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**Item 5.1 of the Agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed on List of World
Heritage in Danger**

Report on the WHC/IUCN mission to Simen National Park, Ethiopia

SUMMARY

Simen National Park with harsh fragile environment is faced with problems deeply rooted to the human presence and their related activities. At least 11,000 people reside within the 136 km² Park. The impact of the villages, agriculture, domestic livestock grazing, erosion, vegetation removal by the people are strikingly evident and worrying. The wildlife populations for which the park had attained a World Heritage status are consequently reduced and tourism activity stagnated. The World Heritage Committee inscribed the site in the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1996. Since this inscription, there are clear signs of a strong commitment to conservation by the authorities of the Amhara National Regional State through the Bureau of Agriculture, a financial commitment by both the State and external donor agencies, an increased level of human and material equipment provided for the park management, legal framework to control use of the park resources, and steps to plan for resettlement of people resident in the Park to other areas.

UNESCO and IUCN
The World Heritage Centre
MONITORING MISSION REPORT TO SIMEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK AND
WORLD HERITAGE SITE, ETHIOPIA (9 - 14th April 2001
By
Professor Dr. Eric L. Edroma & Dr. Kes Hillman Smith

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEDC	Austrian Embassy Development Cooperation
ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
BoA	Bureau of Agriculture
CDE	Centre for Development and Environment
ELE	Eric Lamila Edroma
EPDF	Environment Project Development funding
EWCO	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUCN	International Union of Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The World Conservation Union.
KHS	Kes Hillman Smith
NYZS	New York Zoological Society
SMBS	Simen Mountains Baseline Survey
SMNP	Simen Mountains National Park
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHS	World Heritage Site
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

REPORT ON A MONITORING MISSION TO SIMEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, ETHIOPIA: 9TH – 14TH APRIL 2001

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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2.0 SUMMARY

UNESCO/IUCN conducted during 8 – 14 April 2001 a monitoring mission to Simen Mountains National Park, a World Heritage Site In Danger. Through consultation, information was gathered on the current conservation status in relation to its World Heritage Site values, state of conservation, the nature and extent of the threats to the site, measures to address them, progress of rehabilitation and other protection measures planned.

The Park with harsh fragile environment is faced with problems deeply rooted to the human presence and their related activities. At least 11,000 people reside within the 136 km² Park. The impact of the villages, agriculture, domestic livestock grazing, erosion, vegetation removal by the people are strikingly evident and worrying. The wildlife populations for which the park had attained a World Heritage status are consequently reduced and tourism activity stagnated. Fortunately there are clear signs of strong commitment to conservation by the authorities of the Amhara National Regional State through the Bureau of Agriculture, a good financial commitment by both the State and external donor agencies, increased level of human and material equipment provided for the park management, formulated legal framework to control use of the park resources, and of phased and zoned holistic approach to implementing proposals for solving the chronic problems of re-settlement of the people, improving the way of life and productivity outside the park in order to reduce the pressure inside, improving conservation of the Park, and for promoting tourism in the area.

The World Heritage In Danger listing has probably encouraged the positive response of international support. Consequently the mission recommended that the In Danger listing be maintained until benchmarks suggested are effectively implemented. The benchmarks are re-alignment of the boundary and acceptance of this and the conservation laws and regulations by the people, exclusion of the villages along the boundary, voluntary relocation of people inside the Park, re-alignment of parts of the road from Debarq to Chennek, extension of the Park to include Mesarerya, Lemalino and (if possible) Ras Dejen Wildlife Reserves, re-settlement of

recent villages, and effecting positive conservation within the extended (proposed) National Park so as to restore the World Heritage values of the Park.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Description

The Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP) is situated (between 38 00'-38 12'E and 13 12' – 13 9'N) in the North Gondar Zone of the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) in the northern and north-western part of Ethiopia. The National Park currently encompasses an area of 136 km² of afro-alpine undulating grassland plateau, with precipitous escarpments dropping away to the north and east, giving spectacular views of peaks and canyons, which are outside the park. To the east this landscape includes Ras Dashen (4,543 m) the highest peak in the country. This scenery was formed from ancient volcanic activity, intensely eroded. Rainfall is between 1350 and 1600 mm per year, varying with altitude, with a dry season from December to April (Hurni in ANRS Management Plan 2000). Additional to the small main park area, there are narrow highland extensions to the west and south east and an extended area to the east known respectively as the Lemalino and Mesarerya Wildlife Reserves and the Ras Deven Wildlife Reserve. Although not currently protected, they offer potential for expanding habitat and wildlife range protection.

Within the park and buffer zone, over 20 endemic plant species have been recorded, of which 4 or 5 are only endemic to the Simen Mountains. Twenty large mammals and 14 smaller mammals have been recorded there (ANRS Management Plan 2000). The most important large mammal is the Walia Ibex (*Capra ibex walie*), which is endemic to Ethiopia and now only found in the Simen Mountains. A national symbol, it is one of the most endangered mammal species, and is currently threatened with extinction due to low numbers and restricted habitat. The Simien Fox or Ethiopian Wolf (*Canis simensis simensis*) is another key species that occurs there, but has always been in low numbers, and larger populations have greater survival potential in places like Bale Mountains National Park.

