



**Report of the
GRASP Meeting of Donor Countries and Agencies and
Others Interested in Supporting Great Ape Conservation**

**National Museum of Natural History, Paris
25 October, 2007**

The GRASP Meeting of Donor Countries and Agencies convened on 25 October 2007 in the National Museum Natural History, Paris, France and was attended by more than sixty participants including Argentina, Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, representatives from nine great ape range states, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. The meeting was hosted by the government of France, and co-chaired by H.E. Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry Economy, Republic of Congo and Jean-Luc François, Deputy Head, Millennium Development Goals and Sector Policies Division, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, France.

Natajaran Ishwaran, Director Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, UNESCO, highlighted that GRASP is a WSSD Type II Partnership and outlined progress, including that the new Scientific Commission has been elected and that the French translation of the *World Atlas on Great Apes and their Conservation* is in its final stages with the support of the French Government. He drew participant's attention to the GRASP Activity and Finance Plan, *Plan It for the Apes*, for discussion at the meeting. He also outlined relevant UNESCO activities.

Co-Chair François highlighted the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) meeting running in parallel with this meeting as well as describing support provided by France in Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire. He said that this is not a very optimistic time for great apes, referring to activities such as mining and biofuels where the environmental impact has not been taken into account, and to the fact that many great ape regions are subject to conflict. He also underscored encouraging signs, such as increased global awareness concerning climate change and that governments and corporations appear increasingly willing to take environmental responsibility.

Co-Chair Djombo, emphasized the variety of biodiversity existing in the Congo Basin, the commitment made to conserve this natural heritage in particular since the establishment of the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC) in 1995, and the launch of the CBFP in 2002. He noted that the week's range state negotiations on the Paris Agreement for the Conservation of Gorillas and their Habitat (Gorilla Agreement) together with this GRASP meeting were an opportunity to indicate commitment to conservation of the species.

Ibrahim Thiaw, Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP, highlighted the objectives of the meeting, including to inform potential GRASP partners about GRASP activities, and launch the GRASP Activity and Finance Plan. He emphasized that GRASP is a partnership and that great apes are a flagship species, also raising several other issues for discussion, including how to: engage the private sector; ensure that the development sector takes on board great ape issues; and ensure that GRASP gains more long term involvement.



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Serge Wich, Chair, GRASP Scientific Commission, gave an overview of the current status of great apes, current threats and importance of protecting them, highlighting their key characteristics, including their: longevity; slow reproduction and development; cognitive complexity; capacity for self-awareness; and extensive cultures. He also outlined causes of the decline in great ape populations and, stressing those elements which make the forest important, he explained that great apes are a keystone species and are vital to the integrity of their forest habitat in particular through seed dispersal.

Ian Redmond, GRASP, emphasized that supporting the partnership is not just about conserving great apes because they are “cute, intelligent, and interesting” but about protecting their role in the ecosystem, saying that conserving forest it is not just about protecting the trees but also the animals. He hoped that other range states would realize the direct economic benefit being derived from great apes by Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and that the meeting in Bali in December 2007 to decide the future beyond the Kyoto Protocol would lead to a new prioritization of the forest. He added that in the context of the Stern Report on the Economics of Climate Change, which concluded that spending 10 to 15 billion dollars per year on preventing tropical deforestation would be the most economical way of achieving a significant and immediate reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the \$30.5 million GRASP Activity and Finance Plan to ensure the survival of forests in Africa and South East Asia is a bargain.

Plan it for the Apes: Presentation of GRASP Activity and Finance Plan

Melanie Virtue, GRASP Secretariat (UNEP), outlined a brief history of the partnership and its structure and highlighted GRASP's added value. She referred participants to the costed list of actions contained in the Activity and Finance Plan, emphasizing the need for increased sustained support.

Discussion

Trevor Salmon, Head of CITES and CMS Policy Team, UK, stressed his country's enthusiasm for GRASP, urging strong advocacy for this flagship species. He noted the support provided to GRASP by the UK government but that the partnership had not achieved as much as had been hoped, expressing hope that the Activity and Finance Plan would address this together with a monitoring system to indicate progress.

Michel van den Bossche, European Commission, outlined details of potential funding mechanisms, including: the call for proposals on tropical forests and local people to be launched in 2007-8; a series of targeted projects; the Global Climate Change Alliance; the launch of a financial instrument through which private companies can participate in the development of countries and the protection of forests.

