fund-raising strategy.
4. Establish the permanent staff and mechanisms necessary to manage GRASP effectively in the long term.
5. Develop a goal-oriented strategic plan that defines GRASP's role within the Global Strategy for the Survival of Great Apes, which supersedes the 2003-07 workplan, and which serves as the basis for annual workplans.
6. Pursue the scientific prioritization of great ape populations recently initiated by the Interim Scientific Commission;

7. Ensure that the great ape conservation policies are coordinated between range states where appropriate, in consultation with the GRASP Scientific Commission.
8. Recognize the links between human livelihoods and the conservation of great apes and their habitats by incorporating biodiversity conservation into development and poverty reduction strategies.
9. Encourage range states to assume greater responsibility for achieving GRASP's objectives, for example by enforcing existing legislation and by protecting remaining great ape habitat;
10. Urge donors and non-range states to make new and additional resources available for great ape conservation and to ensure that their policies and legislation contribute as actively as possible to great ape conservation.

In closing, the NGO Partners of GRASP would like to emphasize the added value that we believe GRASP can bring to great ape conservation over and above the activities that we and others are conducting on the ground. GRASP's ability to act systematically at governmental and intergovernmental level and to bring together all the stakeholders in great ape conservation is unique and goes far beyond the modest capacity of non-governmental organizations to tackle the causes behind the decline in great ape populations. We are committed to work with all other GRASP Partners to increase the effectiveness of great ape conservation actions worldwide.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Democratic Republic of Congo for hosting this Intergovernmental Meeting. The DRC harbours more species of great ape than any other country in the world and we are all very pleased to be here.

Thank you.

Statement made on behalf of the following GRASP NGO Partners:

- *Ape Alliance*
- *Balikipapan Orangutan Society (BOS)*
- *Bonobo Conservation Initiative*
- *Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation*
- *Born Free Foundation (BFF)*
- *Bristol Zoo Gardens*
- *Budongo Forest Project (absent)*
- *Care for the Wild International*
- *Conservation International (CI)*
- *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund (Europe)*
- *Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund (Int'l)*
- *Fauna and Flora International (FFI)*
- *Great Ape World Heritage Species Project (GAWHSP)*
- *GRASP Japan*
- *Hutan*
- *International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)*
- *International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP)*
- *International Ranger Federation (Category H Partner)*
- *Jane Goodall Institute (JGI)*
- *Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA)*
- *Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP)*
- *Orangutan Foundation*
- *Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA)*
- *Paneco Foundation/ Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme*
- *Polepole Foundation (POPOF-DRC)*
- *Rural Environment and Development Organization (Rwanda)*
- *Tayna Center for Conservation Biology (TCCB)*
- *Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF)*
- *Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)*
- *World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)*
- *WorldWide Fund for Nature (WWF)*
- *Zoological Society of London (ZSL)*

The following non-governmental organizations which were present at the IGM as Observers have also endorsed the above statement:

- *Animal Defenders International (ADI)*

- *Alliance Nationale pour la Nature (ANN, République du Congo)*
- *HELP Congo*
- *John Aspinall Foundation (JAF)*
- *Lukuru Wildlife Research Project*