However, the park was originally gazetted with people inside it, who have never moved out. It is inhabited and surrounded by an increasingly dense human population.

3.2 Chronology

The National Park was gazetted on 31st October 1969. It became a World Heritage Site in 1978 in view of its unique rugged and high mountain landscape and habitat representation of northern Ethiopian highlands and its position as the only protected area harbouring the last endangered and endemic Walia Ibex and one of those with the endemic Simien Fox. Other heritage values include the occurrence of the endemic Gelada baboon, Klipspringer, the hammergeyer vulture and raptor birds.

Prior to 1977, the park had a series of Swiss Wardens and researchers, many of whom, notably Professor Hans Hurni and Dr. Bernhard Nievergelt know the area and people very well, continue

to have a strong commitment to working with ARNS and the Ethiopian people for its conservation and are well respected in the area.

Seventeen years of protracted wars in the country prior to 1992 had most effect in the park area especially between 1984 and 1992 (Aychew Kebede, pers.comm). During this time the wardens and the game scouts abandoned the Park, there was little or no protection of the area and the people that had been living within the park area since its inception increased both through reproduction and immigration. Under the new governance and decentralisation following the war there were several evaluations of the post war status carried out (Hurni 1993 in Nievergelt *et al* 1998 Hillman 1993, report to EWCO and NYZS). In 1994 a helicopter survey of the human population of the park and buffer zone was carried out by Farm Africa as part of an assessment of the status of the area and potential future cooperation by UNCDF (Hogg, 1994). They found then that there had been on average 32%, ranging from 111% to -52% increases in the human population in lowland villages within the park and major increases in the highland villages, most prominent of which is the extended village of Gich. Planning Department, figures at the time gave a population of 11,000 within the park, though the survey stated that 8,000 people strictly within the park was more accurate, with a total of 54,931 in the peasant associations of the 3 *woredas* or districts into which the park falls.

The Simen Mountains Baseline Survey (SMBS) of Wildlife and ecology in 1994 and the detailed surveys carried out in 1996 by mixed Ethiopian and Swiss teams led by Dr. Nievergelt are reported in the “Walia” monograph (Nievergelt *et al*, 1998). In 1983 the Walia population level had been estimated at 300-500 animals and observations were frequent (Hurni, *et al* 1996 – management Plan in Nievergelt 1998). Simultaneous counts in 1994 and 1996 saw 186 and 180 Walia respectively, within the park and Mesarerya Wildlife Reserve, though these will only be minimum figures. They found that Walia numbers had decreased both through poaching and emigration particularly from the west and central parts and that they were occupying areas outside the park to the east and were more confined to the steep escarpments than previously. Between 1994 and 1996, although overall numbers did not change, there were indications of some movement back into the park in the east. As a result of these surveys compared with previous data, it was concluded that the Wolf had also declined within the area of the park. Comparative fixed point photographs and other habitat observations also showed habitat degradation and that the human population within the park had increased, leading to major over-exploitation of the habitat through agriculture, grazing by domestic stock and cutting of woody vegetation for firewood.

A workshop was held in Bahrdar in 1966 to discuss the situation and plan for rehabilitating the park (Hurni, 1996). On the basis of the major decrease in status of the resources for which the World Heritage status had been given, and in line with agreed recommendation 8 of the Workshop in 1996, in consultation with the State Party, but it seems, insufficient consultation with the regional government, UNESCO registered SMNP on the list of World Heritage Site “In Danger”.

Since 1994 under the Federal Government of the Ethiopian People’s Democratic Front (EPDF), the process of Regionalisation had begun. In 1997 the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation (EWCO) handed control of the SMNP to the Amharic Regional National State.

Since that time there have been substantial planning processes carried out and development of major financial commitments both nationally and by donor agencies. The ARNS does not therefore agree with the “In Danger” listing. At the UNESCO workshop on “The role of World Heritage In Danger listing in promoting international cooperation for the conservation of World Natural Heritage” in Jordan October 2000, Dr. Belay Demissie, Head of the Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) of the ARNS presented a paper justifying opposition to this listing and it was requested that a brief mission representing the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO and IUCN be fielded to up-date the level of information in order to guide decisions in this regard.

The mission planned for 2000 was unable to take place, but from 9th to 14th April 2001 the mission reported here visited Ethiopia and the SMNP in order to fulfill this requirement.

3.3 Objectives

- Evaluate the current conservation status of Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP) in relation to its World heritage Site values and “In Danger” listing
- Make contact with the various stakeholders to discuss the state of conservation and measures to be taken
- Gather relevant information and take photographs and forward these to UNESCO and IUCN
- Report on the nature and extent of threats to the site, progress of rehabilitation programme, protection measures planned by the State Party and recommendations for additional action
- Recommend whether the level of threats to the site warrants it being on the “In Danger” list and if so, suggest benchmarks for its ultimate removal.