Stressing her own personal commitment to great apes, Maria Susana Pataro, Department of Multilateral Political Affairs, Argentina, highlighted awareness raising activities carried out amongst key players, highlighting collaboration with UNESCO.

Bamba Diop, African Development Bank, said that requests for support can be made by the range states but also urged a more multi-national approach. He noted that the Congo Basin is a special focus and that opportunities for synergies are being explored.

Frank Wolff, Ministry of the Environment, Luxembourg and Harald Schwammer, Schoenbrunn Zoo, Austria, said they were present as interested potential donors to listen and gather information. Claude-Anne Gauthier, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, France, stressed the need to intervene at the ecosystem level and urged ensuring that biodiversity conservation is taken into account at all levels of development.



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Co-Chair François highlighted several points from the discussions, including that:

- the GRASP Scientific Commission had emphasized the preservation of forests;
- support is required to enable the involvement of range state governments in great ape conservation;
- political decision makers require facts and figures, which is why publications such as the Stern report are effective;
- there is a need to finance projects for sustainable management of forests and to ensure that these projects take into account great ape conservation; and
- there is a demand for trans-frontier parks to preserve great apes such as the Parks for Peace initiative progressing in southern Africa.

Co-chair Djombo urged donors to ensure that a proportion of funding goes to the environment, lamenting that environment can often be the “Cinderella issue.” He emphasized the need to undertake common actions to avoid countries being hubs of illicit trafficking of biodiversity resources.

Ibrahim Thiaw said that the political commitment has been made and the Activity and Finance Plan must be put in place to implement a global plan for the conservation of great apes and their habitats. He emphasized the need for sustainable financing and to ensure that GRASP provides “added value” to existing national plans, and highlighted several activities including developing a rapid response programme, benefiting indigenous communities and, referring to the recent UNEP mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo, addressing conflict situations given that many great ape habitats are in conflict areas. He proposed follow-up missions to the range states to be facilitated by the GRASP Secretariat.

Eric Bettelheim, Executive Chairman, Sustainable Forest Management, spoke eloquently of the role of the private sector and his organisation’s success in attracting some USD 250 million worth of investment capital and invited interested parties to contact him.

Keynote Speaker, Wangari Maathai, Goodwill Ambassador, Congo Basin Forest Ecosystem, urged responsible and equitable management of resources so as to pre-empt conflict. She highlighted the £50million funding from the British government, explaining that a trust fund was being created to manage it with the support of the World Bank and African Development Bank. She spoke of instances where farmers undermine their own livelihoods through farming in a damaging way and would ultimately be the first to go into the forest to kill the first animal they see.

Minister Djombo called for exchange mechanisms between the Amazon, Congo Basin and Asian forest regions to pool knowledge acquired in management of forests, and stressed the need to change farming techniques.

Annette Lanjouw said that the ARCUS Foundation provides US\$6 million per year for great ape conservation and respect of great apes, as well as awareness building of the value of the animals. She emphasized the need to finance projects and activities in the field related to species and habitats as well as political lobbying.

Indra Purwandita Sunjoto, Sabah Forest Department, Malaysia, highlighted his country’s commitment to great ape conservation and not to convert forest land.

Matthew Hatchwell, Wildlife Conservation Society, spoke from the non-governmental organization perspective, noting that NGOs contribute much to the GRASP partnership. He emphasized GRASP’s added value beyond the contributions of the partners individually, in particular in its ability to intervene at the international ministerial level and gain access to the funding that would not



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normally be available to the partners. He highlighted the need to consider those activities under the Activity and Finance Plan that are carried out by NGOs and those by others.

Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary, Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), underscored the importance of the Gorilla Agreement agreed in the week and open for signature the next day during the meeting of CBFP. He noted that the CMS Secretariat would work closely with the GRASP Secretariat on delivery of the agreement.

Andrew Mitchell, Executive Director, Global Canopy Programme, introduced the Forest Now Declaration, saying it is gathering momentum in addressing deforestation. He also referred to the Prince's Rain Forest Project being launched that day, seeking new solutions and financial mechanisms also to address deforestation.

