

Minutes of the 4th GRASP Interim Executive Committee Meeting

**17 February 2004
Teleconference**

Attendance:

Members:

Melanie Virtue	Acting Chair and Secretariat (UNEP)
Matthew Hatchwell	NGO representative (WCS)
Ashley Leiman	NGO representative (OFI)
Leonard Muamba	Range State representative (DRC)
Rob Bowman }	Donor country representative (UK)
Eric Blencowe }	Donor country representative (UK)
Natajaran Ishwaran	Secretariat (UNESCO)

Observers:

Sarah Jones	UK Defra
Vickie Whitehead	UK Defra
Rob Hepworth	CMS (representing MEAs)
Ian Redmond	GRASP technical support team
David Jay	GRASP technical support team
Samy Mankoto	Secretariat (UNESCO)
Naoto Shibui	Secretariat (UNESCO)
Daniel Malonza	Secretariat (UNEP)
Matt Woods	Secretariat (UNEP)

Apologies:

Justus Tindigarukayo	Chair and Range State representative (Uganda)
Widodo Ramona	Range State representative (Indonesia)
John Sellar	MEA representative (CITES)
Christophe Boesch	Acting Co-chair, Interim Scientific Commission
Mark Leighton	Acting Co-chair, Interim Scientific Commission

Unfortunately due to technical difficulties and field work the Interim Scientific Commission was unable to participate in the teleconference, and the DRC range state representative was disconnected after a short period of time. The Uganda range state representative was unable to attend due to a sudden anthrax outbreak in Queen Elizabeth National Park that required his urgent attention.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted with a slight change of order.

2. Preparations for the Intergovernmental Meeting and GRASP Council

Mr Muamba, of the DRC, confirmed the suitability of 5-9 September 2005 as the dates of the Intergovernmental Meeting on Great Apes and GRASP and the announcement to this effect by His Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo at the 2nd Summit of Central African Heads of State on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Resources recently held in Brazzaville. The committee thanked the DRC and welcomed the goodwill and commitment from the highest level of the government. Samy Mankoto (UNESCO) provided a related GRASP update from the COMIFAC meeting.

DRC and the Secretariat jointly presented a provisional draft budget for the costs of the IGM. The reaction for the committee was that the costs were very high. Mr. Muamba noted that some of the costs were open to discussion and that much depended on the number of expected participants. The committee agreed to use the provisional draft budget as a first foundation on which to approach donors, in particular regarding range state participants' expenses, while at the same time examining the option of reducing certain budget lines. The Secretariat confirmed that US\$126,000 was currently secured towards the IGM and GRASP Council costs. The Secretariat noted that further financial and technical support from the EU and international NGOs (WWF) in Kinshasa may be available upon receipt of a Terms of Reference and short background paper on the IGM and Council. Appeals now need to be made to the Partnership and beyond and key international development agencies approached to assist with funding.

The opportunity to use DRC national government commitment at the highest level to attract Ministerial level and donor attendance was emphasized. As the need to distribute invitations as soon as possible was highlighted by the committee, DRC and the Secretariat were requested to send out invitations as a critical priority to range states and donors. The Secretariat and Mr Muamba were asked to seek guidance regarding the proper protocol for formal invitations and investigate the possibility of assisting the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo in a personal effort to write to donors. It was suggested that the Secretariat provide direction to President Kabila on key IGM objectives and expected outcomes. UNEP informed the committee that they would also be circulating an informal pre-invitation to all Environment Ministers and other interested parties attending the 21-25 February 2005 UNEP Governing Council. UNESCO proposed a two-tier approach whereby formal processes be supplemented with informal, *ad hoc* work to keep the IGM and GRASP Council preparations on track.

Some disappointment was expressed over the fact that a detailed plan for the IGM and GRASP Council arrangements was still not available to the committee. It was suggested that a Secretariat mission to Kinshasa to discuss IGM and Council preparations and produce a detailed plan be undertaken as soon as possible. The Secretariat proposed that a joint UNESCO DG and UNEP ED letter be sent with haste to President Kabila informing him of the joint Secretariat mission.