3.4 Programme

The mission’s programme was as follows:

Sunday 8 th April	-	Arrival of Dr. Eric L. Edroma, stayed Empire Hotel
Monday 9 th	-	Arrival of Dr. Kes Hillman Smith (Plane delayed so missed meeting at EWCO with Dr. Edroma)
	a.m.	- Dr. Edroma meeting at Ethiopian Wildlife Conversation Organisation with Ato Leykun Aburie and Ato Tesfaye Hundessa
	p.m	- Meeting ELE and KHS with Director Mr. Mamady Conde and Ato Alehamayu Minas at the UNESCO offices
		Overnight Empire Hotel
Tuesday 10 th	a.m.	- KHS Meeting Ato Tesfaye Hundessa and Ato

Leykun Aburie of EWCO
Travel ELE and KHS to Bahrdar, met by Ato Assefa
Wundessa

p.m. - Meeting with Ato Aychew Kebete, ANRS and Ato
Koyachew Mulluye, BoA
Dinner with Ato Assefa Weldesenbet and Ato Koyachew
Mulluye

Wednesday 11th

Fly from Bahrdar to Gondar
(This had been planned for early morning to be
followed by a drive to SMNP and overnight at Sankabar
Camp. The flight was cancelled by Ethiopian Airlines and
we flew instead in the afternoon. At the original time of
the flight, it was planned that we should drive as far as
Debark in the afternoon. The afternoon flight was delayed
and we spent the night at Goha Hotel, Gondar)

Thursday 12th

a.m. - 05.00 hrs drive to Debark, met with Park Warden
and others and drive to SMNP. Drove the length of the
park to Chennek, with several stops to look around.
Returned to opposite Gich. Rode ponies and mules and
walked to the valley before Gich. Returned to Sankkaber
Camp, met scouts and drove to Debark. Examined count
data at Park offices and returned to Gondar.
Dinner with Ato Assefa and Ato Koyachew

Friday 13th

a.m. - KHS attempted to fly to Addis Ababa via Axum 09.00 hrs
to catch Kenya Airways flight, but the flight was double-
booked. ELE was interviewed at 11.00 hrs for broadcast on
Ethiopian Radio Broadcasting Corporation.
ELE & KHS attempted to fly direct to Addis Ababa 13.00
hrs, but aircraft went unserviceable on landing.

p.m. - 15.00 hrs ELE and KHS flew to Addis Ababa, stayed
Empire Hotel

Saturday 14th

p.m. - ELE returned to Uganda, KHS to Kenya

4.0 OBSERVATIONS OF THE MISSION

4.1 Conservation Commitment

There is a very strong and enthusiastic commitment to conservation of the SMNP by the authorities of the ANRS, Bureau of Agriculture, under whom the environmental conservation falls in the Region. There appears to be general agreement on all the basic recommendations and

proposed actions developed by the joint missions, workshops and now the very comprehensive draft Management Plan. The World Heritage status of the park is valued and a report had been prepared specifically for the UNESCO/IUCN mission by Dr. Belay Demissie, head of the Bureau of Agriculture. Although he was unfortunately not available, having gone to Addis Ababa *en route* to a conference abroad, Directors of the Bureau provided generous, efficient and well informed support to the Mission. The current mandate of EWCO in relation to the park, is monitoring and advice and involvement in federal decisions. Although not proximally involved they also maintain high priority on conservation of SMNP.

There is a good financial commitment. The ARNS is committing between 340,000 and 530,000 Birr annually to the park (current rate 8.4 Birr/US\$). This year's budget is 371,000 Birr, approximately \$45,000. The ANRS budget comes largely from a federal government allocation and partly from income generated in the Region.

The main direct external support to the park comes from the Austrian Embassy Development Co-ordination project (AEDC), which is currently about to enter Phase III and has helped ANRS to produce the management plan that is in final draft stage and will guide conservation development activities for the next 10 years. This is also supported technically by a programme of the Swiss Development Co-operation ESAPP, with CDE in partnership with national institutions.

Much of the problems of the park relate to human presence and the lives of the people are harsh, with low productivity of the area. A holistic approach is therefore important. A major project in the Adi Arkay *woreda* funded by UNCDF/UNDP was signed in May 2000 and aims to contribute by improving livelihood and relieving pressure on the park. The GEF is working on development of a programme listed as \$10 million over 5 years, the first phase of which is project development in order to raise support for all the activities outlined in the management plan.

The GEF project summarises potential funding as follows:

(a)	Estimated US\$ 10 million over 5 years	
	• GEF input	\$5 million
	• Government contribution	\$0.5 million
	• Co-Finance (UNCDF, Austria, Swiss University, UNESCO)	\$4.5 million
(b)	Project Development Phase total	\$459,000
	• GEF	\$177,000
	• UNCDF	\$182,000
	• UNDP	\$ 30,000
	• Austria	\$ 50,000
	• Government	\$ 20,000

In addition, the continued Swiss commitment to raise international support and awareness, the Pro Simen Foundation and the awareness raised by the World Heritage status and "In Danger" listing have clearly helped to promote these sources of support.

The Steering Committee recommended by the joint Mission in March 2000 (Hurni and Ludi, 2000) has been established. The 14 member committee consisting of most senior officials is chaired by the Vice President of the regional State.

There appears, therefore to be a very solid basis on which ARNS can work, but until now much of this has been under planning and development and so far has not yet had a chance to show significant results in the field.

