



**United Nations
Environment Programme**

**United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization**

**Preparatory experts meeting for an
intergovernmental meeting on great
apes and the Great Apes Survival
Project (GRASP)**

First session

26-28 November 2003, UNESCO headquarters, Paris

**Report of the preparatory experts meeting for an intergovernmental
meeting on great apes and the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP)**

Introduction

1. The Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) was established in response to the realization that today, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, every one of the great apes species is at high risk of extinction, either in the immediate future or at best within 50 years, and that the many conservation measures already being implemented throughout range States in Africa and south-east Asia would have a greater impact if they were part of a systematic, prioritized approach. GRASP was launched in May 2001 under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with partners and stakeholders from the great ape range States, donor States, conservation and development non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and other interested parties.

2. GRASP was registered as a type II partnership at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002. The GRASP strategy document for this type II partnership indicated that an intergovernmental meeting on great apes and GRASP should be held by the end of 2004. This was subsequently confirmed by the UNEP Governing Council in February 2003.

3. UNEP and UNESCO convened a preparatory experts meeting for the intergovernmental meeting on great apes and the GRASP project at UNESCO headquarters from 26 to 28 November 2003. Its specific objectives were to prepare and discuss a global strategy for the conservation of great apes, as well as the constitution and work plan for GRASP, to be presented at the intergovernmental meeting.

4. All member States and observers of UNESCO and UNEP, along with current GRASP non-governmental organization partners, were invited to send representatives to the preparatory expert meeting, and great apes range States were particularly encouraged to do so. The meeting was in fact attended by 17 great ape range States (out of 23), 11 non-range States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the international press. The list of participants is available on the GRASP web site (www.unep.org/grasp).

5. Mr. Samy Mankoto (UNESCO) and Mr. Robert Hepworth (UNEP) jointly chaired the plenary session of the meeting.

I. Welcoming remarks by the representatives of UNESCO and UNEP (item 1 of the agenda)

6. Mr. Walter Erdelen, Assistant-Director General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO, formally opened the meeting on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura. Welcoming the diverse range of participants, he emphasized the need to work together, through an integrated and multidisciplinary approach, in order to save the great apes from extinction. While acknowledging the multifarious nature of the great apes' situations, he highlighted the importance of awareness-raising, education, training, interdisciplinary research and monitoring.

7. Mr. Robert Hepworth, Deputy Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions, presented the objectives of the meeting. Those were:

- (a) Increasing the visibility of GRASP, especially through the press;
- (b) Engaging the involvement of the range States in GRASP;
- (c) Making substantial progress on drafting a strategy, a constitution or rules for GRASP and a GRASP work plan.

8. A video address by Ms. Jane Goodall, one of the patrons of the GRASP project, was shown to the participants. Stressing the importance of the GRASP partnership in the quest to save humans' closest living relatives, she reminded the participants of the urgency and importance of addressing their plight and reiterated her commitment to GRASP. Written statements by GRASP patrons Mr. Russ Mittermeier, Mr. Richard Leakey and Mr. Toshisada Nishida were made available to participants.

II. Adoption of the provisional agenda (item 2 of the agenda)

9. The provisional agenda as contained in document UNEP/UNESCO/GRASP/PrepCom.1/1 was adopted without modification.

III. Introductory remarks (item 3 of the agenda)

10. Mr. Robert Hepworth gave the opening presentation, entitled "Arithmetic of apes", in which he highlighted the threats posed to great apes and the value added by GRASP to the effort to save them. As a new type II partnership under the World Summit on Sustainable Development, GRASP linked range States, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in an unprecedented manner. Since it began operation in 2001, GRASP had mobilized approximately \$1.8 million, which had been used for some 20 technical missions and 17 field projects. He outlined a GRASP vision of mobilizing much greater sums than the minimum figure of \$25 million over the next five years for all range states and expressed the hope that by 2010 – the target date set by the World Summit on Sustainable Development for a significant reduction of biodiversity loss – GRASP would have undertaken some 100 projects and ensured the survival of several thousand great apes in the wild.

