

Global strategy for the survival of great apes and their habitat

1. Introduction

The text of the global strategy for the survival of great apes and their habitat is set out below, with an indication of the overall goal of the strategy, its subsidiary objectives and the action at the national and international levels required for their attainment. The strategy's background and rationale are set out in the annex which follows.

2. Overall goal¹

The overall goal of the strategy is, 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, and, beyond that, to conserve in their natural habitats wherever they exist, wild populations of all species and subspecies of great ape, and to make sure that, where they interact with people, those interactions are mutually positive and sustainable.

3. Objectives

3.1 Immediate objectives

The immediate objectives of the strategy are the following:

- 3.1.1 To promote the global strategy for the survival of great apes;
- 3.1.2 To determine the potential of sites, monitor populations of great apes, and set up a database with this information;
- 3.1.3 To collate and analyse existing projects and initiatives at different levels to identify gaps and set priorities in action, and to encourage coordination and cooperation;
- 3.1.4 To encourage range States to prepare and implement national action plans for the survival of great ape populations and their habitat, and ensure that range States have the necessary resources for this;
- 3.1.5 To prioritize the use of resources for optimum effectiveness, and identify funding areas that are currently neglected and underfunded;
- 3.1.6 To promote and enforce a legal framework for the survival of great apes and their habitat in the countries concerned;
- 3.1.7 To identify and support income-generating initiatives to the benefit of communities living in and around great ape habitat and protected areas, with due consideration of indigenous communities and to ensure, where it becomes imperative to resettle indigenous people in conformity with United Nations guidelines, that compensation is paid with international support;
- 3.1.8 To educate and raise awareness among local populations;

¹ The overall goal of the *Global Strategy* is similar but not identical to the overall goal of the GRASP Partnership as listed in the *Rules for the organization and management of the GRASP Partnership*.



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- 3.1.9 To help generate new and additional funds for the survival of great apes and their habitat and to ensure that the international community in the widest sense (donor nations, international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations, private business and industry) provides effective and coherent support to the efforts being made by the great ape range States.

3.2 Longer-term objectives

The strategy shall have the following longer-term objectives:

- 3.2.1 To carry out scientific research to generate information necessary for the survival of great apes and their habitat, and to disseminate such information in an easy and accessible manner;
- 3.2.2 To encourage countries to enter into and/or enforce relevant conventions and agreements for the conservation of great apes and elimination of their illegal trade, bearing in mind the cost of such participation;
- 3.2.3 To work with relevant international networks of intelligence on great apes aimed at eliminating illegal transboundary traffic;
- 3.2.4 To promote the development and transfer among range States, partners and other interested parties of appropriate technologies, training programmes and best practices for planning, finance, monitoring and delivery of outcomes;
- 3.2.5 To promote the inclusion of information highlighting the importance of great apes and their habitats in the national curriculum, and the dissemination of such information through the media.

4. Action

4.1 National-level actions

The Global Strategy for the Survival of Great Apes and Their Habitat aims to encourage the Government of each great ape range State to develop and adopt a national great ape survival plan. This would identify the status of current knowledge with regard to each species' population and distribution, relevant legislation and other pertinent factors. Where there are gaps in information, research should be undertaken to remedy the deficiencies within a designated time frame. Key actions at the national level could include:

- 4.1.1 Determining the current status and recent trends of each ape population and of all remaining ape habitat. Where this information is lacking, immediate surveys should be undertaken to provide this basic data. The national great apes survival project should include maps to show the extent of ape habitat now and in the recent past, with national parks and reserves superimposed. Recommendations should be made:
- (i) To review the national system of protected areas, including community conservation areas, sacred sites and traditional use areas, with respect to national biodiversity conservation strategies and plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and related national land and water-use plans;
 - (ii) On the basis of the findings of such review, to create or reinforce a national system of protected areas linked by corridors and transition areas, which maximizes the area of habitat available to great apes, in line with the ecosystem approach and the biosphere reserve concept. Building such a national system should take account of:

- Where possible, extending existing protected areas to encompass adjacent areas with great ape habitat;
 - Ensuring effective management of existing protected areas;
 - Establishing new protected areas in great ape habitats, and recognition of community conservation areas, sacred sites and traditional use areas;
 - Fostering transboundary cooperation to conserve shared great ape habitat, including through, as appropriate, the use of international designations of World Heritage sites, Ramsar wetlands of international importance, and biosphere reserves under the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
 - Identifying and establishing ecological corridors of land between fragmented areas of great ape habitat and promoting their sustainable use in a manner compatible with great apes conservation and welfare;
 - In areas where great apes have recently been extirpated, supporting viable wild reintroduction programmes in accordance with IUCN-the World Conservation Union guidelines;
- 4.1.2 Assessing existing national policy, legislation and conservation programmes to establish whether they adequately protect great apes and their habitat and recommend revisions or new laws where necessary to achieve the following objectives:
- (i) The hunting, trading and private ownership of apes should be illegal, the unsustainable use of ape habitat should be prohibited and the use of such habitat subject to strict regulation;
 - (ii) The harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products, mining of minerals, building of roads and buildings and agricultural development should only be permitted in areas of ape habitat where the activities and their consequences are not detrimental to the survival of great apes;
- 4.1.3 Identifying possible gaps in law enforcement and recommend measures needed to protect great apes and their habitat, for example:
- (i) Law enforcement agencies (police, customs officials, wildlife officers and rangers, etc.) should be given increased manpower, training, equipment and resources;
 - (ii) Where communities live in or adjacent to great ape habitat, measures should be taken to encourage active participation in ape conservation, including law enforcement measures;
- 4.1.4 Assessing the impact on great apes and their habitats of extractive industries such as logging, mining, oil exploration, etc., and, in conjunction with the appropriate ministries, chief executive officers of the companies concerned and development agencies such as the World Bank, take action to mitigate this pressure through, for example, the following measures:
- (i) Logging concessions should be awarded for periods of time equivalent to the generation time of the tree species being harvested, to encourage long-term planning;
 - (ii) The awarding of contracts should be contingent upon the activity being ecologically sustainable;
 - (iii) The workforce of the company should not engage in, nor be nutritionally dependent upon, hunting for bushmeat;
 - (iv) Access roads should be disabled after use, unless they are part of a planned road network with appropriate measures to control the commercial bushmeat trade;



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- 4.1.5 With due consideration for the need for coordination and synergy, identifying, planning and implementing sustainable development projects to benefit people living in or near great ape habitat, such as ecotourism based on carefully controlled ape-watching, use of non-timber forest products, etc. Above all, it is essential to support community-based projects that protect the entire forest resource and maintain its capacity to supply people with essentials such as water, food, medicine, building materials, soil and fuel. Some communities have longstanding traditions which give special protection to primates, including great apes. National great ape survival projects should build on these wherever possible. Emphasis should be given to links with rural development projects and projects outside protected areas which may relieve pressures on these areas;
- 4.1.6 Where the illegal trade in young apes continues, providing a government-approved facility to care for, and where possible rehabilitate, confiscated or seized animals. Where no such facility exists, the Government should either establish one or make arrangements (through the Pan-African Sanctuary Alliance in Africa or the network of orangutan rehabilitation centres in Indonesia and Malaysia) with a suitable sanctuary in a nearby country to receive confiscated or orphaned apes with the minimum of bureaucratic delay (to minimize stress and medical complications);
- 4.1.7 Taking the necessary measures to avoid the transmission of disease between great apes and human beings;
- 4.1.8 Encouraging conservation education initiatives – both formal and informal – through schools, sanctuaries and ape-tourism centres, and using press, radio and television;
- 4.1.9 Consulting all stakeholders, including local communities and relevant non-governmental organizations, and agreeing with them on appropriate work plans to ensure that they share ownership of the national great ape survival project process;
- 4.1.10 Establishing national great ape committees involving all stakeholders (Governments, non-governmental organizations, business, academia, local communities, etc.) and appointing national focal points to deal with great ape conservation matters, including the preparation of national great ape survival projects;
- 4.1.11 Inviting or encouraging all actors envisaged in the national great ape survival projects to discharge their assigned role and function so as to secure the full and timely implementation of the national great ape survival projects;
- 4.1.12 Regularly reviewing progress made in implementing the national great ape survival projects and taking appropriate action to correct deficiencies or reorient priorities;
- 4.1.13 Liaising with, and developing cooperative efforts between, range States, in particular where:
- (i) Areas of ape habitat are contiguous with similar areas in neighbouring countries, where tranboundary natural resource management conservation agreements can be implemented, for example within the framework of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species;
 - (ii) Illegal trade in bushmeat, live infants or other ape products, is known to exist between countries;
 - (iii) Possibilities exist for developing subregional strategies or agreements for the conservation of great apes;