4.2 The Park and people

The problems of people, villages, agriculture and domestic livestock in the park and their effects on the habitat through over grazing, erosion, use of woody vegetation, notably tree heather *Eica* for fuel wood and disturbance (Hurni *et al.*, 1996, Nievergelt *et al.*, 1998, ARNS Management Plan) particularly in the central Gich plateau area are very prominent. Although partly due to the time constraints imposed by itinerary perturbations, our attempt to get a feeling for the tourist attraction of trekking through wild spectacular country and to view the village scattered over the opposite slope, ended up as a short walk down a ploughed hillside on thin ponies, whose compatriots were grazing nearby. This was all within the National Park. The figure of 11,000 people within the park as quoted by BoA staff, though relates back to the 1994 census, may even be higher now. The Bahrdar Workshop report (1996) quotes 30,000 using the park area, though with about 4,500 within the central part. As with all people and conservation problems, this is a very difficult one. For several people this Park has been their home for generations, although it seems as if many originally came to the region to escape other pressures, and there has been much immigration since the establishment of the park. Alternative options are limited. The park falls within 3 *woredas* or districts: *Adi Arkay, Debark and Janamorra*. All are of very low agricultural potential, with fragile soils, subject to erosion and climatic and altitudinal constraints on crop production. Yet relative to that situation the population levels are dense (31.7-49.4 persons per km², Hogg 1994), poverty levels are high and pressure on the park and its natural resources is intense.

The BoA and Park authorities are well aware of the problem and the Management Plan outlines a phased and zoned approach involving dialogue, control of increase, gradual reduction of numbers and habitat effect by voluntary re-settlement, alternative attractions and land rehabilitation, aiming ultimately, but perhaps long term, for exclusion of people from the core zone. The people are wary of re-settlement schemes. There is a Regional National policy for relocation of people from marginal lands, and an investigation within the region of sparsely populated and/or more productive lowlands some 200 km away for their resettlement. Bearing in mind the heat and disease risks as well as tradition and the exorbitant cost involved, the Mission felt sceptical that this would be an easy answer.

Support for re-settlement of people from the core zone was requested from UNESCO during the course of the Mission. As a critical issue for a World Heritage Site, there might be possibilities for future consideration, for example of the UN Foundation? However, the first stage is dialogue, participatory planning and investigation of and clearer agreement on options. Some 240,000 Birr within the AEDC project is set aside for this process and it was suggested that details for further support should be considered when there are results from that. Several people in the Gich area are weavers, while guiding of visitors could also be a potential. For a proportion of the people, an economy based not entirely on agriculture and outside the Park but associated

with it may therefore not be impossible. The mission fully endorsed the proposals made by the March 2000 mission (Hurni and Ludi 2000) and the Management Plan, that

- a) the park boundary should be re-aligned to exclude the 11 villages on the northern edge
- b) certain villages should be re-located particularly Gich in the highlands, Islam Debir in the southern lowlands and Adarmaz and Muchila in the northern lowlands (approximately 2,000 people), leaving a highland core area free of human use, and
- c) the phased and zone approach to implementing the above should get underway. Apparently a series of 10 participatory workshops are planned with different groups in and around the park, starting in late April 2001 to address this issue.

These recommendations, formulated jointly, are agreed as the way forward, but so far there is no result on the ground.

4.3 Park Management

The officials responsible for the Park appear in Annex 1 and Annex 2. The Park has four recently acquired Toyotas of which two are currently functional. The Park Warden is based at Debarik village outside the Park and game scouts are based at the six camps in the park.

The evolution of this National Park with people inside it and the current situation contrasts strongly with the view of a National Park in the rest of Africa. The game scouts have always been used to this situation. Changing it will involve their training also. It was stated that they had already received training by the park wardens. However, the Mission felt they would profit from attending external training or having outside input in situ.

The ARNS has written out a series of bye laws pertaining to use of the park, for example forbidding exploitation of vegetation and wildlife within the park boundaries (Annex 3). There needs to be a full participatory approach to agree on and make clear to people, not only the boundary and other changes, but also the rules and where and how they will be enforced. To expect game scouts, who are unused to preventing their own neighbours or relatives from grazing or tree felling, suddenly to begin enforcing rules, may be expecting too much. The mission felt that there should be more training in conservation law enforcement for game scouts and wardens, and that there should be some outside technical involvement in this, benefiting from experience of other national parks. A basic patrol-based monitoring system should also be established, recording the patrols and conservation activities of the scouts as well as wildlife sightings. Parks wardens and other high level staff appeared to be largely graduates and experienced researchers but they seemed to have limited park management training or experience. This could also be an area where UNESCO could be supportive.

Further to this **the Man and Biosphere programme of UNESCO** may wish to explore with the ARNS the options of effective collaboration. It would seem that this type of approach may be more relevant in this area.

Part of the holistic approach is to improve the way of life and productivity outside the park to reduce the pressure inside it. The UNCDF project plans to do this for the Adi Arkay *woreda* to the north, but the Debark and Janamorra *woredas* need attention if the balance is to be maintained. More collaboration and planning between the development and conservation agencies would appear to be beneficial. The Director of the UNESCO office in Addis Ababa Mr. Manady Lamine Conde undertook to meet with his UNDP and UNDCF counterparts to ensure respect for the conservation and World Heritage importance in their activities.

The mission felt that the implementation Phase III of the AEDC project would benefit from an internationally recruited technical project leader to work in partnership with the Warden.