11. Mr. Ian Redmond, head of the GRASP technical support team, gave a presentation entitled "The global view". He recalled the efforts of the 1990s era non-governmental organization Ape Alliance and the triple lessons learned, i.e., the need to obtain political will for great ape conservation projects at the highest level, to secure the support of local people and to ensure sustainable financing.

12. Mr. Bernard Fosso, GRASP focal point in Cameroon, gave a presentation on GRASP-related activities in Cameroon, one of the great ape range States. He provided an overview of the network of protected areas in Cameroon and how it provided protection for great ape populations and briefly described other activities related to great ape conservation, including the repatriation of illegally traded young apes.

13. Ms. Lucilla Spini, Mr. Guy Debonnet and Mr. Mario Hernandez gave a joint presentation on great ape-related activities at UNESCO. They drew attention to activities of the natural sciences sector, namely under the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme through its World Network of Biosphere Reserves, as well as those of the World Heritage Centre; both of which focused on the *in situ* conservation of great apes. They also highlighted capacity-building and training activities, as well as monitoring activities in collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA).

14. Ms. Evelyne Samu, from the Central African Regional Programme for the Environment (CARPE), spoke on behalf of civil society in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She expressed the strong interest and commitment manifested by national non-governmental organizations in environmental matters, and in particular GRASP. She invited attention to a preparatory workshop on elaborating a national strategy for the survival of great apes, which took place from 26 to 28 September 2003 in Kinshasa. Among several achievements, the meeting highlighted the threats posed to great apes and oversaw the establishment of the *Alliance Congolaise pour la Conservation des Grands Singes* (ACCGS) (Congolese Alliance for the Conservation of Great Apes).

15. Mr. John Sellar, Senior Enforcement Officer for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), spoke about CITES activities relevant to GRASP. He provided an overview of the illicit trade in primates and an insight into the difficulties and challenges of enforcement, followed by an outline of the necessary actions to combat those illegal activities. He also illustrated some of the achievements of CITES, which worked in close cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol).

16. Mr. Fritz Balkau, from the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and the Environment (UNEP/DTIE), gave a presentation on industry as a threat and partner to GRASP, in which he provided an overview of both the benefits and dangers of cooperation with the corporate sector. Activities such as tourism and minerals development were analysed, with a review of their negative and positive outcomes. He concluded that the key to successful cooperation between GRASP and the corporate sector lay in appropriate project design and sensible Government policy.

17. Mr. Robert Hepworth announced that the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP/WCMC) was preparing a world atlas of great apes, and that the representative of UNEP/WCMC, Mr. Julian Caldecott, Director – Early Warning Assessment, wished to meet range State delegates in order to discuss the atlas.

18. Mr. Neil Maddison, head of conservation programmes at Bristol Zoo Gardens, made a presentation on the importance of community education for great ape conservation. He provided an update on a GRASP-sponsored community education programme in the Dja Biosphere Reserve in Cameroon, from which certain lessons had been drawn. Those included the need for cross-cultural communication on the purpose behind conservation measures and the importance of mutual trust in local community involvement.

IV. Discussion (item 4 of the agenda)

19. The discussion that followed the above presentations allowed non-governmental organizations, range States and donor States to present activities and view points. Their interventions are summarized in the following paragraphs.

20. Ms. Ashley Leiman, Director of the Orangutan Foundation, spoke of the plight of orangutans in South-East Asia. She pointed out that, in contrast to African great apes, orangutans were threatened mainly by habitat destruction and that ecotourism was not a viable option for them. In consequence, efforts to ensure their survival needed to focus on halting illegal logging. She also highlighted the importance of research, awareness-raising and education and detailed the successes of various GRASP-funded activities, including an awareness-raising television campaign in Indonesia.

21. Ms. Tracey Guiry, Commercial Director of At Bristol, presented a proposal for a global exhibition on great apes that could consist of a range of exhibits: one targeting North America, Europe and Japan aimed at encouraging donations to GRASP work and sensitizing consumers; another for range States in the field; and another for the professional community. The exhibition was planned to be ready in late 2004. In a complementary presentation, Ms. Harriet Nimmo, Chief Executive of the Wildscreen Trust, an international charity committed to the public appreciation and awareness of biodiversity through wildlife imagery, described the trust and drew attention to the ARKive project (www.arkive.com), which sought to bring together digitally all visual and audio wildlife documentation for free public use and learning. Support from UNEP and UNESCO was sought for its development.