- 4.1.14 Participating in intergovernmental agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Tropical Timber Agreement, relevant conventions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, etc., which are concerned explicitly or implicitly with great ape conservation, and in particular support such initiatives as:
- (i) The Central Africa Working Group;
 - (ii) The CITES Great Ape Enforcement Task Force;
 - (iii) The liaison group of the Convention on Biological Diversity on non-timber forest resources;
 - (iv) The Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora task force for fighting wildlife crime;
- 4.1.15 Including the protection of biodiversity, with particular emphasis on great ape conservation, as a key factor in establishing priorities for sector programmes at national level, for example in the context of poverty reduction strategy papers, and in requests for funding made to multilateral aid agencies such as the World Bank, the European Union, Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), etc., or to bilateral donors;
- 4.1.16 Contributing to the international debate on the current conservation status of great apes.

4.2 International-level actions

4.2.1 Role of the international community in the survival of the great apes

The responsibility for ensuring great ape survival lies with all humankind – the developed world as well as the great ape range States. The rich industrialized countries with their vast ecological “footprint” and their insatiable demand for resources, products and services, pose continuing threats to biodiversity in general and the survival of endangered species in particular, including great apes. Consumer nations must take all possible steps to mitigate these impacts.

(i) Donor countries and international agencies

Donor countries and international agencies, including the international financial institutions, all have a major part to play in helping the great ape range States successfully implement their programmes for the conservation of the great apes. They are encouraged to build the underlying priorities of the global survival strategy for great apes into their own biodiversity strategy and action plans insofar as those plans have (as they should have, given the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and elsewhere) an international dimension. These priorities should inform the diplomatic and substantive agenda of donor nations as they debate the priorities and work programmes of agencies or groupings (such as the World Bank, GEF, the European Union, UNDP, etc.) of which they are a member and whose activities – directly or indirectly – may be vital for effective great ape conservation programmes. These priorities should also increasingly be reflected in the work of regional agencies and groupings such as the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

(ii) *Non-governmental organizations*

Non-governmental organizations that historically have played an important role in efforts to conserve the great apes, both at the national and international level, are encouraged to redouble their efforts. The great apes need strong and effective advocates. They need publicity and high-profile events designed to generate public concern and an outpouring of funds. They need non-governmental organizations with a strong profile in implementation and follow-up, including, for example, environmental impact assessment and advocacy work, such as pressure for sustainable logging, green certification of timber, etc.

(iii) *Academic and scientific community*

The academic and scientific community, which has already played such a crucial role in documenting the extent of the great ape crisis and in providing the scientific underpinning for sound conservation projects and programmes, is called upon to play an even more vital role in the future. Specialist groups of IUCN and the national and international primatological societies are particularly relevant in this context.

(iv) *Private sector*

The private sector is of special importance to great ape conservation. Many of the opportunities – as well as threats – facing great apes depend on activities undertaken by the private sector, including national and multinational companies. Ecotourism, for example, if properly managed, generates income for local communities, jobs in wildlife reserves, and profits for travel, hotel and tour companies. Further investment is encouraged, particularly in areas with unrealized potential for tourism, so giving local people a permanent stake in the conservation of ape habitats. Sensitively managed ecotourism, taking into account the need to avoid any transmission of diseases between apes and humans, also provides unrivalled opportunities to raise public consciousness of great apes and the valuable forest ecosystems they inhabit: Every ape tourist should become a lifelong ambassador for these remarkable species.

4.2.2 Role of GRASP within the global great apes survival strategy

While current efforts at great ape conservation involve many actors at both governmental and non-governmental levels, GRASP has a key role to play as part of global efforts to save the great apes. and in the implementation of this global strategy.

(i) *Future membership of the GRASP Partnership*

The launching of GRASP in May 2001 permitted the foundations to be laid of a truly global alliance in support of the great apes. Crucial to that alliance in those early days were the non-governmental organization partners whose inspiration helped create GRASP and whose staff carried out GRASP-supported conservation projects on the ground. The list of GRASP non-governmental partners has expanded dramatically since the launch of the project and currently numbers over 40 organizations. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNESCO are keen to extend this list and to broaden it to cover national and local bodies, including those working with people living in and around ape habitats.