4.4 Wildlife

Nievergelt *et al* (1998) found that most mammal species, for example Walia, Simien Foxes, Klipspringer, Bushbuck had decreased within the park as a result of habitat losses and disturbance, although there were indications of some return of Walia to the eastern Chennek area in 1996. Simultaneous observation counts of Walia were carried out repeating the same method in 1994, in the park and Mesarerya Wildlife Reserve. Totals seen were 186 and 180 respectively, and, since these are minima, it was extrapolated that population estimates may have been in the region of 250. A similar count was carried out by the park personnel in December 2000. The same area was covered but with 31 instead of 20 observation points. The total number of Walia observed in 2000 was given as 450. Original observation point totals were not available, although some examples of data sheets were seen. The figures tabulated were grouped into totals for areas that amalgamated several observation points. Table 1 compares these by area as far as possible. There was some uncertainty as to how many of the 213 grouped under the heading Chennek in 2000 were inside and outside the park, and indeed whether parts of Ras Dajen had been counted. The Warden promised to send the full figures and map of the observations. As far as can be seen, however, it appears that numbers have decreased within the park since 1996 and increased outside to the east and in the eastern tip of the park.

The Warden quoted the figure of 41 Ethiopian wolves (Simien foxes) seen on the simultaneous count, which involved 21 blocks. Fourteen wolves were seen in the park and 27 (66%) out. The researcher with the data was not available, but it was stated that most wolves occurred in Ras Dajen area. During the survey in 1996 only 6 direct sightings were recorded and the report notes that sightings of this species have always been rare. No direct comparison can therefore be made without knowing the precise area and method used in 2000.

The mission observed one young male Walia Ibex of about 4-5 years resting half way down the escarpment east of Chennek and one Klipspringer west of Sankkaber. Many Gelada baboons there, *Theropithecus geloda* were seen in groups west of Sankaber and around Gich. Over 7,000 are estimated to exist in the park with an over-population problem, as they are considered a pest by the people.

Several interesting bird species were seen including 6 Lammergeier or Bearded Vultures (*Gyptius barbatus*), Augur buzzards (*Buteo augur*) and the Thick Billed Raven (*Corvus crassirostris*)

Table 1: **Comparative number of Simultaneous counts of Walia Ibex**
(1994 and 1996 data from Nievergelt et al 1998, 2000 data from Warden Ato Berhanu Gebre)

Protected Areas	Observation Point	Nr.	Dec.1994	Jan. 1996	Dec. 2000	
SMNP	Kebero	1	2	0	6	
	Michibiny	2	0	3		
	Sankaber	3	2	6		
	Gich Plateau	Gidir Got	4	0	0	73
		Zemed Yellelesh	5b	0	0	
		Muchila Afaf	5a	0	0	
		Kedadit	6a&b	12	2	
		Set Derek	7	16	21	
		Saha	8a	2	22	
		Gwaro	8b			
		Imet Gogo	9a	27	13	
		Meflekiyaw	9b			
		Shayno Sefer	10	0	17	
Inatye	11	3	10			
Chennek	12	0	10	213		
Mesarerya Wildlife Reserve	Bwahit-N	13	23		6	
	Bwahit-E	14	27		15	
	Mesarerya	15	72		55	
	Digowa	16				
TOTAL			186	180	450	

Count results and wildlife observations reinforce the need to reduce or exclude the human presence and disturbance from the core area in order to allow suitable habitats to recover and the need to extend the boundaries of the park to protect Mesarerya and Ras Dajen Wildlife Reserves. As Mountain Simen is the sole remaining area of endemic Walia Ibex, they are key to the World Heritage status.

4.5 Boundary

The boundary modifications agreed after the March 2000 Mission (Hurni and Ludi 2000) to exclude 11 villages within the park and to include Lemalino and Mesarerya Wildlife Reserve areas, in the future even Ras Dajen area are planned in the Management Plan in a phased manner. But they have not yet happened on the ground. They are clearly very important, both to reduce the human population in the park and to protect sufficient relatively undisturbed Walia Ibex and Simien Fox habitat. As they do, it will be necessary to ensure that the conservation rules within the park or zones are clearly communicated and agreed, then reinforced, and that capacity is sufficient to ensure that boundary modifications are recognised in reality as well as on paper.

4.6 Road Re-alignment

The road from Debarq is now completed beyond Chennek. In the central area it follows the southern boundary of the park, but to the east and west it cuts through previous Walia Ibex habitat, with a major scar, separating grazing from cover habitats and channeling what is likely to be an increasing amount of vehicle traffic through the park. The March 2000 mission agreed on possible re-alignments of two sections and the ARNS would like to carry these out and limited the existing road through the park to tourist use only. Ideally a road coming into Janamorra *woreda* from considerably further south would be even better for the park, but this may be prohibitively expensive. However, at very least the minor proposed re-alignments are needed. The ANRS report cites 17 million Birr as needed for this.

