



## **GRASP Priority Plan 2013-2016**

### **1. GRASP Background**

The Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) was launched in 2001 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to help ensure the permanent survival of gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans in Africa and Asia. The partnership is a unique mix of member nations, research institutions, United Nations agencies, conservation organizations, and private sector supporters. The GRASP Secretariat is co-hosted by UNEP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

GRASP focuses on global threats to great apes, utilizing the range of institutions and access and the collective resources of the partnership to craft solutions. GRASP also encourages national-level capacity building for protecting biodiversity critical to ecosystem function and resilience as well as developing, testing and implementing tools and methodologies for the conservation of great apes and their habitat.

Great apes occur in 23 countries across Africa and Asia, of which 13 are Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 10 are either conflict or post-conflict states. Governments and civil society organizations in these states are faced with serious capacity, material and funding constraints, which limit to a great extent the effectiveness of their biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management efforts, in turn hindering great ape conservation efforts.

### **2. GRASP Priority Plan Objective**

The GRASP Priority Plan 2013-16 is designed to identify GRASP's vision, goals and priorities for the next four years, and to emphasize the partnership's added value to great ape conservation.

The proposed GRASP Priority Plan was composed by the GRASP Secretariat in collaboration with the GRASP Executive Committee, the GRASP Scientific Commission, and GRASP partners, and takes into account key recommendations from the 2012 GRASP Strategic Review.

This document aims to lay the groundwork for the GRASP Priority Plan by describing key working areas with a number of examples that indicate the scope of anticipated GRASP activities. It will be reviewed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> GRASP Council with the expectation that a final version will be approved by the 2<sup>nd</sup> GRASP Council.

The GRASP Priority Plan will apply to the partnership as a whole, but will be facilitated, coordinated and, at times, implemented by the GRASP Secretariat. The GRASP Secretariat will play an active role and serve as a catalyst in exploring options for new strategic alliances, in bridging the gap between traditionally unrelated sectors, in maximizing inputs from U.N. agencies, in accessing the political clout and neutrality of the U.N., and in engaging partners actively in fundraising proposals and implementation. GRASP and its supporters recognize that the partnership and the platform it creates produce value and results that far outweigh the sum of the individual components.

### **3. GRASP Vision**

*“GRASP’s vision is to conserve all great ape species and sub-species in appropriate habitat.”*

### **4. GRASP Goals**

- 4.1. Address drivers of great ape habitat loss
- 4.2. Address drivers of great ape population decline
- 4.3 Create global dialogue on great ape conservation

### **5. Threats to Great Ape Populations**

The threats to great ape populations are well documented, and are primarily 1) habitat conversion and alteration due to large scale development activities including logging, mining, and conversion into agro-industrial landscapes, 2) illegal hunting, 3) disease, and 4) the illegal trade in great apes.

The threats can generally be divided into those affecting great ape populations directly, and those affecting the habitat of great apes. The GRASP Priority Plan is therefore divided into great ape population-centered activities and great ape habitat-centered activities.

### **6. GRASP Added Value**

GRASP was created to leverage the convening power, international access, and multi-disciplinary resources of the United Nations working with other Partners on behalf of great apes, and, according to the Rules for Governing GRASP adopted in 2005, engage in “high-level political dialogue on issues relating to great ape conservation.”

The GRASP Strategic Review notes that GRASP can do more to implement the resources presented by the partnership, and that some believe only high-level negotiations with political leaders and policy makers can have any real impact on key issues. The review states, “New voices are needed to speak on behalf of GRASP and to pass highly sensitive messages, carefully orchestrated and planned in advance by the Secretariat. “

While high-level negotiations are one area in which GRASP might concentrate, GRASP can play an equally important role in promoting great ape policy, law enforcement, judicial reform, public awareness, and enhanced public visibility of great ape issues. GRASP’s access

to international media affords it an audience and outreach opportunities not available to most partners.

GRASP's global perspective and range of partners allows it to address issues and offer solutions on a much broader scale than individual partners. GRASP has access to a variety of U.N. agencies and programmes – such as UN-REDD, UNHCR, UNODC, WHO or the MONUSCO peace-keeping missions – that can tackle issues too large or too complex for individual organizations, or experts capable of offering advice and opinion.

As noted above, GRASP accesses funding not available to most partners, and can create regional initiatives that move beyond national borders. GRASP's publications and research are supported by the GRASP Scientific Commission, a panel of international experts drawn from leading primate conservation bodies.