Overall, the committee affirmed its agreement to proceed with Kinshasa as the venue and wished to express its thanks to DRC for its kind offer. The IEC recognized the need to provide DRC with as much assistance as possible in preparing for the IGM. In this regard, the need for (a) project manager(s) to assist DRC and the Secretariat with preparations for the IGM and GRASP Council was discussed. Aside from the use of the UNESCO Kinshasa office, the Secretariat informed the committee that it would discuss with the UNDP Kinshasa office for the provision of an IGM and GRASP Council UNDP focal point. NGO representatives also confirmed that civil society in Kinshasa would be available to support the

IGM and GRASP Council organizing committee. The Secretariat also asked that an IGM and GRASP Council working group comprised of interested members of the IEC and ISC and other key individuals be established.

Action:

- I. Secretariat (UNESCO & UNEP) to arrange a joint mission to Kinshasa to meet with the IGM and Council organizing committee, assess Kinshasa's needs, finalize a detailed IGM and Council plan and approach President Joseph Kabila for his personal support.
- II. Samy Mankoto to approach the DRC Vice-President to discuss the latter possibility.
- III. Samy Mankoto to draft letter from UNESCO DG and UNEP ED to President Kabila informing of the Secretariat mission to be sent by 28 February.
- IV. Secretariat (UNESCO), in consultation with DRC, to revise the provisional draft budget, removing the costs covered by the Secretariat and those to be provided by the DRC government.
- V. Secretariat (UNESCO) to secure assistance for IGM and GRASP Council from UNESCO and UNDP Kinshasa office.
- VI. Secretariat (UNEP & UNESCO) to seek guidance on the proper protocol for formal invitations to be distributed from the UN and the Office of the President of DRC.
- VII. IEC & ISC members and observers to inform the Secretariat (UNEP) of their interest in establishing an IGM and GRASP Council working group.

3. GRASP Secretariat

The Secretariat provided an update on activities since the December 2004 IEC meeting. UNEP informed the committee of the status of its proposals to Ireland and the EU, as well as the departure of Mark Collins from UNEP. UNEP also updated the committee on the status of the World Atlas of Great Apes & their Conservation and preparations of the IUCN West Central Africa regional great ape workshop.

UNESCO reported on its current staffing levels and notified the committee that an email on UNESCO contributions to GRASP would be circulated. UNESCO mentioned the meeting of GRASP Patron Toshisada Nishida with the UNESCO Director General and the potential upshots for fundraising in Japan. UNESCO noted that the possibility of a GRASP event at the UN Pavilion of the March – September 2005 World EXPO in Aichi, Japan appeared promising.

A strong recommendation came from the committee regarding the need to coordinate the Secretariat, IGM and TST 2005 workplans with the assistance and input from the ISC. The committee also expressed concern over the lack of plans to replace UNEP high level representation on GRASP. The NGO representatives indicated their support for a GRASP “CEO” or similar, identified and funded by the Partnership. WCS confirmed their commitment in principle to providing some funds for such a position, and WCS and the Orangutan Foundation volunteered to draft a short concept note for review by the IEC. The “CEO” position could either be provided as an in-kind resource by a Partner (secondment) or all interested Partners could contribute to the equitable sharing of costs for such a position.

Action:

- I. Secretariat to arrange with the ISC and TST a meeting to discuss how to best coordinate their work and the input of the ISC to the TST 2005 workplan (now scheduled for Monday 4 April in London or Horsham).

II. WCS and OF to draft short concept note on the idea of a GRASP “CEO” for circulation.

4. On-going work of the Technical Support Team (TST)

Ian Redmond (Head of GRASP Technical Support Team) provided a summary of the January and February TST mission to Cameroon, Republic of Congo and DRC. National Great Ape Survival Plan (NGASP) progress in all three countries is on track for the action plans to be ready by the September IGM. The TST also noted that all the central Africa NGASPs would benefit from the scientific inputs of the May 2005 IUCN regional workshop in Brazzaville. The confirmation of free transmission rights for the broadcasting of conservation documentary films from the Cameroon and Republic of Congo authorities was another highlight of the mission.