As UNCDF/UNDP have been involved in this and other development projects within the area at various stages, it is suggested that they be approached for support in this regard. Relative to the UNCDF/UNDP project in the Adi Arkay *woreda*, the Director of the UNESCO office, Mr. M. L. Conde offered to negotiate to ensure that World Heritage concerns were recognised in implementation of the project. A meeting for the Mission with the UNDP representative was attempted but failed to materialise. **The Mission requests that the Director also pursues the issue of need for support to the re-alignment of the road.**

4.7 Tourism

Tourism is important as the main potential means to generate income. It has increased from 108 visitors in 1984 to 1289 in 1999, earning then 120, 303 Birr. In 2000 until December the figures were only 655 visitors. The main tourism previously has been through walking and pony/mule trekking, and this is clearly the most attractive and appropriate, when handled sensitively. The road has had a negative effect on some of the areas through which this used to be particularly attractive.

However the road also has the positive factor of facilitating the more rapid one or two day visitors in combination with the whistle stop cultural World Heritage Site visits that appear to be favoured in the area. To improve the visitor experience for both kinds, but particularly the latter, there is a major need to remove the negative human impact from the core area and to develop limited, but quality accommodation and facilities. There has been a start on this through the AEDC project, but while the building using local stone is a good feature, there could be many improvements in developments more in keeping with the environment and in understanding the appreciation of western visitors, like making use of the spectacular views. It is suggested that the AEDC both brings in some expertise with experience from elsewhere (e.g. East or Southern Africa) to work with ANRS in this aspect and that the appropriate ANRS personnel benefit from study visits. For example in Kenya, the IL Ngwesi Lodge, developed and run by the local communities with guidance from local land-owners and the Mt. Kenya Rotunda cabins, could provide some ideas, as could the availability of innovative fuel saving cooking and water heating devices.

Additionally, coming from adjacent Kenya and Uganda, the Mission felt that there was potential for greater promotion of the natural conservation areas of Ethiopia, KHS offered, and has followed up the offer, to suggest reconnaissance and promotion to Travel Review, who have enthusiastically agreed to explore possibilities.

4.8 World Heritage Status and In Danger Listing

SMNP was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1978 on the basis of its outstanding universal value: spectacular scenery and the presence of the rare endemic Walia Ibex and Simien Fox and the endemic Gelada baboon. However, even at that time IUCN questioned the integrity of the site for full protection of these species. The status reviews after the constraints on conservation and increases in human settlement during the protracted 17 years civil war indicated that numbers of these key species within the park had gone down and the status and disturbance of their habitat had even further reduced the carrying and protection capacity within the existing park. "In Danger" listing was therefore proposed in 1996 to draw international attention to the urgent need for increased support and modification of management approaches in order to help the management authority to save this valuable site. In the international view this was a technical decision that in no way reflected any lack of confidence in the changing of management agencies.

It was the Mission's view that the World Heritage in Danger listing has probably encouraged the positive response of international support agencies in working with ANRS to begin improving conservation activities and developing the realistic and detailed Management Plan. The Management Plan fulfills one of the criteria required by the World Heritage Convention and when fully implemented should re-establish the integrity of the Site for conservation of the key factors. Although the situation in management of the Park is improving, however, the Mission found that the results on the ground were not yet sufficient to consider the park out of danger. It is recommended that the site continues listed as a World heritage In Danger in order to reinforce the support needed to help the park staff and projects to implement the Management Plan and to

raise extra funds where necessary. Benchmarks are suggested below for removal of the In Danger listing.

The World Heritage Site and In Danger listing do not automatically mean instant effect on the ground. But they can be a very effective and advantageous tool, if perceived and used that way. The example of the support programme that has been developed for the WHSs of the Democratic Republic of Congo was used to demonstrate how these listings can be used to considerable advantage by the conservation agency and do not need to be viewed in a negative light.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

So far only one of the recommendations made in March 2000 have been implemented. The following recommendations are based partly on these and the Management Plan, coupled with the observations of the mission. They were originally formulated by people with far more experience and knowledge of the site than ourselves.

5.1 Conservation commitment

UNESCO/IUCN are requested to write to formally recognise the conservation commitment and steps taken by the ANRS towards improving the status of the SMNP, including the establishment of the Steering Committee and the value of the way forward outlined in the Management Plan. It could also be noted that In Danger listing is in the spirit of focusing International concern and reinforcing the possibilities for international support to help the ANRS and Bureau of Agriculture to achieve their conservation objectives for the park.

5.2 Boundary re-alignment

Boundary re-alignment to exclude the villages on the borders and to include the extended habitats of the Walia and Simien fox is extremely important. It needs to be fully negotiated and understood with the people and the conservation capacity of the park needs to be improved to allow effective implementation.

5.3 Re-settlement

Satisfactory and sensitive re-settlement with modern facilities of people from within the core area and rehabilitation of the habitat was felt to be important for the survival of the Site.

5.4 Road re-alignment

Re-alignment of the road and re-direction of non park or tourist traffic should be carried out. Motoring speed should be kept to a minimum in view of the dust.

5.5 Training and study visits

There are several international conservation training and study visit opportunities from which the personnel could benefit.

5.6 Technical assistance for major projects

There is excellent expertise available within the existing personnel, but it was felt that international technical advice working with them could benefit the implementation of the aid projects.

5.7 WHS In Danger Status

It is recommended that the World Heritage In Danger listing should remain in place until such time as the benchmarks suggested below are fulfilled. It is also suggest that all efforts should be made to indicate the positive support value that this implies.