The crucial priority now is to build on early foundations of GRASP, by ensuring the full participation of all 23 great ape range States. In this context, it is most encouraging to note that the rules for the organization and management of the GRASP Partnership, adopted by the GRASP Council at its first meeting, held in Kinshasa on 7 and 8 September 2005, provide that all great ape range States are accepted as full GRASP partners with immediate effect.



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States or regional groupings that are not great ape range States and that have supported GRASP already include Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. These States, and the European Union, should be invited by the GRASP secretariat to confirm their wish to become full partners of GRASP in accordance with provisions of the GRASP rules. Other States with a substantial interest in great ape conservation and related issues should also have the opportunity to become partners at an early date and should be formally invited by the GRASP secretariat to do so.

In addition to UNESCO and UNEP, the sponsoring agencies, other key international organizations are encouraged to become or to remain active GRASP partners. CITES, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Heritage Convention are clearly already of great importance for GRASP and have joined the GRASP partnership. Going beyond the multilateral environmental agreements, GRASP should hope to find partners in other key agencies of the United Nations such as FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests, as well as the International Tropical Timber Organization and the multilateral development finance institutions, notably the World Bank, UNDP, GEF, the European Union, the African Union and NEPAD and regional development banks with an interest in the conservation and sustainable development of biodiversity.

IUCN with its unique network of resources both governmental and non-governmental (including the Primate Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission) is also encouraged to become a partner. IUCN has already agreed to play a full part in the current GRASP structure by providing scientific advice.

(ii) GRASP and the private sector

One of the distinctive features of GRASP is that it has been registered as a type two partnership initiative under the World Summit on Sustainable Development framework. As such, it not only unites the range States and the donor nations, non-governmental organizations and the scientific community, but also provides for the participation in GRASP of private business and industry as supporting members.

The private sector is of fundamental importance to GRASP. The over-exploitation of forests, mainly for timber, bushmeat, or minerals, is the greatest threat to many great ape populations. Private companies undertake much of this activity. GRASP should make a concerted effort to engage them in efforts to mitigate damaging impacts, and plough back resources into conservation and local communities.

Two particular concerns of GRASP are the effects on gorillas, chimpanzees and other wildlife of uncontrolled mining for coltan – a key component of mobile telephones – in Central Africa, and the impact of illegal logging and mining on orangutan populations in Sumatra and Borneo.

(iii) Grasp work plan and programme of action

The GRASP detailed programme of action is currently being developed under the responsibility of the Executive Committee based on the GRASP outline work plan for 2003–2007, presented to and approved by the Council at its first meeting, in Kinshasa in September 2005, taking into account the guidelines and priorities indicated by the Council at that meeting.



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(iv) *Role of GRASP in leveraging new resources for great ape conservation projects and programmes*

When they launched the GRASP strategy document at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002, UNEP and UNESCO indicated that their target was to generate \$25 million for great ape conservation by 2005. A sum of this order was, these agencies believed, essential to make a lasting impact in reducing the risk of extinction and establishing areas where ape populations could stabilize or actually increase.

The new permanent GRASP structure, as set out in the rules for the organization and management of GRASP, adopted by the GRASP Council at its first meeting, makes it possible to build more effective alliances not only with the non-governmental community in support of great ape conservation programmes and projects, but also – and crucially – with the major international players which are in the business of financing biodiversity (the World Bank, GEF, etc.), as well as with key bilateral donors and the European Union. Indeed, as discussions about the global great ape survival strategy proceed in the various relevant forums, it may well be appropriate to revisit the \$25 million target on the basis of a better understanding of what is needed and possible in terms of projects, as well as a new readiness on the part of the donor community to increase their level of funding for great ape conservation programmes.

The vital concept here will be the ability of GRASP to help generate or leverage new and additional resources for great ape conservation. GRASP should not be seen as a major new funding mechanism or institution, but as a way of promoting the development and implementation of national great ape survival plans and projects and of assisting in the better coordination and targeting of resources. That said, GRASP should be in a position to fund from resources that it is able to raise critical activities which might not otherwise attract timely or adequate support through traditional channels such as the World Bank, GEF, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations.

