



**GREAT APES SURVIVAL
PARTNERSHIP**



**9th Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) Executive Committee Meeting
21-22 August 2014
CITES, Geneva, Switzerland**

Attendance: Neville Ash (UNEP), Noéline Raondry-Rakotoarisoa (UNESCO), Ousmane Kane (West Africa - Senegal), Dieudonne Anara (Central Africa – Congo), Range State representative (Congo), Agus Sb Sutito (Asia – Indonesia), Pia Jonsson (CITES), Ashley Leiman (Orangutan Foundation), Emma Stokes (Wildlife Conservation Society) Serge Wich (GRASP Scientific Commission), Doug Cress (GRASP Secretariat), Julien Simery (GRASP Secretariat)

Absence: Aline Kuehl-Stenzel (CMS), Aggrey Rwetsiba (East Africa – Uganda), Marianne Courrouble (France), Joakim Ladeborn (Sweden)

Chair: The 9th GRASP Executive Committee meeting was chaired by Dieudonné Ankara (Congo), who was nominated by Ousmane Kane (Senegal) and seconded by Neville Ash (UNEP).

Opening Remarks: CITES Secretary General John Scanlon welcomed the GRASP Executive Committee at a coffee and tea reception that included CITES staff members, and recognized CITES' long-standing relationship with GRASP. He outlined CITES' current work in combatting illegal trade in a variety of species and emphasized the potential of the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC), and added that although he did not believe the illegal trade in great apes to currently be of a major scale, it merited close attention going forward.

Agenda: Indonesia proposed to update the GRASP Executive Committee on the orangutan situation in Southeast Asia following the International Primatological Society (IPS) Congress in Hanoi. UNESCO requested an update from the members of the GRASP Executive Committee to be added to the agenda on subjects they would like to share. Senegal proposed to move the AOB before discussing the next meeting of the GRASP Executive Committee. The agenda was adopted as amended.

GRASP Technical Reports

GRASP Secretariat Report (2013-14)

The GRASP Secretariat delivered the GRASP Secretariat Report (2013-14), which covered the six priority areas of work: law enforcement & judiciary, political advocacy, addressing threats of disease, habitat protection & enhancement, conflict-sensitive conservation, and Green Economy. The GRASP Secretariat

emphasized the engagement of GRASP with its partners, reporting a 50% increase in the number of partners engaged despite the limited human and financial resources available.

The GRASP Secretariat Report (2013-14) prompted a number of questions and comments, including:

Orangutan Reintroduction

Indonesia requested GRASP to provide additional support to the Government of Indonesia on how to best conduct the release of orangutans. Indonesia noted that FORINA will conduct an orangutan population and habitat viability assessment (PHVA) in Indonesia in 2015 and asked whether GRASP was considering or would consider supporting the exercise. The GRASP Scientific Commission provided additional details on the results of the Borneo Futures Projects and how some findings can help Indonesia with its reintroduction strategy. The GRASP Secretariat added that it would look into how to support FORINA for the census in Sumatra.

Orangutan Population Census (PHVA)

The Orangutan Foundation (OF) asked that GRASP support a scheduled population census (PHVA) in Southeast Asia, since the census has not been conducted since 2004. The Chair stressed that addressing threats of disease was a major issue for the African apes and this is a major priority for GRASP, and GRASP should focus more on raising awareness for local populations on the risk of diseases. OF added that reintroduction was mainly a genetic issue as orangutans are not territorial, but the burden of genetic analysis should perhaps not hamper reintroduction to such an extent.

GRASP Budget

UNEP asked for increased clarity on the GRASP budget (2013-2014). The GRASP Secretariat said that there were still some issues with UNEP finance in sorting out the GRASP budget. The GRASP Secretariat said it been advised to negotiate a reduced programme support cost rate with UNEP finance services, but this had not been feasible. UNESCO requested to add the cost of its JPO contribution to the overall GRASP budget (\$142,000 USD), and UNEP asked that Born Free Foundation public donations (although few and infrequent - less than \$200 USD per year) be added to the budget.

Ebola

The GRASP Secretariat noted that Ebola issues were a major focus of the meeting because the issue is rapidly escalating. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) provided an overview of the Ebola issue and suggested GRASP to support a review of Ebola literature looking at the best way for GRASP to be engaged and support this issue in relation to apes.

GRASP Range-State Support

The Chairman requested GRASP to provide additional support to help range-states focal points in their duties, such as small support for office equipment. The Secretariat noted that previous support was being provided through the European Union grant, which has ended, and the Secretariat hopes to be able to support more.