5.8 Benchmarks

It is suggested that the benchmarks for removal of the In Danger listing should be as follows:

- 5.8.1** Re-alignment of the boundary and acceptance of this and the associated conservation laws by the people, specifically:
- a) Exclusion of the village along the boundary, as cited by Hurni and Ludi (2000) and in the Management Plan.
 - b) Extension of the Park to include at least Mesarerya and Lemalino Wildlife Reserves, both legally and with the means to effect control and with inclusion of Ras Dejen Wildlife Reserve underway.
- 5.8.2** Significant and sustainable reduction of the population of the extended Gich village and their effects on the environment. Re-settlement of recent villages, such as Muchilla and Kewa. No human population should remain in the core area.
- 5.8.3** Effective conservation within the extended National Park of a larger population of Walia Ibex and Simien Fox – as shown by count results related to protected area and mapped, in combination with the activities cited above.

5.9 New world heritage Site(s)

Ethiopia has other natural properties such as Bale Mountains National Park with outstanding values that could qualify for recognition under the World Heritage Convention. The State Party is advised to carry out inventory for Tentative listing as a starting point for UNESCO consideration.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 People met in Ethiopia (in chronological order)

ALEMAYEHU MINAS – Secretary General Ethiopian National Commission for UNESCO
LEYKUN ABURIE - Deputy Manager in charge of Parks, Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation

Organisation

TESFAYE HUNDESSA - General Manager, Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation (EWCO)

MAMADY LAMINE CONDE - Director UNESCO Office, Representative of OAU in the CEA for Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti

ASSEFA WUNDESSA - Public relations Officer, Bureau of Agriculture, ARNS

KAYOCHEW MULLUYE - Regulatory Department Head, ARNS – BoA

AYCHEW KEBEDE - Head, Economic Development Sector, The Council of Amhara National Regional State

SOLOMON – Trekking tour guide for “Experience Ethiopia” and two clients (MARTIN AND MARRIANNE HAYS)

BERHANU GEBRE - Warden SMNP

ENDALKACHEW TESHOME - Tourism Officer SMNP

FASIL AYEYU - Head of Department of Culture, Tourism and Information for Northern Gondar

ASSEFA W. SENBET - Head, Public Relations Service, BoA

TESHOME MULU - Team Leader of Protection and Regulations Department

MEGABIAN TASSEW - Head, Economic Development, N. Gondar Administrative Council

BEKELE ASRES - Head, Zone Agricultural Department, N. Gondar Administration.

6.2 Other People not met but Consulted (Experience relevant to mission noted)

Dr. J. CHRIS HILLMAN - Ex-Project manager, Bale Mts and Advisor to EWCO

YILMA DELELGENE – IUCN Regional Office, Nairobi, EA.

Dr. JAMES T. THORSELL – IUCN/WHC

PROFESSOR DR. HANS HURNI – Ex Park Warden, Long experience and knowledge of the area, Leader of several Mission.

Dr. RICHARD HOGG – Ex-Farm Africa for Ethiopia, Survey of Simen Mts National Park and Buffer Zones

Dr. STUART WILLIAMS – Ethiopian Wolf Project

Ato MOGES TILAHUN – Austrian Development Cooperation

MIKE JACKSON AND CATHERINE SCHOELER – Ex WCS Ethiopia

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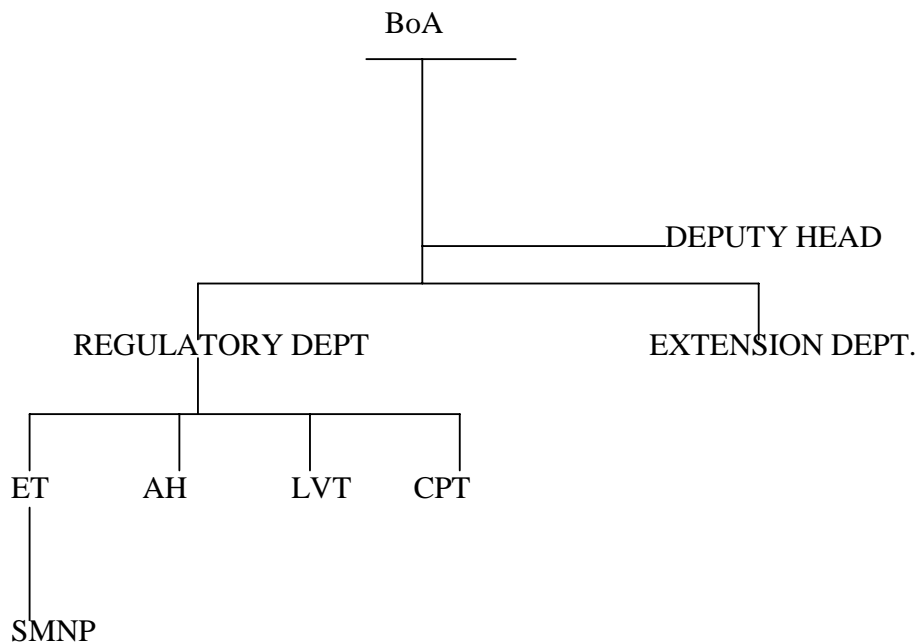
* Copies sent to IUCN-WHC