*Adopted at the 1st GRASP Council Meeting
Kinshasa, 7 September 2005*



Annex

Background

Great apes: the threat of extinction

1. “Ensuring environmental sustainability” is one of eight Millennium Development Goals associated with the Declaration adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. The protection of biodiversity and forest resources is identified as one of the means of achieving that goal and its associated economic and social benefits. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, adopted in Johannesburg in September 2002, similarly emphasizes that “biodiversity, which plays a critical role in overall sustainable development and poverty eradication, is essential to our planet, human well-being and to the livelihood and cultural integrity of people.”² The World Summit participants called for immediate actions significantly to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, subregional and national levels.
2. The loss of biodiversity, as mentioned in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, is presented in possibly the starkest terms when whole species or groups of species are threatened with extinction. This is precisely the situation in which the great apes are to be found today. Indeed, the threat of extinction of the great apes, in the immediate future, is without any doubt the main reason for elaborating and implementing a global great ape survival strategy.
3. There are three genera of great apes: gorillas, chimpanzees, and orangutans. Gorillas are divided into western and eastern species, found in ten countries from Nigeria to Uganda. Chimpanzees comprise two species: the common chimpanzee, found across 21 countries in west, central and east Africa; and the bonobo, or pygmy chimpanzee, found only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Orangutans live in south-east Asia, on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra in Indonesia and east Malaysia.
4. The Species Survival Commission of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) has categorized both the western gorilla and the eastern gorilla as “endangered overall”, i.e., facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future. Three particular populations are categorized as “critically endangered”. These are the Cross River form in the far west, and both the mountain and Bwindi forms in the far east.
5. As for chimpanzees and bonobos, the Species Survival Commission in 2000 categorized both the chimpanzee and the bonobo as “endangered”. In the former case, each of the four subspecies is also categorized as “endangered”.
6. The Species Survival Commission categorized the Sumatran orangutan as “critically endangered”, and the Bornean orangutan as “endangered overall”. The three recognized subspecies on Borneo are also categorized as “endangered”.
7. In short, it can be asserted that today – at the dawn of the new millennium – every one of the great ape species is at high risk of extinction, either in the immediate future or at best within 50 years. For example, in a recent survey of 24 protected areas in Africa and south-east Asia, great ape populations were found to be declining in 96 per cent of these sites.

² Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E. 03. II. A. 1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 44.



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8. Most of the threats to apes result from human activities: increasing human populations encroaching on their habitat, civil wars, poaching for meat or the live animal trade, diseases such as ebola which can decimate ape populations, and the destruction of forests.
9. Results of recent analyses indicate that more than 70 per cent of the habitat of each of the African great ape species has been negatively affected by infrastructural development. For the orangutan, the corresponding figure is 64 per cent. Future scenarios suggest that the annual loss of undisturbed habitat will be greater than 2 per cent per year in the case of the African great apes, and 5 per cent in the case of the orangutan in south-east Asia. By 2030, the scenarios suggest that less than 10 per cent of great ape habitat in Africa will remain free of the impacts of infrastructural development. In the case of the orangutan, the corresponding figure is less than 1 per cent. These figures are supported by estimates of habitat loss and degradation made independently by great ape field researchers.³

Special significance of great apes

10. Great apes have a spectrum of attributes, which gives them special significance. These attributes relate to genes, morphology and physiology, individual capacities and social organisation and behaviour. In terms of genetic inheritance, great apes share much of their heritage with human beings: on average around 96 per cent, with chimpanzees as high as 98.4 per cent.
11. At the level of individuals, great apes deploy a wide range of intelligent behaviour, including tool making and use, food selection and the use of plants for self-medication. They communicate with sounds, facial expressions, gestures and displays, and in captivity have been taught language, either by signing or by using symbols and computer-based programmes. They also manifestly experience a range of emotions, including joy and grief. The social life of great apes has been studied in detail, especially in chimpanzees. It has been found to be enormously rich and complex. Maternal-offspring bonds are intense and long-lasting, and can include demonstrations of tool use. Older siblings care for younger siblings. Males cooperate for hunting and territorial defence, and form political alliances for dominance. The beginnings of morality are evident in the way that excessive harassment of a subordinate by a dominant animal will evoke expressions of unease by other group members. Cultural differences, for instance in tool use, occur between different populations of the same species. Modern cognitive science, using sophisticated imaging systems on working brains, is demonstrating that there are strong similarities in the brain function of humans and great apes.
12. Given this, great apes form a unique bridge linking humans to the natural world. Understanding great ape ecology and behaviour thus provides a continuing opportunity for humans to appreciate how we evolved, and our own precarious position as one of the 10–15 million or more species of the planet. If we were to lose any great ape species, many people would feel that we were destroying part of the bridge to our own origins, and with it a part of our own humanity.
13. Great apes also act as key indicator species for endangered ecosystems. The forests which the great apes inhabit are a vital resource for humans, and a reduction in ape numbers is a sure sign that the forests are being used unsustainably.
14. Ape habitats are vital to humans and many other species as a source of food, water, medicine and timber and as a regulator of our changing climate. Apes play a key part in maintaining the health and diversity of tropical forests, by dispersing seeds and creating light gaps in the forest canopy which allow seedlings to grow and replenish the ecosystem.