22. Mr. Mark Zimsky of the UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination (UNEP/DGEF) made a presentation on the operations of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), in particular in relation to its biodiversity focal area. He stressed the importance of GEF co-financing, with GEF covering in particular the incremental costs needed to attain global environmental benefits, and reported that priority was being given to activities to ensure the sustainability of national systems of protected areas and mainstreaming biodiversity into national sectoral planning.

23. Mr. Pak Widodo Ramono, Director of Biodiversity Conservation of the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry, expressed his appreciation of GRASP and underlined its importance for his country. He outlined national activities to protect orangutans, which included relevant forestry policies, protected areas, yearly expert meetings on orangutan conservation and the work of various foundations. He noted some success in certain protected areas, but also pointed to a lack of resources to manage most of them properly. He expressed support for the establishment of wildlife corridors, such as the one funded by the European Union in Gunung Leuser National Park. He said that the necessary ingredients for fulfilling conservation objectives were political responsibility, sustainable values and benefit sharing. He also suggested that the proposed touring exhibition on great apes should be adjusted to national contexts.

24. Ms. Valery Belon of the United States Embassy, in the presence of United States Congressman Mr. George Miller, made a statement on behalf of the United States Government, detailing the numerous activities related to great apes that it currently supported. Many of these were funded by the Great Apes Conservation Fund, which had been established under the Great Apes Conservation Act, passed by the United States Congress in 2000. The fund, administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, supported projects in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo and Uganda. She also detailed financial and technical support provided to CARPE and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the CITES Bushmeat Working Group, the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Jane Goodall Institutes, and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. A major focus of the United States support had been the bushmeat trade. A written copy of the United States statement was tabled.

25. Mr. Justus Kashagire Tindigarukayo, Assistant Commissioner of Wildlife in the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry of Uganda, highlighted the critical role of local communities and their traditional practices and values relating to great ape conservation. He spoke of current law and policy reforms in Uganda in favour of great ape conservation, and expressed his support for partnership with neighbouring Governments through joint ratification of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and CITES. He emphasized the need for GRASP to work with range States through non-binding mechanisms and, in particular, through national great ape survival plans. He also underlined the lack of proper coordination of donor input and called for the elaboration of effective financing mechanisms.

26. Mr. Hemmo Muntingh, Senior Policy Advisor for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, spoke of his organization's lobbying of the European Parliament on the bushmeat issue and the latter's consequent approach, which consisted of financing, capacity-building, education, management of protected areas, and enforcement. He also mentioned the European Parliament's support of the Ecosystemes Forestieres d'Afrique Centrale (Central African Forest Ecosystems) (ECOFAC) programme.

27. Mr. Rob Bowman, from the Environment Policy Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, reaffirmed his Government's commitment to GRASP as one of its largest donors to date. He emphasized the need for countries and organizations to work together, as well as the urgent need for research into the causes of decline in great

ape populations. He affirmed that the full involvement of all stakeholders was essential for effective conservation measures and underlined the importance of political and financial support, encouraging donors to commit themselves politically and financially.

28. Mr. Joseph Ipalaka Yobwa, Secretary-General for the Environment and Nature Conservation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, pointed out the need for updating and enforcing existing national laws instead of elaborating new ones. He described various areas in his country set aside for the protection of great apes and forestry laws relevant to great ape conservation. He also described actions relevant to GRASP, including projects by the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. He stressed that poverty reduction was “at the heart of everything”. He also proposed a community forest reserve as a candidate for GRASP support.