## **7. GRASP Priority Working Areas**

GRASP's strength is the collective contribution of its partners, and those partners work in a broad variety of areas that address many aspects of great ape conservation. GRASP itself will focus its efforts for 2013-16 in adding value to the work of individual partners, where GRASP's resources and added value can have the greatest impact.

Each GRASP Priority Working Area includes a background statement, expected accomplishment, and some exemplary actions. Each action will be further developed to include performance indicators and evaluation measures, to assess overall impact and effectiveness, and future efforts will be adjusted accordingly

### **7.1. Communications & Advocacy**

#### **7.1.1 Background**

GRASP's potential to deliver a strong, unified message on behalf of great ape conservation is one of its greatest assets. GRASP will collaborate with partners to harness the power of communications and social networks to impact local, national and international attitudes, and will raise political and social debate regarding challenges and solutions for great ape conservation to the highest possible level. GRASP will engage with politicians, business leaders, and key decision-makers, both in response to crises and in crafting or enforcing policies, in order to increase the impact of conservation programmes and accelerate achievement of great ape conservation goals.

GRASP will release news and scientific analysis relevant to great ape conservation, and will develop targeted communication activities for a variety of audiences in range States and internationally. GRASP will capitalize on its access to international news media to promote specific topics or initiatives, and will utilize the GRASP patrons and other select spokespersons to reach the largest possible audience through an informed, unified, and credible message.

GRASP will make use of new technologies such as advanced mobile and web platforms and social media to promote collaboration, information sharing and open dialogue among GRASP organs, partners, and the wider public.

#### **7.1.2 Expected Accomplishments**

- Political leaders take into account the conservation of great apes and their habitat in promoting policies and decisions on land-use and development

- Great ape conservation is highlighted to audiences through sports and entertainment promotional opportunities
- New spokespersons for conservation – including from range States– are developed.
- GRASP’s ability to speak to crises and critical issues is developed to its full potential
- Sponsored advertising campaigns promote awareness and support for great ape conservation
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### **7.1.3 Exemplary Actions**

- GRASP holds meetings with political leaders in great ape range States
- GRASP works with internationally recognized political figures to address great ape issues
- GRASP uses great ape conservation data to educate international media
- GRASP uses professional sports stars and entertainment organizations to promote great ape conservation
- GRASP creates an open source mobile web platform to improve news and content distribution, crowd-sourced open data and public engagement in great ape conservation
- GRASP makes use of Great Ape Ambassadors to reach larger audiences with great ape messages

## **7.2 Law Enforcement**

### **7.2.1 Background**

GRASP’s unique position within the U.N. system gives it an important opportunity to promote law enforcement and mitigate the illegal domestic and international trade in great apes, great ape parts, and the consumption of great ape meat (bushmeat). GRASP will collaborate with CITES, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interpol, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Coalition to Combat Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and other partners to strengthen the legal protection of great apes and their habitats, and its enforcement. This would create international support for judicial action, support range and consumer States efforts to strengthen legislation, promote and coordinate cross-border action, and highlight gaps and opportunities to reduce the threat posed by the illegal trade in great apes.

*Last Stand of the Gorilla*, a rapid assessment report developed by GRASP in collaboration with GRID-Arendal and Interpol, indicates that crime syndicates are involved in illegal activities, ranging from logging, mining and charcoal production to trade in great apes, and calls for collaboration among different UN agencies to address the illegal trade in gorillas. Additionally, CITES CoP 15 approved a decision to conduct joint CITES-GRASP missions to countries that are involved in the illegal trade of great apes.

### **7.2.2 Expected Accomplishments**

- Great ape conservation is incorporated into the activities of major law enforcement and judicial agencies
- Improved great ape law enforcement reduces the threat to great apes from illegal harvesting and trade.

### **7.2.3. Exemplary Activities**

- Conduct joint-missions with Interpol, CITES, World Customs Organization to great ape countries that are involved in illegal trade in great apes.

- Prepare a report on the illegal trade in great apes to guide law enforcement activities
- Develop an integrated database on illegal activities impacting great ape populations to guide law enforcement operations
- Promote judicial reform and legal capacity-building on behalf of great ape conservation
- Support bushmeat mitigation and monitoring programmes

### **7.3. Conflict-Sensitive Conservation**

#### **7.3.1. Background**

Conflict exists throughout great ape range States, from local disputes to armed political conflict. There is a need for conflict-sensitive solutions, and conservation often provides common objectives for cooperation and peace-building. GRASP will use great apes as an entry point to promote peace and stability in areas where conflict affects great ape populations.