GRASP & UNESCO

UNESCO noted that part of the JPO position seconded to GRASP should be invested in ensuring more cooperation between UNESCO and the GRASP. The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is currently developing its new strategy, which will give a unique opportunity for GRASP to be involved and revisit how MAB and GRASP could cooperate. UNESCO notified range-states delegates that they have to request and engage with the MAB Secretariat should they wish to get support from MAB in establishing new biosphere reserves and possibly implement projects. The GRASP Secretariat noted that the GRASP Strategic Review (2012) stressed the need to increase cooperation with UNESCO.

Report from the GRASP Scientific Commission (2014)

The Chair of the GRASP Scientific Commission (SC) presented an overview of the recent progress and achievements, including the review of a World Bank strategy on mainstreaming ape conservation in its policies, SC participation in key meetings (IPS congress in Vietnam in August 2014), and support to the GRASP report, *The Future of the Bornean Orangutan*. The SC also proposed five projects of work to GRASP and requested support for them to be undertaken.

General Comments

WCS expressed concern regarding too many evidence-based questionnaires currently in circulation. WCS said that monitoring bushmeat is an important issue often overlooked or poorly addressed. CITES suggested possible linkages with the CITES Working Group on Bushmeat.

OC noted the expansion of mining and lack of forest cover in some areas of Kalimantan (Borneo) and people are starting to realize the impact it has on their ecosystems. OC stated the Ape Alliance is planning to do a study on palm oil in Africa and suggested GRASP to interact with them as their work could easily duplicate with what the SC is proposing to do on palm oil and Africa.

The GRASP Secretariat stressed that new disciplines have been added to the SC and more should be done to take advantage of this new expertise at hand. UNEP welcomed suggestions from the SC, and that a priority should be put on some of them and proper resources allocated from the GRASP budget for their proper execution. UNEP was of a view that the issue of palm oil in Africa was a high priority.

The SC agreed with UNEP to prioritize proposed activities. On Ebola and bushmeat consumption, the SC noted the lack of resources to get engaged on the issue and could potentially get help from a student. WCS added that they were supportive of the study on palm oil in Africa and noted that several multilateral grants were available for land-use planning in Africa and it seems to be the right time to conduct that report.

The Chairman emphasized the lack of research on disease and suggested the SC to do more on that topic. One project on bushmeat consumption is being conducted by FAO, but it only focuses on species

rather than disease transmission. The Chairman stated that GRASP needed to support veterinarian training.

GRASP Presentations

The GRASP Secretariat made six presentations on key issues

Palm Oil

The GRASP Secretariat presented the recent activities undertaken by GRASP with regards to oil palm issues and presented an outline of future activities to come.

OC welcomed the GRASP Secretariat's work on palm oil as this was a serious issue that needed to be taken seriously. The OC asked the GRASP Secretariat to not forget other certifications, such as the Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO), which will become mandatory by end of 2014. WCS suggested GRASP to start a more strategic way to forward. WCS suggested GRASP to look more carefully at the certification systems in place, look at what criteria and principles could be improved and where apes can be furthermore assessed. WCS added there were several certification schemes, and RSPO has many failings. WCS urged the GRASP to define clear outcomes for the cooperation envisaged with RSPO.

UNEP suggested that national policies might be improved, and added that the demand issue needs to be sorted. UNEP said that palm oil was a crucial issue for GRASP and a key area where the Secretariat and the SC should work hand in hand. UNESCO stressed that oil palm is an important issue where GRASP can make a difference and urged the partnership to reinforce advocacy efforts with the private sector to address the issue in more concrete terms.

WCS suggested the GRASP Executive Committee to review the activities put in the draft MoU between UNEP and RSPO. UNEP suggested the MoU to go forward but discuss the detail of those activities and ensure that GRASP is not removed from RSPO processes while waiting.

Gibbons

The GRASP Secretariat presented initial consideration for the inclusion of gibbons into GRASP, as mandated by the 2nd GRASP Council. OC stated that GRASP needed to stay focused and avoid taking on too many issues, and asked whether the rationale for adding gibbons was mainly political.

Indonesia supported the proposal to increase its focus on gibbon conservation and to add more Asian countries at the table. The SC supported the idea and suggested the SC to support the review of the implications of adding gibbons to the partnership.