29. Mr. Dieudonné Ankara, GRASP focal point at the Ministry of Forestry Economy and Environment of Congo, commented on the critical state of great apes in Congo, which had been severely affected by the Ebola virus. Noting the role of protected areas, international conventions and national environmental laws in achieving great ape conservation, he pointed out that there were presently too few resources to enforce such regimes on the ground. He reported on the positive outcomes of an NGASP workshop in Congo, which had resulted in the adoption of a great ape survival plan, but added that additional financial resources were required in order to publish the report of the meeting. He suggested that the Western Lowland Gorilla be included in annex I of CMS. He proposed three subregional projects for GRASP support, all aimed at the fight against the Ebola virus. He added that Congo lacked adequate information technology to coordinate numerous research findings. Finally, he encouraged GRASP to carry out concrete projects on the ground through the national GRASP focal points.

30. Ms. Ndeye Sene Thiam, GRASP focal point at the *Direction des Parcs Nationaux* (National Park Service) of Senegal, spoke of the need to promote communication between GRASP and range States, as well as more technical and informational support for the elaboration of national great ape survival plans. She underlined the need for subregional strategies that took into account the migration of great apes and added that more resources were needed to implement action plans. She also noted that while many experts on great apes carried out research in Senegal, their efforts were dispersed and uncoordinated, resulting in inefficiency and duplication.

31. Mr. Arnulf Mueller-Helmbrecht, Executive Secretary of CMS, provided a brief overview of the convention. He expressed his interest in the proposal to add the Western Lowland Gorilla to annex I of CMS, and described how this could be done. He urged parties to join CMS as a way of forming transboundary agreements for great ape conservation. Mr. Redmond also stated his support for Congo’s proposal to add the Western Lowland Gorilla to the convention’s annex, and encouraged other range States to propose the addition of other sub-species to the annex. He also suggested that the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage could be used as an instrument to protect the cultural diversity found among great ape species.

32. Mr. Frédéric Joulian, Assistant-Director of the Laboratory of Social Anthropology, Paris, France, emphasized that great ape conservation measures needed not only to focus on protected areas, but also to take into account the diversity of situations in which great ape populations were found. In addition, he underlined that the diversity of cultural attitudes towards great apes needed to be appreciated in order to develop coherent and culturally appropriate approaches to great ape conservation. That could be achieved through closer cooperation between natural and social scientists. He added that the failures of the conservation measures of the last 20 years needed to be analysed and improvements proposed and made in order to make progress in addressing the urgent crisis facing great apes.

33. Mr. Boniface Nyakageni, Advisor to the Ministry of Land Use Planning, Environment and Forests, Burundi, spoke of the difficulty in monitoring the aerial transport of great apes. He also expressed scepticism regarding the involvement of the military in environmental issues, from the viewpoint of competence and motivation. He added that inventories of great ape populations in post-conflict countries were needed.

34. Mr. Matthew Maige, Species Conservation Coordinator from the United Republic of Tanzania, expressed the need to involve local communities in great ape conservation while ensuring the equitable

sharing of benefits. He also underlined the major role of non-governmental organizations in supporting Governments, technically and financially.

35. Mr. Gilbert-Gil Nandiguinn, Cultural Advisor to the Permanent Delegation of the Central African Republic to UNESCO, added his support to the subregional action proposed by Congo to fight the Ebola virus.

36. Mr. Greg Cummings, Director of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, drew attention to the fact that around \$50 million had been spent on great ape conservation in the last ten years. He continued by saying that more attention needed to be paid to past mistakes and to the causes, rather than the symptoms, of great ape population decline. He also underlined the importance of transparency, self-criticism and accountability with respect to GRASP. Mr. Hepworth responded by saying that standards of quality would be ensured throughout GRASP.

37. Mr. Tondossama Adama, Deputy Director of National Parks, Côte d'Ivoire, expressed his agreement that focus should not only be on protected areas. He issued a call to GRASP partners to provide support for an evaluation of great ape populations in rebel-occupied territory, and detailed the need for additional finances to implement national action plans.