Keith Brown, Jane Goodall Institute, reconfirmed support for GRASP and welcomed the timeliness of the Plan. He emphasized benefits for communities living alongside great apes, support for research to establish the reasons for conservation of the great apes, and increased public awareness.

Brigitte Decadt, Advisor, Science Policy Office, Belgium, stressed sustainable management of forest and ecosystem service support, highlighted good experience with working with the World Heritage Convention and urged sharing good practices in, for example, ecotourism.

Dan Bucknell, the Gorilla Organization, and Kaddu Sebunya, African Wildlife Foundation, endorsed the Activity and Finance Plan.

The Range State Perspective

Moses Mapesa, Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority and GRASP Executive Committee Chair, presented the links between great apes and poverty reduction. Noting that great apes share their habitat with millions of human beings, and that range states are often least developed countries and conflict areas, he urged concerted global efforts to promote sustainable development and linking welfare of humans, animals and habitats. He underscored the financial benefit derived from great ape tourism in Uganda. In conclusion, he described how GRASP has solicited information from range states to contribute to the Plan as well as supporting the development of NGASPs, calling for support from donors to implement them, including through bilateral arrangements.

Co-Chair Djombo agreed with the need to address local population needs, and urged creating projects to ensure economic and financial autonomy for local people to draw them away from poaching and other activities which are detrimental to the environment.

Central African Republic welcomed the Plan and suggested including the taxonomic table created by the Scientific Commission, and emphasized poverty reduction, saying GRASP could act as an engine to draw those lagging behind.

Luta Nkosi Kingengo, Angola, outlined the situation in his country, highlighting problems encountered carrying out a chimpanzee census, and called for donor support for such surveys.

In response to a call from Germain Kombo, Republic of Congo, Minister Djombo urged making concrete proposals for the trans-frontier park between the Republic of Congo, Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo.



Stephen Ebai Takang, Cameroon, endorsed the Activity and Finance Plan, in particular addressing human-animal conflict and poverty. He urged including research as an area for support, as well as implementation of the NGASPs and field activities.

Ian Redmond reassured participants that field activities, surveys and monitoring (but not academic research) were included in the Activity and Finance Plan.

Further Discussion

Ibrahim Thiaw welcomed the range states' political interest and noted the demand for reinforcement of capacity building and research and that, in most cases, biodiversity is not just limited to protected areas. He also highlighted communication as an added value of GRASP, referring to a global campaign to be launched on climate, and said that the Secretariat would now follow up on the messages and actions identified in the meeting.

Samy Mankoto GRASP Secretariat, (UNESCO), supported Ibrahim Thiaw's conclusions and further highlighted the need for GRASP to intervene in conflict zones. He also noted: the support for creation of the trans-frontier park between the Republic of Congo, Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo; collaboration with the CBFP; and the need for support for education. He concluded by highlighting the work of the Scientific Commission in providing assurance to donors.

Wendy Elliot, WWF, outlined the work being carried out by her organization in great ape conservation and looked forward to working on implementing the Activity and Finance Plan.

Trevor Salmon welcomed the comments of the range state and NGOs. On the Activity and Finance Plan, he underscored enforcement, implementation of NGASPs, and a rapid response unit. On education, in particular in relation to law enforcement and the judiciary, he highlighted the work of the Coalition against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT) in raising awareness about trafficking, and collaboration with TRAFFIC on a training programme currently being trialled in India. On global cooperation, he proposed compiling a list of other initiatives, such as the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, to ascertain where GRASP can build partnership.

Co-Chair François summarized the outcome of the meeting, including the need to:

- strengthen GRASP's capacity to support the range states
- enhance communication and share best practices
- support the implementation of the NGASPs, including through bilateral discussions
- produce concrete results
- support COMIFAC
- link forest certification to concessions where great ape populations are increasing
- conduct trans-frontier actions
- organize donor meetings to consider common funds/basket funding

Emphasizing the need for sustainable development alongside great ape conservation, he concluded by offering to organize a meeting of European donors in the margins of a scheduled EU forest meeting in Brussels.

Bringing the meeting to a close, Co-Chair Minister Djombo congratulated the participants in having adopted the Activity and Finance Plan, welcomed the willingness of donors to participate and said that the moment had now come for all GRASP partners to put it into action.