GRASP has worked with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) to develop a conflict sensitive conservation strategy in eastern DR Congo and in Ivory Coast/Liberia. Other collaborations include work with the UNEP Post-conflict and Disaster Management Branch in DR Congo, and discussions with the Department for Peacekeeping Operations in New York, which resulted in the inclusion of environmental issues into the mandate of the MONUSCO peacekeeping operation in DR Congo.

GRASP recognizes disease is a major threat to both great apes and humans. GRASP will work within the UN system to raise awareness of zoonotic diseases, monitor and mitigate disease outbreaks and develop health protocols. However, GRASP realizes that individual partners may be better positioned to confront diseases such as Ebola and test vaccines.

#### **7.3.2. Expected Accomplishment**

- Conflicts between park authorities and local communities, private sector, and/or armed forces are resolved in priority great ape habitats
- Conflict-sensitive approaches are included into the planning processes of national park authorities responsible for great ape conservation.
- Great ape conservation issues are taken into account in UN peacekeeping operations, UN humanitarian and UN development planning processes

#### **7.3.3. Exemplary Activities**

- Assist protected area authorities in developing conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution strategies.
- Use the U.N. convening power and neutrality to provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration on conflict-sensitive great ape conservation, upon the request of partners.
- Collaborate with World Health Organization (WHO) to monitor and mitigate disease outbreaks that impact human and great ape populations.

### **7.4. Green Economy**

#### **7.4.1. Background**

The need to promote great ape conservation efforts that provide growth in income, employment, and human well-being and equity – while preventing the loss of biodiversity -- requires a focus on projects and initiatives that strikes this crucial balance. GRASP will advocate “Green Economy” approaches to prevent species and habitat loss, while

encouraging local, regional and international investment in projects that offer economic and social gain. In short, the human dimension must factor prominently in great ape conservation policy and on-the-ground interventions.

The concept of green economy shows that sustainable development can both conserve natural resources and generate revenue. Research and investment in this field over the decade has led to number of approaches relevant to great ape conservation such as Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes and climate change adaptation and mitigation funds. In 2011 GRASP published a study on economic incentives to conserve orangutan habitat in Sumatra, showing that a conservation scenario based on income from carbon credits could outcompete unsustainable forms of land-use including oil palm production. These new opportunities have to be taken into account when decisions on land-use are made.

GRASP can provide the necessary framework to advocate for new approaches in PES and revenue sharing, and can show governments the benefits of a more sustainable pathway to development. Communities will be key to building these green economies, and it will be of great importance to showcase the benefits communities accrue from new forms of revenue, including monetizing these using carbon credit schemes, ecotourism projects or other forms of payment for ecosystem services.

#### **7.4.2. Expected Accomplishments**

- International processes such as REDD+, FLEG-T and others incorporate great ape conservation issues
- Community capacity in natural resource management -- including community tourism and community carbon projects, among others -- is strengthened in and around great ape habitat.

#### **7.4.3. Exemplary Actions**

- Publish reports analyzing the economics of great ape conservation and ecosystem management
- Support land use planning processes in landscapes with great apes by supporting PES feasibility studies such as REDD+
- Support certification processes such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
- Engage in international processes such as FLEG-T and REDD to ensure priorities for great ape conservation are reflected
- Design project concepts and provide advice to communities and governments on revenue sharing from the benefits accrued from great apes and their habitat

### **8. Operationlization of the GRASP Priority Plan 2013 – 2016**

Once approved as a set of priority areas, the GRASP Priority Plan 2013-2016 will be further developed to include specific targets, indicators and activities for consideration by the GRASP Executive Committee. This process will include establishment of clear reporting and monitoring tools so that all GRASP activities will have a clear a.) baseline and b.) an evaluation tool that will measure impact towards achieving its goals and objectives.

The GRASP secretariat will issue regular reports to the GRASP partnership providing information on GRASP Priority Plan projects, including achievements, opportunities, and financial updates.

Implementation of the GRASP Priority Plan will require a variety of resources. The GRASP Secretariat will raise the necessary funds and access the required personnel through joint

proposals with U.N. agencies, grant proposals that involve GRASP partners, and efforts in raising funds from the private sector, through either direct or in-kind contributions