38. Mr. Samy Mankoto, GRASP focal point in UNESCO, commented on the presentations and discussion. He acknowledged the assertion, supported by the representatives from Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire, that focus should not only be on protected areas. He acknowledged the importance of involving local communities in great ape conservation. He directed attention to the value of the ecosystem approach, and the role of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in providing a balance between conservation and sustainable use and between protected and non-protected areas. In addition, he highlighted transboundary biosphere reserves as effective mechanisms for cross-border cooperation. He consequently encouraged the high-level visibility of biosphere reserves at forums such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. He also encouraged range states to nominate sites inhabited by great apes to the World Heritage List. He underlined the potential value of the *Réseau des Aires Protégées d'Afrique Centrale* (Network of Central African Protected Areas) as a partner of GRASP. Finally, he emphasized the need to coordinate funds within the GRASP initiative.

39. Mr. Rob Hepworth drew up the following list of common concerns and needs which had been revealed by the presentations:

- (a) Use of existing protected areas for great ape conservation and the urgent need for GRASP partners to help the countries concerned to improve their management effectiveness. A parallel priority was to protect great apes living outside protected areas, for example in transition areas, following the biosphere reserve approach;
- (b) Engagement of local communities as stakeholders in GRASP work, promoting action to harness their self interest, which would also benefit conservation;
- (c) Addressing cross-border issues related to conservation (migration) and illegal trade;
- (d) Enforcement of existing laws rather than enactment of new ones;
- (e) Awareness-raising at all levels;
- (f) Health questions, notably in relation to Ebola – UNEP had discussed with the World Health Organization possible measures for combating Ebola and other diseases shared by apes and humans and mobilizing the necessary expertise and financial aid;
- (g) Recognition that considerably more resources would be needed for GRASP than the \$25 million mentioned.

V. Presentations and discussions of options for a global great apes conservation strategy (item 5 of the agenda)

40. Mr. Stanley Johnson, a UNEP consultant for GRASP, gave an introduction to the document entitled Towards a global great apes conservation strategy (UNEP/UNESCO/GRASP/PrepCom.1/2), which was submitted as a discussion document for revision and subsequent submission to the anticipated 2005 intergovernmental meeting. He highlighted the fact that the draft text featured a global strategy for the entire international community, and was therefore a framework under which GRASP would function. He likened it to Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, which was a morally binding document setting out general objectives, key actions to be taken, key players for those actions, and the level of funding required. It was up to the countries to implement their own national Agenda 21s. The draft text was also similar to the UNEP Marine Mammal Action Plan in that it related not only to countries directly concerned in their capacity as range States, but also other countries for which the survival of the great apes was an ethically important matter for humanity as a whole.

41. He pointed out some issues for attention in the discussion document, such as the relative importance of national great ape survival plans; the need for references to regional agreements such as the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Chimpanzees in West Africa (2002); the need to involve intergovernmental organizations, (e.g., the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union), potential bilateral donors (Japan, the United States of America, the European Union, other countries through their international aid policies and obligations under multilateral environmental agreements); the role of non-governmental organizations, especially in international awareness-raising as well as field action; the role of the academic community, notably in controlling the quality of data on great apes; and the role of the private sector, which had the potential to greatly harm – or mitigate – the great apes' chances of survival.

42. The question of funding was also still open to discussion, since the \$25 million quoted for a five-year period needed to be fully justified and was likely to be considered a minimal sum.

43. In the plenary discussion, Mr. Johnson clarified in response to a question from the Wildlife Conservation Society and Bristol Zoo Gardens that the global strategy being put forward was intended for all actors, of which the GRASP partners were one group. The GRASP work plan would come under that larger framework. The representative from Malaysia drew attention to the fact that 70 per cent of the remaining orangutan population resided outside existing protected areas, and hence there was a need to involve the forestry sector and the Forest Stewardship Council to ensure that environmentally friendly forestry practices were encouraged in favour of great apes.

