

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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THE GREAT APES SURVIVAL PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION DOCUMENT

1. This document has been submitted by the Secretariat* on behalf of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) in relation to the agenda item 9.1.1.

The Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) is a unique alliance of 105 partners, including national governments, conservation organizations, research institutions, United Nations agencies and private companies, committed to the long-term survival of great apes and their habitat in Africa and Asia.

UN Environment and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) serve as co-hosts of the GRASP Secretariat.

This information document is developed in response to *CITES CoP16 Resolution 13.4: Conservation of and trade in great apes* to highlight some of the activities carried out by GRASP. Resolution 13.4 calls upon intergovernmental organisations to support the conservation of great apes by taking action on the following points:

- a) The provision of funding;
- b) Assistance with enforcement, training, capacity building and education;
- c) Population monitoring, and the gathering and exchange of scientific, technical and legal information and expertise;
- d) Habitat management and restoration;
- e) Mitigation of conflict between humans and apes;
- f) The development of projects which deliver tangible benefits to local communities such as alternative sources of protein;

The GRASP Secretariat serves as a platform for partners to confer and collaborate on important initiatives. The GRASP partnership has driven many noteworthy projects, some of which are listed below, categorized under the particular Resolution 13.4 action point that they address.

Action Point (a): The provision of funding

- GRASP raised funds for projects relevant for the conservation of great apes and which are listed below under the respective technical deliveries.

Action Point (b): Assistance with enforcement, training, capacity building and education;

- GRASP partnered with the World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC) to create the Apes Seizure Database, the first online reporting tool to gauge the scale and scope of poaching and illegal trade

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

in great apes. The database is designed to assist national authorities, civil society, and businesses to monitor and act on illegal trade in live animals, body parts and wild meat. Field-based GRASP partners, such as great ape sanctuaries and protected area authorities, play a crucial role in providing relevant and case-specific information. The database was initially launched at the 17th Conference of Parties of CITES in October 2016, where it received a strongly positive response from participants. In December 2020 the database went “live”. Access and instructions were given in this first phase to the 23 contacts at 19 institutions provided to GRASP by the Pan Africa Sanctuaries Alliance. Key actors in Asia were kept informed, in readiness for future expanded rollout. Together with historical reports held by GRASP, during the first year almost two thousand records were uploaded, predominantly of live apes but including some dead specimens. Discussion has commenced with a view to conducting practical training sessions.

Action Point (c): population monitoring, and the gathering and exchange of scientific, technical and legal information and expertise

- The CITES decisions 17.232 and 17.233 mandate the CITES secretariat to collaborate with the SGA, the GRASP secretariat and other experts, to produce a report on the status of great apes and the relative impact of illegal trade and other threats on great apes. The GRASP Secretariat collaborated with the CITES secretariat and the IUCN Primate Specialist Group/Section on Great Apes on the Status Report. Data on great ape population numbers and changes over time were derived from the IUCN Ape Populations, Environments and Surveys (A.P.E.S.) Database. The report was adopted at the last CITES CoP and is still being used as reference for baseline information on great ape populations and habitats.
- GRASP is implementing the mountain gorilla component of the Vanishing Treasures project. The project is funded by Luxembourg and focusing on climate change adaptation and flagship species (snow leopard in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Bengal tiger in Bhutan and mountain gorillas in Uganda and Rwanda. In collaboration with the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and the Dian Fossey Gorilla fund a technical study on the direct impact of climate change on mountain gorillas was conducted. The study was published in *Frontiers in Conservation Science* (doi:10.3389/fcosc.2022.738820) and revealed that on hot days – and there will be more in the future according to the current climate change models - gorillas drink from open water sources more often than observed in historic data, this makes mountain gorillas potentially more vulnerable to parasites and human diseases.
- With funding from the GEF Congo Basin Impact Programme and GIZ GRASP is supporting the Wildlife Conservation Society’s work on human and wildlife health monitoring in Central Africa.

Action Point (d): Habitat management and restoration

- GRASP held an inception workshop for the GEF Congo Basin Impact Programme in Kinshasa in late May. GRASP has been managing the regional component of the project on behalf of UNEP’s Biodiversity, People and Landscapes unit. The project focusses on sustainable land use management, and GRASP implements via its partners great ape specific interventions including human and wildlife health monitoring, analysis of the of expansion of vegetable oil production, and training of range state experts in Environmental Impact Assessments.
- GRASP is leading the Congo peatlands project with funding from the German International Climate Initiative (IKI). An inception workshop was held in Kinshasa and Brazzaville in June 2022. The project focuses on sustainable land use in the Lac Tele Lac Tumba landscape shared by the Republic of Congo and DR Congo.
- GRASP – with funding from the German Ministry of Environment - partnered with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Convention on Migratory Species to develop a road map for the nomination of the CRIKOT (Cross River – Korup – Takamanda) Transboundary World Heritage Site in Cameroon and Nigeria.
- GRASP, with funding under the GEF Congo Basin Impact Programme, is partnering with the IUCN primate specialist group/section on great apes to train Central African primatologists in mitigating impacts of industrial development projects on great apes.

Action Point (e): Mitigation of conflict between humans and apes

- Under the Vanishing Treasures project cited above GRASP, the International Gorilla Conservation Programme and Uganda Wildlife Authority developed and started implementation of a new

management plan for the Nkuringo buffer zone around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda. The management plan addresses issues of human wildlife conflict and tries to make agriculture resilient to climate change.

Action Point (f): The development of projects which deliver tangible benefits to local communities such as alternative sources of protein

- GRASP supported range state partners to implement ecotourism and community-managed great ape conservation programmes as good models for the confluence of biodiversity conservation and economic development. The pandemic has shown that in some cases there is an over-dependency on revenue from tourism, for other areas tourism is not a viable business model. GRASP and UNEP's Biodiversity, People and Landscapes unit is looking into alternative finance models which make wildlife an economically viable land use option. The GRASP secretariat attended the recent CITES workshop on sustainable wildlife finance.