

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



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YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAMME OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

This information document has been submitted by South Africa in relation to agenda item 23 on *Follow-up of the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife and South Africa's Youth Conservation Programme.**

Youth Conservation Programme of the Republic of South Africa

Report submitted to the CITES Secretariat on 15 September 2017

1. Introduction

The global conservation community has led a contemporary worldwide movement to elevate the youth voice in biodiversity conservation. In line with this global movement, South Africa recognises the need to forge and strengthen a meaningful relationship between young people and nature. South Africa's commitment to this initiative is demonstrated in many of the country's international efforts, including South Africa's pledge to the Sydney Promise at the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014. Through these international platforms forces have been joined with global partners in the endeavour to place young people at the center of decision making processes as current and future leaders for change.

The 17th CITES Conference of Parties provided South Africa with a platform to reflect on its CITES undertakings and consider work that still needs to be done. For South Africa, as hosts of CoP17, this momentous occasion was a unique opportunity not only to showcase the country's conservation efforts, but to launch new initiatives that deepen the dedication to inspiring a new generation of young conservationists on home soil.

As a legacy of CITES CoP17, the Youth Conservation Programme was born. This is a programme mobilising South Africa's youth participation in conservation. The importance of every individuals' role in the protection of South Africa's natural capital wealth is stressed. Simultaneously opportunities for socio-economic upliftment through participation in the biodiversity economy is highlighted.

* *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.*

One of the primary objectives of the Youth Conservation Programme is the formal integration of the youth voice into structures of governance, particularly, within the People & Parks Programme. After a pilot period, the Youth Conservation Programme was presented to the 7th People & Parks Conference held in Midrand in September 2016. At this Conference, Youth Conservation Programme was fully endorsed as a key vehicle for empowering young South Africans to become pivotal in our conservation landscape.

2. Roll-out of the Youth Conservation Programme throughout South Africa in 2016-2017

In the period August 2016 – August 2017, the Youth Conservation Programme has been rolled out in all 9 provinces, reaching 407 youth. Partnerships were formed with key role-players in each of the provinces. These include the relevant provincial agencies and provincial People & Parks structures.

The table below provides further information about the roll-out of the Youth Conservation Programme throughout all 9 provinces.

Province and Protected Area visited	Communities from which participants were selected	Provincial Partner Agency	Dates	Number of Participants
North West, Pilanesburg Game Reserve	Lekubung; Raserapane; Moruleng; Ramongkgwe; Letshetleng; Mabodisa; Mogwase; Welgvaal; Ramoga; Mabele A Podi; Ramasedi; Lerome & Ramolope	North West Parks and Tourism Board	23 August - 09 September 2016	41
Mpumalanga, Andover Nature Reserve	White City; Andover; Cottondale; Gottenburg; Hluvukani; Tlhavekisa; Buffelshoek; Servill B; Hlalakahle; Islington; Thorndale & Werverdiend	Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA)	22 August - 14 September 2016	43
Limpopo, Makuya Nature Reserve	Bende Mutale; Nkotswi; Masetoni; Musunda; Guyuni & Mbuyini	The Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment & Tourism (LEDET)	24 August - 10 September 2016	41
Gauteng, Abe Bailey Nature Reserve	Communities living alongside Suikerbos, Abe Bailey and Roodeplaat Nature Reserves - Khutsong; Carletonville; Tembisa; Pretoria; Midvaal; Heidelberg; Germiston	Gauteng Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (GDARD)	20 - 30 March 2017	48

Free State, Golden Gate Highlands National Park	Communities living alongside Golden Gate Highlands National Park; Maria Moroka Nature Reserve & Rustfontein Dam & Nature Reserve - Phuthaditjhaba; QwaQwa; Botshabelo; Thaba Nchu; Clarens; Kestell & Bethlehem	South African National Parks (SANParks)	20 - 26 March 2017	48
KwaZulu Natal, Ndumo Nature Reserve	Mbangweni; Makhani; Mthanti; Mwayi; Munywana; Bhekabantu; Magwangu; Impala; Eziphosheni & Mbandleni	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	20 March - 07 April 2017	50
Northern Cape, Rolfontein Nature Reserve	Kertjieskloof; Petrusville & Phillipstown	Department of Environment and Nature Conservation	8 - 14 August 2017	43
Western Cape, Table Mountain National Park	Hangburg; Masiphumelele; Ocean View Redhill; Westlake; Imizamo Yethu; Mandela Park; Khayelitsha & Emfuleni	SAN Parks	14 - 20 August 2017	45
Eastern Cape, Great Fish Nature Reserve	Communities living alongside Great Fish Nature Reserve (NR); Tsolwana NR; Mkhambathi NR; Hluleka NR; Ongeluksnek NR; Baviaanskloof NR	Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency	21 - 28 August 2017	48

3. Youth Empowerment Resolutions at the 7th People & Parks Conference

The People and Parks Programme in South Africa was developed to enable active and beneficial participation by rural communities in protected areas. The vision of the programme is “Unlocking the socio-economic potential and total transformation of protected areas for the benefit of communities”. The overall aim of the People and Parks programme is to “address issues at the interface between conservation and communities, in particular, the realization of tangible and intangible benefits by communities who were previously displaced from their ancestral land to pave the way for the establishment of protected areas”.