** Copies obtainable in Switzerland direct from beniever@wild.unizh.ch

ANNEX 1. STAFF OF THE PARK

Warden	1
Expert Officers	
Park Supervisor and Development Expert	1
Tourism Officer	1
Warden for Wildlife Education	1
Taxidermist	1
Scouts	36
Secretary	1
Drivers	2
Finance Head	1
Administrator	1
Accountant	1
Purchaser	1
Archivist	1
Auditor	1
Guards	4

ANNEX 2. ORGANOGRAM OF THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURE LINKED TO THE PARK



KEY:

- AH = Animal Health
- CPT = Crop protection Team
- ET = Environment Team
- LVT = Land-use Team

ANNEX 3. REGULATIONS TO DETERMINE THE PROTECTION, DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SIMEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK (EXTRACT OF THE MOST RELEVANT PARTS)

- 1.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Park Administration Office**
The Park Administration Office being accountable to the Bureau of Agriculture shall execute the day-to-day routine affairs of the Park. Accordingly, it shall have the following detailed roles and responsibilities.
- 1.1 Leads, controls and executes the Park Management, Protection and Development activities
 - 1.2 Leads, Strengthens and controls the established and those to be established controlling posts intended to be appropriate for the protection of the Park.
 - 1.3 Educates the surrounding community, Kebele and *Woreda* administrations to cooperate in protecting the Park in conjunction with Park Administration, informs the annual plan, agitates, organizes, organizes and co-ordinates.
 - 1.4 Prepares a favorable ground whereby endemic big or small wild animals of Ethiopia, different plant species and vegetation receive special protection and care.
 - 1.5 Makes sure that the boundary marks of the Park and those to be annexed by the Park in the future get legal recognition and respect.
 - 1.6 Makes sure that close areas outside the Park that serve for the mobility and periodic migrating areas for the *Waliyas* are protected.
 - 1.7 Creates favorable grounds where the people living inside the Park, step by step, voluntarily leave the Park site and find solutions for the people living in the outskirts with the relevant institutions to settle the displaced based on a feasible study.
 - 1.8 Prepares, with the relevant organs, inviting conditions of the periodic increase of the inflow of tourists without doing harm to the environmental situations.
 - 1.9 Collects different revenues with legal money collecting receipts
 - 1.10 Submits the annual plan and budget of the park to the Regional Agriculture Bureau. Implements it by drafting detailed action plan once it is approved.
 - 1.11 Submits the list of the selected individuals who gave special contribution to the protection and development of the park to Agriculture Bureau so as to make them receive an honorary wildlife conservation identification card.
 - 1.12 Facilitates a way to be taken legal measures on persons committing prohibited activities in the Park.

- 1.13 Gives a prior information, with different methods, to national and non-national tourists about the rules and regulations they are expected to follow while visiting the Park.
- 1.14 Submits periodic reports to the Agriculture Bureau.
- 1.15 Performs other tasks assigned to it by Agriculture Bureau.

2.0 **Determining Different Tariff**

- 2.1 Any visitor/tourist coming from in and outside the country is expected to pay a service charge according to the guideline which is to stem out from this regulation.
- 2.2 According to this Article sub-article 2.1 different payments and tariff extended to the service of the Park shall be studied by the Bureau and will be approved by the Executive Committee in the guidelines that are to stem out from this regulation.

3.0 **Prohibited activities**

According to this regulation, activities performed outside the permitted acts and relevant organs and places, performing the following acts are prohibited.

- 3.1 Found carrying a gun inside the Park without handing over at the gate of the Park
- 3.2 Using sound instruments in the Park beyond the limited level.
- 3.3 Chase, threaten and hunt the wild animals.
- 3.4 Cutting vegetations
- 3.5 Taking away birds' eggs
- 3.6 Creating violence in the Park, pick, take, deteriorate or destroy natural or human made items
- 3.7 Performing agricultural practices in unpermitted areas
- 3.8 Send domestic animals to graze in the Park
- 3.9 Mineral search or digging
- 3.10 Setting fire
- 3.11 Carrying poisonous elements
- 3.12 Sale or exchange any item

- 3.13 Throwing away food containers or other things brought in by the visitors to places which is not allowed by the Park Administration Office
- 3.14 Building houses, planting grinding mill or establishing other institutions in the places reserved for the Park
- 3.15 Entering into the Park taking in domestic animals such as dogs or cats
- 3.16 Driving Cars beyond the limited speed
- 3.17 Driving in or around the Park before 6 a.m. in the morning and after 6 p.m. in the evening.

4.0 Paying Afelama

To prevent the domestic animals to intrude and graze in the Park illegally paying Afelama payment or tariff shall be in effect. Details shall be given in the Forthcoming guideline.

5.0 Penalty

Any individual violating those prohibited acts mentioned in Article 3.0 or creates an obstacle to the materialization of this regulation shall be fined in an appeal made in an appropriate penal code.

6.0 Issuing Guideline

The Regional Agriculture Bureau shall issue different guidelines to implement this regulation.

7.0 Duty to Co-operate

Any person or any juridical personality has an obligation to cooperate in the implementation of this regulation.

8.0 Effective Date

This regulation shall come into force after its publication in Zikre Hig Gazette.

Done at Bahir Dar this ____th of January, 2001
Amhara National Regional State Executive Committee