

**STATEMENT FROM SUDANESE OBSERVERS  
AT THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING  
AND FIRST GRASP COUNCIL MEETING  
KINSHASA DRC 5 - 9 September 2005**

We the observers from Sudan would like to express our thanks to the organizers of this conference for the invitation and facilitation of our coming to this historical event. We also commend and appreciate the high level of commitment and professionalism shown by the participants in this conference. We congratulate and thank DRC for hosting this successful event.

Sudan is the northern most range for the Great Apes where only one species do occur in the South, that is the chimpanzee. In Sudan chimpanzees are found in the Western Equatoria State, west of the Nile, in an area that stretches between Morobo to Ezo along the borders with the DRC and the Central African Republic. Also they used to exist in the gallery forests in the Southern National Park.

In the early 1960's and 1970's three protected areas namely Bangangai, Mbarizonga and Bire Kpatuo in Southern Sudan were established for the protection of chimpanzees and other rare wildlife species therein. However, during the two decades of civil war these areas as well as other protected areas in Southern Sudan suffered the wantons of war. All protected areas were neglected as priorities went to other issues. There was no management or any other sort of conservation activities taking place. Hence the chimpanzee populations suffered the same way as all other wildlife species.

The current threats to the chimpanzee populations in Southern Sudan are as outlined here:

- 1- Bush meat crisis in South Sudan. As a result of the protracted war, food insecurity, has pushed the people to heavily depend on bush meat as a cheap means for their livelihood, this was aggravated with the proliferation of firearms in the area, and so the threat is more than ever. If such threats are left to continue then the great apes will get extinct from this areas and the range will shrink down southwards.
- 2- Negligence during the war time, where the protected areas went with out management, no one knows the numbers and population size of wildlife in general and chimpanzee in particular, that is left in these areas.
- 3- Logging and habitat destruction, as refugees and Internally Displaced Persons returning to resettle in their ancestral villages after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the long civil war in the country. The demand for construction material in form timber and poles will soar dramatically, so will the need for bush meat.
- 4- The current on going organized logging in the natural forests in Southern Sudan is also posing threats to habitats.
- 5- International conservation organizations have shown little or no interest in South Sudan, often citing the political conflict as a constraint. This has to change and they should begin to help conservation efforts and set up a good network for the survival of great apes in their northern most end territory.

Factors enumerated above particularly hunting for meat consumption had severe impact on chimpanzee populations in South Sudan.

In 2003 8 orphan baby chimpanzees were confiscated from poachers, 2 died and 6 were sent out destined to an Orphanage in Zambia, but they were held in Nanyuki, Kenya, as there were no CITES document among the papers accompanying them. Infact during the 22 years of civil war in

Sudan, which has just ended by the signing of the CPA on 9.1.2005, there has been no person in South Sudan who signs CITES papers. The situation in which those baby chimpanzees were was so grave that necessitated their relocation to an orphanage where they can get a better care until a conducive environment prevails in their natural home.

Conservation measures taken in South Sudan during the wartime include the following:

- Creation of a Wildlife Conservation Department, which is strife to conserving what is left of the war
- A Wildlife Act 2002 was brought into force to control the situation
- A Training Center has been established with support from USAID to help build the capacity, which has been destroyed during the wartime.
- Population status surveys were conducted in some protected areas, but could not cover all areas due to lack of fund.
- Currently structures and policies are being reviewed

Southern Sudan would expect from this forum:

- The on-going political transition in the Sudan might have affected the official representation of the country in this Conference in one-way or the other. Therefore, we urge the GRASP Council to swiftly reach out to the government of national unity in Sudan and the government of Southern Sudan with the resolutions and declarations from this conference, so as to solicit the official stand of the Sudanese authorities on the Great Apes Survival in the Country.
- Aware that that there isn't much time left for the survival of Great Apes in the Sudan, if the remaining populations of chimpanzee are left to go to extinction then the habitat of Great Apes will shrink posing pressure further south, therefore urgent action should be taken now before it is too late.
- Technical and financial assistance urgently needed for South Sudan, to conduct population status surveys to determine current status of chimpanzee and develop conservation strategy.
- Technical and financial support to review and rehabilitate the existing protected areas and developing them to an effective protected area network that will help conserve and protect the remaining species.
- Call for transboundary cooperation with the neighboring range countries (CAR, DRC and Uganda) in conservation issues in general and chimpanzee in particular.
- We urge the range states, which have gone ahead in Great Apes conservation program to technically assist South Sudan in this field.
- South Sudan needs to be assisted financially and technically to repatriate back the orphan baby chimpanzees that were sent to orphanage in East Africa (Kenya) during the armed conflict time, so that they are reintegrated to their home range.
- Assistance in capacity building in the field of conservation particularly in area of primatology.

In conclusion we thank DRC for hosting this important IGM and congratulate all the participants for this successful event.

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