The 7th People & Parks Conference was held in Midrand in August 2016. In the youth empowerment commission, the following issues were discussed:

- a) How to involve youth in conservation;
- b) Discussions related to careers for youth in the conservation sector;
- c) Determining the best mechanisms to mobilise youth to participate in the biodiversity and conservation sector; and
- d) Discussing roles that can be played by youth against poaching of fauna and flora.

Some of the key issues raised included the fact that most of the programmes involving youth recruit people with matric or post matric, but the primary “targeted” beneficiaries are from in and around protected areas and they often do not have matric, which thereby excludes them; a platform for trained, skilled individuals (graduates who often live in Johannesburg) who want to come back to their communities should be established; technology, art and music should be harnessed to promote conservation issues and to recruit young people as ambassadors for conservation and to raise public awareness; and clear strategies and plans for implementation of projects must be developed.

Actions necessary to develop careers for youth in the conservation sectors were unpacked, and broadly related to making conservation and job opportunities more visible to young people, and to involve them in film making, story-telling and media. Ideas to mobilise youth to participate in the biodiversity and conservation sector included integrating youth programmes in both public and private sector initiatives and to encouraging joint meetings with relevant parties. It was suggested that young people should be involved in protected areas committees and in anti-poaching campaigns. It was suggested that young people need to be supported to start businesses related to the sector and to provide them with ongoing mentorship and skills development support.

Some of the key actions identified included:

- Convene youth conservation imbizos at grassroots level;
- Convene youth conferences at regional, provincial and national level;
- Establish a youth conservation forum provincially and nationally;
- Ensure that conservation is included in the foundation phase curriculum at school;
- Ensure that the Department of Education as well as all other key departments collaborate and are involved in programmes supporting youth in conservation; and
- The use of arts and culture to promote youth involvement in conservation.

One of the key issues was to make sure that youth are included in decision making platforms, thereby mainstreaming them into the existing governance structures established to coordinate and monitor implementation of programmes within the protected areas space. In South Africa, there is community structure called “people and parks community task team” that is established and mainstreamed within the government system to discuss and inform policy directions and programmes implementation to unlock economic benefits from protected areas for the communities neighboring protected areas. The Terms of Reference for the establishment of a People & Parks National Youth Forum has been developed to aligning this forum with existing People & Parks structures. 15 Interim Forum Members were elected at the 7th People & Parks Conference in August 2016, and processes are currently underway to establish provincial structures.

4. Participation of Youth in the Global Youth Biodiversity Network Africa Workshop

The Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) is an international network of youth organizations and individuals from all over the world, established in 2010, to work towards the common goal to prevent the loss of biodiversity. The network, which is the official youth coordination platform in the negotiations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), raises awareness amongst young people on the values of biodiversity, and connects individuals and youth organisations in order to build a global coalition to halt the effects of climate change on the environment. GYBN represents 343 000 members from 107 countries worldwide.

42 Youth from 12 African countries working in the field of conservation and protection of biodiversity attended the first Global Youth in Biodiversity Network in Africa workshop in Gauteng in August 2017, to exchange ideas and find possible solutions to preventing biodiversity loss. The Interim People & Parks Youth Conservation Forum was represented at this workshop.

The GYBN in Africa was one of a number “Youth Voices” workshops being hosted worldwide to build regional capacity by bringing together young leaders that work on Biodiversity issues in the region. During the workshops, the participants learn about the CBD-process, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 - 2020, the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) and the importance of mainstreaming Biodiversity into other sectors.

The participants also had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge about project management, effective communication, advocacy work and fundraising. Each delegate was encouraged to develop their own small projects and campaigns that will directly contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The delegates developed a Roadmap on how to develop the GYBN in Africa and South Africa in order to ensure conservation is not only addressed at heritage level, but also addresses socio-economic perspectives by ensuring natural resources play a development role in Africa and South Africa.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Strengthen partnerships with provincial agencies to ensure continued roll-out of the Youth Conservation Programme and to ensure that the 2018/19 planning cycle at national and provincial levels supports such a roll-out.
- 5.2 Continue to support the work of the People & Parks National Youth Forum which includes the establishment of provincial structures, the refinement of their annual work plan and implementation thereof.
- 5.3 Continue to support South African youth to engage with other youth across Africa and globally through youth networks.
- 5.4 Continue to find linkages with other programmes that target youth and conservation initiatives.

Appendix A: Youth Resolution 17.5 at CITES CoP17

WELCOMING the efforts of the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife and South Africa's Youth and Conservation Programme to engage young people and serve as examples of ways to integrate youth in wildlife conservation, including CITES matters;

ACKNOWLEDGING that today's youth will one day be in decision-making positions and that organizations responsible for wildlife conservation decisions must engage these people now to equip them to be stronger leaders in the future;

RECOGNIZING that by welcoming today's youth into species conservation and wildlife trade conversations, our decision makers will add a rich diversity of ideas and solutions;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that today's youth have come of age in a generation very different than those before it, including great technological advancement, and that the skills held by younger colleagues can be valuable tools to ensure that wildlife trade is legal and sustainable;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. ENCOURAGES Parties to explore opportunities to engage today's youth in CITES and other wildlife conservation issues, for example through internship or mentoring programs;
2. INVITES Parties and the CITES Secretariat to work with universities, youth groups, and other relevant associations and organizations, to create educated and engaged youth networks that can inform and influence conservation decisions;
3. INVITES Parties and observer organizations to include youth delegates on official delegations and provide learning opportunities at CITES meetings.