The Chairman added that the decision rest with the Council as it has many implications, including possibly changing the name of the partnership. UNEP agreed that the decision should be taken by the GRASP Council and the GRASP Executive Committee has to guide the GRASP Secretariat on how to best

present a Council discussion. A document should be done well in advance of the Council meeting so that all partners, the EC and the SC have sufficient time for discussion.

WCS stressed the need for the review to look at how it benefits the current objectives of GRASP for great apes. WCS also read out comments from TRAFFIC that supported the inclusion of gibbons. The OC added that the team/consultants chosen must be chosen carefully and have deep knowledge of the Asian context.

Illegal Trade

The Secretariat gave an overview of the progress made in establishing the Ape Traffic Database.

OC expressed concerns over the duplication of efforts and asked where numbers on orangutans came from. WCS stressed out the need to set up a technical advisory committee, which would include experts in statistics. WCS passed on comments from TRAFFIC since the meeting in Cambridge, which also said they had not received a request from GRASP for a data collection partnership agreement.

The SC offered to help the Secretariat with technical advice on the development of the database. UNEP echoed other comments to engage more with the SC and the Technical Team. UNEP noted the importance of transparency for gaining credibility.

WCS asked how to reconcile the CITES and GRASP processes. The Secretariat noted that the nature of the proposed GRASP database is truly different from other database in place. GRASP said that several sources can be inputted to verify each other. GRASP noted that the database is ambitious and adjustments will be made based on use once it is in place. GRASP is currently managing different pocket groups to look at different aspects of the database, mainly because the database has many aspects that are difficult to discuss in a large forum. GRASP is also expecting to ease the data collection process to avoid additional work, although it will require agreements to ensure that information can be used and treated properly to meet the database requirements.

GRASP Strategic Review / Political Advocacy

The GRASP Secretariat presented progress in addressing most issues raised in the GRASP Strategic Review and presented some difficulties faced operating within UNEP, particularly in terms of achieving political access. UNEP responded by saying that the hosting arrangement implies abiding to some UN rules, which are providing a level of comfort to partners, yet can create some challenges for the operation of GRASP. Programmatically, GRASP is considered a UNEP project to allow it to operate.

The SC asked UNEP to clarify how the partnership as a whole or the SC can get messages sent or endorsed without necessarily involving the GRASP Secretariat and UNEP. UNESCO noted that the President of the Council meeting does not hold its power between meetings and asked whether this would be a possibility or a perhaps have the EC play this role. UNEP suggested to elect Chair for the EC and Council and noted that the GRASP Rules had a provision on the election of a Chairman for the EC for four years.

OC noted the benefits of being operating within UNEP, but expressed concerns that GRASP may not always be able to stand up on relevant issues.

China

The GRASP Secretariat presented a plan to engage China on key issues, including illegal trade. CITES suggested a change in title to reflect an Asian strategy rather than a Chinese one. UNEP added that there needs to be credible information on the proposed Chinese Academy of Sciences research centre and perhaps request clarifications. The Chair of the SC was asked to source credible information, and, if concerns persist, the EC would authorize a letter be sent to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, after being approved by the EC.

GRASP updates

World Great Apes Day

The Secretariat gave an update on declaring World Great Apes Day. UNESCO noted that should UNESCO support the petition, there should first be a decision through UNESCO's governance bodies before it can support the petition. CITES proposed to use World Wildlife Day to feature great apes. The Chairman proposed to write to the SG of the Convention on Migratory Species and suggested to table discussions for the next Council meeting. Countries should start lobby for the nomination of World Great Apes Day.

GRASP Regional meeting

The GRASP Secretariat presented an overview of the GRASP Regional Meeting in East Africa on 4-6 September 2014 and some plans for subsequent organization of regional meetings in Southeast Asia and West Africa.

XXVII IPS Congress (2018)

The GRASP Secretariat announced that UNEP won the bid to host the XXVII International Primatological Society (IPS) Congress on 19-25 August 2018 and presented an outline of the event and its major themes. GRASP will be the implementing agency. UNESCO noted this was a huge achievement for GRASP and called upon the GRASP Secretariat to work closely with UNESCO to ensure the success of the IPS congress.