44. The working group on the global strategy, consisting of some 25 persons, met in parallel with those on the draft "constitution" and the work plan on 27 November. A version of the strategy as revised by the working group and taking account of comments in the plenary session is available on the GRASP web site (www.unep.org/grasp). The main points of the revision are as follows:

(a) The original title of the strategy working document referred to a "great ape conservation strategy"; the term "survival", however, was deemed to be more appropriate, given the urgency of required action. Hence the title was revised to become "Global Strategy for the Survival of Great Apes";

(b) Paragraphs 10 and 11 were revised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to give a clearer explanation of the special attributes of great apes;

(c) The overall goal (paragraph 35 (UNEP/UNESCO/GRASP/PrepCom.1/2)) was debated at length, but was only slightly modified in the end in recognition of the fact that the immediate challenge, as was stated, was to "lift the threat of imminent extinction facing most populations of great apes". The subsidiary goals were however re-organized into those requiring immediate attention and those for the longer term;

(d) The section in paragraph 37 on key actions at the national level received the most comments and was considerably reworked, with an emphasis on: means for maximizing the habitat available for great apes; enforcement of existing protection; ensuring the use of environmental impact

assessments for development projects which risk increasing pressures on ape populations; and inclusion of the protection of biodiversity, and particularly great apes, in national poverty reduction strategy papers;

(e) The section on key actions at the international level gave more emphasis to decreasing consumer demands in industrialized countries that had indirect effects on great apes, such as promoting purchases of only Forest Stewardship Council-certified timber products.

VI. Presentation and discussion of the draft constitution of the GRASP Partnership (item 6 of the agenda)

45. The working document for this item (document UNEP/UNESCO/GRASP /PrepCom.1/3) was introduced by Lucilla Spini of UNESCO. She gave particular emphasis to the proposed categories of partners and GRASP bodies, i.e., the council, the executive committee, the secretariat, the technical support teams, the patrons and the scientific body. Procedures concerning GRASP finances were also illustrated, as those needed to be discussed within the context of the constitution.

46. A general discussion took place in plenary, during which the following points were raised:

(a) The constitution aimed to reflect the innovative nature of a World Summit on Sustainable Development type II partnership; it was therefore a new type of instrument that had no real precedent in existing texts;

(b) The proposed draft could be interpreted as being too bureaucratic, and there were questions regarding its binding nature. Concern was expressed that such a “constitution” could obstruct rather than facilitate the implementation of GRASP in range States. The proposed text was also found to be too complicated and needed simplification.

47. On the basis of those general remarks, the working group on the constitution met in parallel with the two other groups. The meeting was attended by some 25 participants. The working group decided not to enter into detail on the redrafting of the proposed text, but rather to discuss key principles that would serve as the basis of a new text to be drafted at a later stage. The group also agreed that the title should be changed and it was suggested that it be called “rules of GRASP” or “organization and management of the GRASP partnership” or some other title along those lines. The principles that would serve as a basis for the drafting of a new text were presented in plenary and agreed upon. They are listed below:

(a) Key principles:

- (i) Voluntary membership by all partners on the basis of supporting GRASP objectives;
- (ii) Not legally binding;
- (iii) Inclusive of all main actors;
- (iv) Supporting and complementary, not prescriptive;
- (v) Project operating as type II partnership (as approved by World Summit on Sustainable Development/Commission on Sustainable Development);
- (vi) GRASP should work with Governments as partners at the range-State level;
- (vii) GRASP should monitor progress towards its goals, at both the international and national levels;

- (b) Membership:
 - (i) Range States to be full GRASP partners at the global level;
 - (ii) Donor states could, if they wished, become full GRASP partners;
 - (iii) Non-range states could support GRASP partners at the global level;
 - (iv) Partners = Members;
- (c) Governance:
 - (i) A GRASP council to meet every two years;
- (d) An executive committee to comprise:
 - (i) Four range States, by subregion (three from Africa; one from south-east Asia);
 - (ii) Two non-governmental organizations;
 - (iii) UNEP;
 - (iv) UNESCO;
 - (v) One representative of multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (vi) Appropriate representation by donor States;
- (e) The secretariat:
 - (i) Sponsoring agencies (UNEP and UNESCO) to provide secretariat with clear location;
 - (ii) Separation of secretariat and agency functions;
- (f) GRASP at the national level:
 - (i) Provisions needed on organization of GRASP at the national level, incorporating role of GRASP focal points;
 - (ii) GRASP structure in range States should encourage engagement with other relevant bodies, e.g., community groups and smaller non-governmental organizations, as local partners;
 - (iii) [Parallel optional provision for GRASP supporting organizations in non-range States];
- (g) Scientific panel/commission:
 - (i) Full cooperation and use of IUCN/Primate Specialist Group/Great Apes Advisory Panel;
 - (ii) Hybrid model of membership (experts and country representatives);
 - (iii) Multidisciplinary;
 - (iv) Final decision by executive committee;
 - (v) Distinctive roles of scientific panel/commission and technical support team;