³ The Great Apes – the Road Ahead. A Globio Perspective on the Impacts of Structural Development on the Great Apes (UNEP GRID – Arendal, Norway, September 2002).



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15. The vital importance of forest ecosystems has been acknowledged by African environment ministers who recently requested that “the New Partnership for Africa's Development define forest ecosystems as one of the major areas of intervention.”⁴ Similarly, the Environment Ministers of South-East Asia agreed to manage sustainably and use wisely their diverse biological resources.⁵

Current efforts in great ape conservation

16. Over decades individuals and organizations have worked to protect great apes by finding ways for them to coexist more successfully with their human cousins in their shared forest homelands in West and central Africa and south-east Asia. Partly as a result of the first year's activity of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) Partnership, operating under an interim constitution⁶, and the organization of workshops and seminars at a national level, as well as visits conducted by GRASP Partnership technical support teams, some great ape range States are now in the process of developing national great ape conservation plans. In some countries, enlightened policies have protected forests for local communities as well as apes. Income generated by tourists visiting parks and watching apes, for instance in Uganda's Bwindi and Kibale Forest national parks, helps pay for their protection as well as provide jobs for local people and revenues for community development. In such cases, and where properly managed, great apes are seen as an important economic resource that can improve the lives of neighbouring communities.
17. Some great ape range State Governments have worked hand-in-hand with local non-governmental organizations on projects for great ape conservation. International non-governmental organizations – many of them GRASP partners – have worked with Governments alongside their local counterparts. The Governments of developed countries and regional groupings such as the European Union have begun to focus on ways in which they can assist the range States to build into their own programmes and policies for sustainable development a legitimate emphasis on the conservation of biodiversity, including the great apes. The United States of America, for example, has recently passed the Great Ape Conservation Act, which will provide funding for some of the initiatives needed. The United Kingdom has provided substantial support for GRASP, both during its interim phase and subsequently.⁷ Australia is considering ways in which it can increase its support for great ape conservation programmes, particularly in south-east Asia. GRASP has also received substantial support from Denmark, Germany, Ireland, and also from the United Nations Foundation. Most recently, the European Union has announced assistance in the amount of 2.4 million euros to GRASP in support both of the intergovernmental meeting and of specific field projects for great ape conservation.
18. Private industry and business have increasingly begun to recognize that the conservation of biodiversity, including the protection of the great apes, offers both challenges and opportunities. Some companies, for example, already adhere to codes of conduct relating to sustainable logging, codes which include some provisions for the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife. Other companies have shown themselves to be sensitive to the potential disruption to forest habitat caused by mineral

⁴ Kampala Declaration on the Environment for Development of the ninth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Kampala, Uganda, 1–5 July 2002.

⁵ Kota Kinabalu Resolution on the Environment, Eighth Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministers, held in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, October 2000.

⁶ Rules for the management of GRASP were adopted at the 1st GRASP Council Meeting in Kinshasa on 8 September 2005.

⁷ In announcing its support for GRASP in Nairobi in September 2001, the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, the first formally to back GRASP, said that it was “deeply concerned and has been active in addressing some of the most pressing problems, such as hunting for bushmeat and habitat destruction due to illegal and indiscriminate logging”.



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extraction, such as coltan mining. Still other companies have found it appropriate to support the work of GRASP.