GRASP Reports

The GRASP Secretariat announced that key findings of *The Future of the Bornean Orangutan* report which will be launched at the Conference of Parties (CoP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Korea in October.

apeAPP

The GRASP Secretariat presented an update of the apeAPP, a mobile phone application supporting great apes awareness and conservation. The application was launched in February 2014 at the Mobile East

Africa conference and a consultant was recruited to expand its capacity and sustainability. WCS requested GRASP to provide information on key indicators of success for the mobile application. The Chairman asked how GRASP was ensuring the funds being donated. UNEP concurred with the view that there is a need to better track these success indicators. UNEP raised concerns over the sustainability of the application in terms of development and maintenance and asked whether some of the donated funds could perhaps be used to cover some of these expenses in the long-term.

Ebola

The GRASP Secretariat opened a discussion to receive guidance from the GRASP Executive Committee regarding Ebola. UNEP noted that there were tools created to track Ebola statistics for humans and asked whether similar tools could be developed for apes. UNEP mention a potential treatment for Ebola tested during the current outbreak and asked whether this could have implication for ape conservation and addressing the threat of Ebola on them.

WCS said there was probably not enough information to justify developing a tool for tracking Ebola cases in apes. WCS added that there were questions as to whether the untested Ebola treatment from the United States could be adapted and administered to apes. The Chairman reiterated his request for GRASP to better train veterinarians. Senegal echoed the comments from the Chairman on the need for GRASP to raise awareness, especially because borders are difficult to close in Senegal. UNESCO asked if veterinary schools have specific courses on disease affecting great apes. The Chairman noted the limitations of some of the courses available and why they are inadequate for a practical field application. WCS noted they are permanently monitoring previous Ebola zones and have materials at hand for training on biosecurity and monitoring.

The GRASP Secretariat asked further guidance from the Executive Committee on how to respond in case of an Ebola crisis. WCS suggested to have GRASP do a systematic review of Ebola cases and prepare priority areas that need further research. The SC stressed the need for resources to be able to undertake these activities.

CMS Gorilla Agreement

The GRASP Secretariat gave an update on the Gorilla Agreement managed by the CMS, and possible ways to revive the agreement through cooperation with GRASP. The Chairman noted that not all 10 gorilla range States had ratified the agreement.

GRASP Partner Applications

The GRASP Secretariat presented an overview of the current GRASP partners and some issues related to some duplication of representation of organizations and alliances. The Secretariat introduced five new partner applications for consideration to the Executive Committee.

World Animal Protection: OC expressed concerns over the focus on welfare issues and UNEP said they could not find much evidence of WSPA's working on great ape conservation issues. UNESCO concurred and said that partners should be closely focused on the same objective and mandate of GRASP. **Denied**

Jane Goodall Institute - Canada: The GRASP Executive Committee was concerned about setting a precedent if approving JGI-Canada's application –given that dozens of JGI chapters exist around the world and JGI's main organization was already a partner -- and decided to request JGI to decide which entity should be represented within GRASP. **Denied**

Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network: The application was accepted by the EC. **Approved**

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA): The GRASP Executive Committee expressed concerns over reputational issues and its efforts in the conservation of great apes in the wild, but approved the application. **Approved**

Orangutan Tropical Peatland Trust: the application was accepted by the EC. **Approved**

Other business

- GRASP will look at the possibility of reestablishing the Technical Support Team through UNEP.
- The GRASP Executive Committee discussed arrangements for the 3rd GRASP Council meeting in 2016, which will require careful preparation and extensive fundraising. The Chairman emphasized the need to make preparations early, in particular to ensure visas for African delegates. The GRASP Secretariat hoped it will be possible to make a reasonable, economical and politically sensible solution and proposed to put together a bid package for circulation to reach out to member states.
- Senegal indicated that during a meeting they had acknowledged their interest in hosting the GRASP regional meeting in West Africa, but arrangements would have to be made shortly. The West African Ebola crisis was emphasized as a reason to delay a West African regional workshop.
- The GRASP Executive Committee collected comments on the draft agreement between UNEP and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) for the development of the illegal trade database. UNEP emphasized that the scope of the illegal trade database still needs to be further discussed. UNESCO reiterated their request to add socio-economic indicators in the database. The SC commented that the SC can look at some of the questions related to the database, but several questions do not match the expertise of the SC as they are more politically oriented rather than scientifically driven. CITES reminded the EC of the need to change the name of the database to reflect its scope.

- UNEP commended the usefulness of the GRASP Executive Committee meetings for discussing GRASP issues, but noted it would be useful for the GRASP Secretariat to engage with the committee on a more ad-hoc basis to collect inputs on a number of subjects.
- The Secretariat will propose potential dates for the next teleconference meeting of the EC around November.