



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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MEETING TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF GORILLAS AND THEIR HABITATS
UNDER THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES
Paris, France, 22-24 October 2007

BACKGROUND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CMS AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF GORILLAS

Introduction and Project Presentation

Development of a CMS Agreement for the Conservation of Gorillas

1. Large primates, and especially the largest of all, the Gorilla, have always generated inspiration and fascination for the people of all continents
2. Many national and international, governmental and non-governmental organisations, are working to multiply conservation actions and efforts to attempt to remedy this critical situation. These initiatives include anti-poaching campaigns, reforestation efforts, development of eco-tourism, implementation of development projects in the regions bordering the areas protected for gorilla conservation and programmes of rehabilitation. Many of these organisations, and the governments involved are now part of GRASP, a partnership between governments, international institutions (notably UNEP and UNESCO), NGOs and the private sector whose objective is great ape conservation.
3. CMS itself is a GRASP partner and we have agreed that CMS main contribution in the next few years will be to facilitate the negotiation and application of a CMS Agreement and Action Plan to support gorilla conservation.
4. For gorillas, CMS aims to establish the legal structure necessary to make all the initiatives durable and to integrate conservation actions. For more than 20 years, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) has been developing and implementing regional agreements under the terms of Article IV of the Convention. These agreements are one of the main conservation tools of the Convention. The CMS Conference of Parties seeks to develop an Agreement under the terms of Article IV between the 10 States covered by the distribution range of the gorilla: Angola, Cameroon, Republic of Central Africa, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda, for the conservation of gorillas and of their habitat. All the *Gorilla* taxa were listed in Appendix I at the last CMS Conference of the Parties, so as to make possible the development of this new NGAGI Agreement (*N'gagi* is the Swahili name for Mountain Gorilla).

5. The UNEP/CMS Secretariat is working with the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, in partnership with the GRASP UNEP/UNESCO Secretariat, and in consultation with the gorilla range states and the other partners of GRASP, to prepare, draft and negotiate this Agreement, and initiate its implementation via a regional, transborder Action Plan. CMS and its partners have engaged themselves to develop and negotiate this Agreement over the next 2 years, and to provide the gorilla range states, as well as the other governments and organisations involved, with a legal framework that will reinforce and integrate conservation efforts.

6. The draft Action Plan to be offered to range states will be centred on the conservation of gorilla populations and their habitats, on the reinforcement of national capacities, on transborder aspects and on **taking into account the socio-economic needs of the populations whose needs are linked to the resources of the forest habitats of the gorillas.**

7. The Plan will be achieved through:

- The integration of the conservation of gorilla populations in the policies of the 10 Range States;
- The reinforcement of regional, national and international awareness of the common heritage value of great apes, in particular, gorillas;
- The reinforcement of transborder collaboration, especially within protected areas;
- The reinforcement of the special protected areas network;
- The reinforcement of inter-state and inter-organisational cooperation by the establishment of an efficient decision making system at local, national and international levels;
- The establishment of a data collecting and surveillance network, the use and exchange of scientific and technical information on gorilla conservation, and the mutual reinforcement of capacities;
- The reinforcement of illegal trade control measures;
- The development of gorilla eco-tourism, particularly in less visited sites;
- The involvement of local communities by the establishment of a discussion framework allowing dialogue with local populations to gain their engagement in conservation and community development goals; and
- The development of financing and fundraising mechanisms to permit the implementation of the regional transborder Action Plan.

8. We hope you will agree that such an Agreement, as well as the projects which will result from it, will contribute to promoting the long term survival of gorillas, their forest habitat and dependent human populations. This should in turn make a tangible contribution to the 2010 targets for biodiversity, and allow the States concerned to combine conservation and long lasting economic development.