19. The resources provided nationally and internationally through the network of scientists involved in organizations such as IUCN and the International Primatological Society (IPS) have also played an important part in ensuring that local, national and international programmes and projects for great ape conservation have a sound scientific basis.
20. International organizations and institutions have also played their part. For example, the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme has set up the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which promotes the ecosystem approach, balancing land-use between outright protection and controlled harvesting or other utilization by local people. The World Heritage Convention, administered by UNESCO, aims at protecting natural as well as cultural sites of outstanding universal value. Several MAB biosphere reserves, such as Taï in Côte d'Ivoire, Odzala in the Republic of Congo, Gunung Leuser in Indonesia, and World Heritage sites such as Virunga, Kahuzi-Biega and Salonga national parks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dja Faunal Reserve in Cameroon and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda, are critical sites for the survival of great apes. The MAB Programme has set up the first regional postgraduate school on integrated forest management in Kinshasa, to build up a new cadre of African specialists. There is scope for increasing both the number and area of MAB biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites, as well as strengthening the ability of national authorities and local communities to give effect to the designations at ground level.
21. UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention have a special programme supported by the United Nations Foundation to strengthen the conservation of World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are highly vulnerable following the armed conflict in the subregion. Another programme, the Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative, is currently in preparation and aims to strengthen the management of several unique transboundary clusters of forest in the Congo Basin and to assist the countries in the region in submitting them for World Heritage nomination.
22. UNESCO has established a so-called "open initiative" between itself and all international space agencies. Through this initiative, UNESCO will assist developing countries in the monitoring of World Heritage sites through satellite images. As part of this activity, UNESCO has formed a consortium with the European Space Agency and several non-governmental organizations working in gorilla habitats. UNEP is a member of this consortium. A pilot project will use satellite images to provide a land-cover-change assessment during the last ten years. This surveillance of gorilla habitat projects will focus on four existing or proposed World Heritage sites in the Albertine Rift covering border areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. One of the main outputs of this project will be simple but accurate maps derived from satellite images. These maps will be provided to site managers, rangers and conservation non-governmental organizations for monitoring and reporting purposes.
23. Both UNESCO and UNEP believe that this project and others under GRASP provide an opportunity to link biodiversity and peace-building in a troubled region, and give international support to the programmes already run by a number of UNEP and UNESCO partners among the non-governmental organization movement.
24. UNEP has mobilized three international wildlife conventions which it administers and has asked them to take a lead role in their area of expertise and the governing bodies of those conventions have endorsed this initiative. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is endeavouring to combat the smuggling of apes for human consumption or sale as



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live specimens. CITES is taking a close interest in recent incidents involving the export of live animals from Africa, which in one case led to the death of two apes. The Convention on Biological Diversity is involved in the debate on the effects of the bushmeat trade on biodiversity resources and in considering how best to integrate ape conservation with wider biodiversity management frameworks (particularly through its forest biodiversity programme of work) in the individual range States, all of which are Parties to the Convention. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species is concentrating on the eastern species of gorilla, which crosses the mountainous border areas between Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Strengthened cooperation between the three Governments would aid the survival of mountain gorillas, and a formal accord could be considered under article IV of the Convention.

25. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is increasingly concerned with the maintenance of biodiversity in the world's forests from the point of view of food security for rural populations, the prevention and control of illegal logging, poaching and smuggling, wildlife management and non-wood forest products.⁸
26. The World Health Organization (WHO) is concerned by the possible implications for human health and well-being of certain interactions between great apes and human beings and the possibility of the transmission of infectious diseases, such as ebola, between man and animal.
27. It is important also to recognize the extent of the involvement of the main multilateral development agencies, including the international financial institutions. In ten years, for example, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has become the single most important source of grant funding for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (an area of activity which GEF considers to be one of its greatest priorities), steering nearly \$4.2 billion in direct grants and co-financing to this end. A GEF project has created a trust fund to help conserve and sustainably develop the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park in Uganda. The project promotes the conservation and sustainable use of important biodiversity along with equitable sharing of benefits accruing from forest resources and has representatives of local communities on a steering committee.
28. The World Bank invested in 226 biodiversity-related projects between 1988 and 1999. The biodiversity portfolio of the World Bank saw a gradual funding increase over the decade, with commitments totalling over \$1.5 billion of its own resources, in conjunction with an additional \$1 billion from co-financiers. The World Bank Group mission and portfolio entail two areas of comparative advantage significant for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. First, the scale and variety of Bank financing instruments is greater than is possible for most other donors. The Bank also provides leadership among the donor community and stimulates co-financing and donor coordination. This provides multiple opportunities to integrate biodiversity concerns into development assistance and to address the root causes of biodiversity loss, including threats to the future of the great apes.⁹ The World Bank has also initiated meetings between chief executive officers of European timber companies and conservationists to promote the adoption of codes of conduct in logging concessions.