As well, the TST informed the committee of its participation, along with Samy Mankoto, in the COMIFAC and Summit of the Heads of State deliberations. The TST met with Dr. Wangari Maathai, Kenyan Assistant Minister for the Environment and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, who was designated as Ambassador for the Congo Basin forests during the Summit. As the Congo Basin forests contain many of the most vital great ape populations and habitat, and as Dr. Maathai is a close friend of UNEP, it was suggested that she be approached to become a GRASP Patron. If UNEP is unable, UNESCO may nominate her as a Patron, Envoy or Ambassador.

The importance of having a number of high-quality, finalized and government-endorsed National Great Ape Survival Plans for presentation at the IGM was re-emphasized by the committee. While maintaining the flexibility of NGASP documents was regarded as essential, the committee also expressed its desire to see finalized plans with measures of success and evaluation mechanisms. The TST was requested by the committee to provide an updated needs assessment of all range states as well as a status report of their NGASPs for circulation, in the hopes that where obstacles existed to NGASP development, donor states and other GRASP Partners may be able to assist. However, ISC contributions to the TST range state priority table was also seen as a pressing concern in this regard.

A general discussion took place on the need for GRASP to focus on priority range states that have clearly shown their commitment to GRASP and the NGASP or equivalent national planning process and where outputs were achievable. In the case of Malaysia in particular, the committee suggested that the country may not see the added-value of GRASP and that if they were to be convinced, the in-country assistance of donors and GRASP NGO Partners would be the key.

Due to the circumstances of the preparations for the TST’s upcoming missions to Malaysia and Australia, the committee agreed that the TST proceed. However, it was emphasized that the number one priority for the TST was the arrangement of the meeting with the ISC and the Secretariat, as well as the need for the TST to produce and range state/NGASP status document and make the necessary contacts prior to departing for Malaysia. The TST was urged to give as much advance warning as possible on any upcoming missions. The UNEP-BFF contract for 2005 TST activities was also presented to the committee and approved.

Action:

- I. TST to produce a range state/NGASP status document for circulation.
- II. Secretariat (UNEP) to approach Dr. Wangari Maathai to become a GRASP Patron.
- III. TST to arrange a meeting with the Secretariat and ISC asap (see 3.I).
- IV. TST and Secretariat to make the necessary preparations for the Malaysia mission.

5. Interim Scientific Commission

Due to technical difficulties and the absence of a representative of the ISC at the teleconference, an update on ISC progress towards some of the tasks identified at the December 2004 IEC meeting was not available. However, following the teleconference, Mark Leighton informed the Secretariat that he would shortly circulate a written update to the committee. The committee requested that the ISC be more proactive due to the general concern felt over the apparent slow progress undertaken to date. The suggestion that the ISC meet as soon as possible with the TST and Secretariat would be an important step in this direction.

The Secretariat informed the committee that a contract between UNEP and the ISC had been signed for US\$4,000 for initial ISC advice to GRASP. The Secretariat notified the committee that UNESCO was looking into the possibility of appointing Dr. Richard Wrangham as GRASP Patron, Envoy or Ambassador and the committee noted its approval. Natarajan Ishwaran (UNESCO) mentioned that he planned to visit the US eastern seaboard shortly and that this would provide the ideal opportunity to discuss with key members of the ISC their representation of GRASP and role in fundraising.

Action:

- I. ISC to circulate update on activities to the committee.
- II. ISC to discuss with the Secretariat and TST arrangements for a meeting as soon as possible (see 3.I). (update: agreed on Monday 4 April in UK)

6. Next meeting/conference-call of the IEC

It was decided that the Secretariat would arrange the next IEC teleconference to coincide with the proposed early April meeting of the TST, ISC and Secretariat in the UK.

As the TST-ISC meeting is set for Monday 4 April, the IEC meeting will be on the morning of Tuesday 5 April.

May 2005 was suggested for the timing of the next face-to-face IEC meeting, but the details and location will be decided at the April IEC teleconference.

2. Any Other Business

The was no other business. The chairperson closed the meeting and thanked all participants for a good 3 hours work.