- (vi) Working within available resources;
- (vii) Targeted fund-raising will be needed to support scientists' role.

48. These proposals were submitted by the working group to the plenary and were agreed. The plenary also agreed to put in place an interim executive committee that would be composed of:

- (a) Three GRASP focal points: Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Indonesia;
- (b) One representative of a donor country;
- (c) Two non-governmental organizations: Wildlife Conservation Society and Orangutan Foundation;
- (d) One representative of multilateral environmental agreements;
- (e) UNEP and UNESCO, as the secretariat.

49. Finally, the plenary took full note of the UNEP/UNESCO statement of intent for GRASP, which had been developed to clarify the distinctive role of GRASP within the global strategy for the survival of great apes. This statement of intent is reproduced below:

GRASP statement of intent

Mission statement

The Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) Partnership has, as an immediate challenge, to lift the threat of imminent extinction facing most populations of great apes, namely gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos (pygmy chimpanzees) and orangutans. Its mission is to work with range State Governments and partners to conserve viable, wild populations of every kind of great ape, and to make sure that, where great apes interact with people, their interactions are mutually positive and sustainable. GRASP also seeks to exemplify and relieve the threats faced by other kinds of animal, birds and plants sharing the forests where apes survive, and to illustrate what can be achieved through a genuine partnership between all the stakeholders in these fragile ecosystems.

Goal

The GRASP Partnership shall have as its goal to conserve viable populations of all species and subspecies of great apes in their natural habitats.

Distinctive approach

GRASP unites all the main actors – United Nations agencies, wildlife treaties, non-governmental bodies and Governments – in the first ever concerted approach to a major extinction crisis. GRASP is a registered World Summit on Sustainable Development type II partnership established by UNEP and UNESCO and also incorporates:

- National Governments;
- Multilateral environmental agreements;
- Non-governmental organizations.

GRASP also works with the academic community and the private sector and with international and regional organizations as well as other donors.

Focus

GRASP will strive to reach its goal by utilizing its direct political links with range State and non-range State Governments and international bodies to:

- Support the development of national, regional and international planning and monitoring processes;
- Leverage new and additional funding for the implementation of those planning processes by the partners;
- Engage in high-level political dialogue on issues impacting great ape conservation.

VII. Presentation and discussion of the GRASP Partnership work plan (item 7 of the agenda)

50. A working group tasked with finalizing the draft work plan for the GRASP Partnership was convened and worked in parallel with the two other working groups. Mr. Korli Korheina of Liberia acted as facilitator.

51. The group decided on a consensual basis that the draft work plan contained in the working document (UNEP/UNESCO/GRASP/PrepCom.1/4) was generally satisfactory in both structure and content. It stressed, however, that the work plan should not stand on its own and would benefit from synergistic arrangements with other relevant ongoing initiatives for its implementation.

52. Some questions of principle were raised, including the need for the strategy and the work plan to constitute a harmonized set of provisions and recommended actions and the need for activities under the work plan to respond to the specific needs of end users. The latter point underlined the importance of carrying out needs assessments, at least in range States.

53. The main points raised by the working group and during the ensuing discussion in plenary are summarized as follows:

- (a) The work plan should focus on *in situ* action, but it should not exclude *ex situ* interventions, where necessary, in support of *in situ* action;
- (b) The work plan should take into account the specific meanings of terms such as “improving conservation” and “viability of populations” when applied to local situations;
- (c) In the implementation phase of the work plan, States should be able to identify the specific communities and national partners to be targeted or involved;
- (d) The capacity-building part of the work plan should be broad in scope, in that training should be provided for a range of specific groups, including the judiciary, police, custom officers, and parliamentarians;
- (e) Transboundary collaboration among range States and among existing institutions in implementing the work plan should also represent a key indicator of its success.

