

The Cape Town Declaration on "Parks for Peace"

[Ed. note: This declaration was issued at the close of the International Conference on Transboundary Protected Areas as a Vehicle for International Co-operation—"Parks for Peace," in shorthand—held in Somerset West (Cape Town), South Africa, 16-18 September 1997. A conference report and proceedings are planned. For more information, contact David Sheppard, the head of IUCN's Protected Areas Programme, at IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland.]

Declaration of Principles

We, the 72 participants of this Conference from 32 countries, are gathered together from around the world, in the common conviction that transfrontier and transboundary conservation areas can be a vehicle for international co-operation, biodiversity conservation and economic development.

We are pleased to note that:

- in many regions of the world there is a new climate of co-operation between neighbouring States; and
- principles of transboundary resource management and resource sharing for mutual benefit are beginning to emerge, although many legal, economic and political constraints remain at both national and international levels.

Based on the wealth of world-wide experience presented at this Conference, we are convinced that:

- a major contribution can be made to international co-operation, regional peace and stability by the creation of transfrontier conservation areas which promote biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and management of natural and cultural resources, noting that such areas can encompass the full range of IUCN protected area management categories;
- such areas can be managed co-operatively, across international land or sea boundaries without compromising national sovereignty;
- such areas can bring benefits to local communities and indigenous peoples living in border areas as well as to national economies through nature-based tourism and co-operative management of shared resources such as watersheds and fisheries;

- such areas also have a vital part to play in the conservation of biodiversity, in particular by enabling natural systems to be managed as functional ecosystem units, for species conservation and ecologically sustainable development through bio-regional planning; and
- appropriate frameworks for transboundary conservation areas may include a range of mutually supportive informal and formal mechanisms, from local liaison arrangements to agreements between States.

The planning and management of transfrontier conservation areas should:

- incorporate the full range of appropriate management options for biodiversity conservation from strict protection to sustainable natural resource management (IUCN protected area categories I - VI);
- fully engage local communities and indigenous peoples and ensure that they derive tangible, long-term benefits from the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation areas;
- build strategic partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, private sector and local communities;
- be undertaken as part of broader programmes for integrating conservation and sustainable development; and
- further the effective implementation of international and regional instruments for conservation of biodiversity.

We particularly endorse the efforts at establishing and strengthening transboundary protected areas in the following regions, where a detailed case has been presented to the conference:

- Southern Africa;
- the habitat of the mountain gorilla on the borders of The Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda;
- strengthening the protected areas in the Meso-American Biological Corridor;
- the forests on the borders of Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam; and
- the demilitarised zone in the Korean peninsula,

whilst noting that there are many other areas around the world where similar efforts deserve support and encouragement, such as the Dead Sea and the Okavango Delta.

We therefore call on the international community to encourage States to cooperate in the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation ar-

as a means of strengthening international co-operation, maximising benefits and fostering regional peace and stability through:

- encouraging individual governments, including provincial governments where these have jurisdiction over natural resources, to strengthen collaboration with their neighbours in the establishment and management of trans-frontier conservation areas;
- developing and widely distributing guidance on best practices and case studies on transfrontier conservation initiatives on land and at sea;
- supporting a code of conduct to provide a clear enabling framework to secure the interrelated benefits of transfrontier conservation areas, namely biodiversity conservation, improved economic and social welfare of local communities and the maintenance and re-establishment of peaceful conditions;
- supporting the development and ultimate adoption of measures to prevent the damaging impact of military activities on protected areas;
- promoting the exchange of expertise, information and other assistance for capacity building to help establish or strengthen transfrontier conservation areas;
- promoting the involvement of the private sector in structured partnerships, which caters for all levels of entrepreneurship within an appropriate and agreed regulatory framework; and
- encouraging international donors and funding agencies to provide additional financial and technical assistance to support transfrontier conservation areas that meet agreed criteria.