⁸ Anticipating the presentations to be made by FAO on the occasion of the XII World Forestry Congress (Quebec City, 21–28 September 2003) organized by Canada in collaboration with FAO, FAO Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, Mr. M. Hosny El-Lakany, said in a statement issued on 24 July 2003: “Nations must manage their forests in a sustainable way so that present generations can enjoy the benefits of the planet's forest resources while preserving them to meet the needs of future generations.”

⁹ Supporting the Web of Life – The World Bank and Biodiversity – A Portfolio Update (World Bank, April 2000).



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29. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) biodiversity support to countries is integrated into its core work, mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into activities such as governance and poverty reduction in more than 120 countries. There are now more than 200 GEF-UNDP biodiversity and international waters projects under way, with the maintenance of forest ecosystems being one of the primary areas of concern.¹⁰
30. The UNEP GEF portfolio complements the regular work programme of UNEP and includes projects that, first, promote regional and multi-country cooperation to achieve global environmental benefits; second, advance knowledge for environmental decision-making through scientific and technical analyses, including environmental assessments and targeted research; third, develop and demonstrate technologies, methodologies and tools for improved environmental management; and, fourth, build capacity for environmental management. The total GEF portfolio of UNEP comprises 320 projects financed at \$760 million, including GEF funding of \$405 million. This includes 48 full-size or medium-sized GEF projects that support biodiversity conservation (total financing \$280 million, GEF grant \$152 million).
31. As far as the conservation of great apes specifically is concerned, it can plausibly be argued that the initiatives already taken in this field by individual range States, non-governmental organizations, industry and business, international agencies and the donor community represent a significant step along the road indicated by the Millennium Summit, by the strategic plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity and by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Moreover, the launching of GRASP by UNEP and UNESCO in May 2001 and the actions so far undertaken by GRASP partners and range States have certainly helped to focus attention on the issue of great ape conservation and to improve the degree of coordination and commonality in the programmes and projects of the many different actors involved. Technical missions, seminars and workshops designed to help the process of establishing national great ape survival plans have been carried out in a majority of the great ape range States. In addition, there has already been significant funding of several important great ape conservation projects by or through GRASP.

Great apes: inadequacy of current efforts

32. While significant efforts have already been made, as noted in section C above, they have not been sufficient to safeguard great apes and to prevent the relentless pressures which have led to the continued dramatic decline in both their numbers and distribution. Though great apes are protected by national law in every country that they inhabit, there is a lack of enforcement capacity in most great ape range States. Even in supposedly protected areas, poaching, illegal logging and mining all have impacts on vulnerable ape populations. International law is also failing to protect great apes. All non-human apes are listed in appendix I of CITES, which bans international trade for primarily commercial purposes, but the high monetary value which some people attach to captive great apes acts as a constant lure to illegal traders and hunters. The illegal commercial bushmeat trade – a portion of which involves great ape meat – continues largely unchecked within and between neighbouring countries in Africa. Disease is also taking its toll, with ebola outbreaks cutting a swathe through ape and human populations, and the new risk of human-induced epidemics in ape communities visited by tourists. Finally, war, civil unrest and a breakdown in law and order have exacerbated existing problems in several African countries and Indonesia.
33. The urgency of the situation clearly demands a higher level of action. It is already too late in many areas where great apes are now extinct. If we cannot generate a radical increase in the effectiveness of

¹⁰ Conserving Biodiversity, Sustaining Livelihoods: Experiences from GEF-UNDP Biological Diversity Projects (GEF, UNDP, undated).



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efforts to protect great apes and their habitats, it will be too late for many more populations of gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans.

34. Every local extinction is a loss to humanity, a loss to the local community and a hole torn in the ecology of the planet. That is why a major new effort on behalf of the great apes and the communities associated with them is both timely and appropriate.

Need for a global strategy for the survival of great apes

35. An important plank in a major new effort to protect and conserve great apes would be the development and implementation of a global survival strategy for all great ape populations within their dynamic, evolving, natural ecosystems. Currently, conservation efforts are being applied in a piecemeal fashion, where opportunities present themselves and resources are available. Such efforts would have a greater impact if they were integrated within a systematic approach to a globally defined problem, while being tailored to local circumstances. Such a global strategy should also be integrated with the development objectives of range States and be sympathetic to the needs of local communities. The global strategy should be regularly reviewed in the light of new knowledge and understanding of the priorities for great ape conservation.

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