

## **UGANDA COUNTRY STATEMENT**

Presented to the Intergovernmental Meeting on Great Apes  
on 9th September 2005, Grand Hotel Kinshasha, DRC

by

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Uganda is an important country for Great Apes conservation. Of the three genera of Great Apes, the Mountain Gorilla and Chimpanzee occur in Uganda. Half of the global Mountain Gorilla population occur in Uganda with 320 individuals estimated in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and while over 37 individuals occur in Mgahinga National Park and are part of a migratory population of 380 found in the Virunga ecosystem characterizing the boarder areas of Uganda, Rwanda and Congo. The last countrywide census of Chimpanzees in the year 2003 estimated 4,950 individuals compared to 3,300 individuals in 1997, an increase of 49.7% and these primarily occur in the large forest blocks in the Albertine Rift, Western Uganda.

The greatest threat to the survival of the Great Apes and their habitat is the pressure associated with human development needs. People depend on the forests for land and natural resources, which causes habitat fragmentation especially on private lands. The good news, however, is that hunting of great Apes for food in Uganda is not a threat as people in Uganda do not use primates for food.

Uganda has endeavored and will continue to ensure sustainable conservation of the Great Apes, their habitats and the associated rural community, social economic set-ups in the context of the overall key government development policies, and legal and institutional frameworks, and development program, commitments to regional and international obligations not withstanding.

As members to the Great Apes initiative we are keen to ensure fruitful, sustainable and perpetual linkages that are specific to GRASP as a strategic high level intervention between Range States and their partners with in the context of other existing multilateral and bilateral initiatives to which we are a contracting party.

On the first day of the Intergovernmental meeting, Uganda made a statement specifying proposals for improvement of the GRASP partnership. We are happy to note that the council that sat on 7th and 8th September 2005 adopted these proposals. I further thank all the partners for giving Uganda an opportunity to spearhead the objectives of GRASP as a Chair of the Interim Executive Committee and to Chair 1<sup>st</sup> Council meeting and then electing Uganda one of the representative state of the Range States on the GRASP Executive committee.

On behalf of my country I wish to pledge Uganda's commitment and support to GRASP initiative and to express my gratitude to the organizers of this intergovernmental and the council meeting in particular UNEP and UNESCO that provided logistical support and the Government of the Democratic of Republic of Congo that hosted the meeting.

Uganda will continue to support conservation of diverse ecosystems and viable wildlife populations, to ensure survival of Great Apes and their habitat, now and in the future.

**For God and My Country.**