54. The plenary, on the basis of the outcome of the working group’s deliberations, agreed to the work plan, with amendments to its language and some of its activities. The work plan as so amended is available on the GRASP web site (www.unep.org/grasp).

VIII. Proposed intergovernmental meeting on great apes and GRASP (item 7 of the agenda)

55. Mr. Robert Hepworth of UNEP introduced this item. He recalled that the main objective of the planned intergovernmental meeting would be to adopt the strategy, the rules for the management of

GRASP and the work plan, and also to obtain pledges for financial support for GRASP activities. In the ensuing discussions, the following points were agreed:

- (a) Date -- Taking account of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (February 2004) and the IUCN World Conservation Congress (November 2004), it was agreed that the intergovernmental meeting should take place in early 2005. Exact dates should be fixed as soon as possible to ensure high-level participation;
- (b) Venue -- The Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Uganda tentatively proposed to host the intergovernmental meeting. Those countries were thanked for their offers and asked to confirm them to the GRASP secretariat at UNEP by the end of January 2004. The secretariat would then contact the proposed host countries in order to obtain a decision by consensus on the venue of the Conference;
- (c) Participants -- The meeting would be intergovernmental, and would include representatives of range States and other States, particularly potential donors. Representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector would also be invited;
- (d) Rules of procedure -- It was expected that the rules for United Nations intergovernmental meetings (category II) would be used;
- (e) Inputs would include:
 - (i) The revised great apes strategy;
 - (ii) The draft rules of management of GRASP;
 - (iii) The draft GRASP work plan;
 - (iv) National reports indicating what range States were doing to implement GRASP. (With respect to this, attention was drawn to the need to carefully consider the status and future of hunter-gatherer communities living in forested areas also used by great apes, which often were located in trans-frontier regions. As key stakeholders in GRASP, it would be necessary for range States to have a clear position on their status quo.);
 - (v) A two-page statement on the purpose of GRASP, what it did, and what it would do;
- (f) Associated events would include an opening scientific side event and the first meeting of the GRASP Council, once the rules of management were adopted by the intergovernmental meeting;
- (g) Outputs of the intergovernmental meeting:
 - (i) A great apes strategy, rules for the management of GRASP and a work plan adopted at the intergovernmental level;
 - (ii) A high level declaration recognizing the importance of great apes from the point of view of biodiversity and committing all humanity to ensure the survival of humankind's closest relative. A draft of this declaration would need to be prepared beforehand in close consultation with range States;
 - (iii) A series of pledges for significant financial support to implement GRASP;
 - (iv) An indication of how projects to be financed with the funds raised for GRASP could be prepared, processed, implemented and reported upon;
 - (v) A clear indication of the role of non-governmental organizations in GRASP;
- (h) Publicity -- To be well-organized in advance, for example through a GRASP side event at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in February 2004; scientific articles, such as in *Nature*; and authoritative statements from range States on the conservation status of the great apes in their territories. Attention would have to be paid to emphasizing that GRASP was special, and that it was a new and innovative partnership that could make a difference;
- (i) Interim executive committee -- The interim executive committee would be entrusted with preparations for the intergovernmental meeting, including the necessary documents to obtain support of the governing organs of UNEP and UNESCO in the course of 2004.

IX. Closure of the meeting (item 10 of the agenda)

56. The co-chairs, Mr. Robert Hepworth from UNEP and Mr. Samy Mankoto from UNESCO, highlighted the progress made at the preparatory experts meeting, in particular the involvement of almost all the range States. They underlined the importance of the next steps for preparing the intergovernmental conference to ensure that it would be a full success. The exceptional international press coverage of the preparatory experts meeting was to be considered an encouraging sign for all participants and for GRASP, especially with respect to awareness- and fund- raising. The momentum would have to be kept in that respect. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the co-chairs declared the meeting closed on 28 November 2003.
