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Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire: Etat de conservation de biens inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril

**REPORT OF THE JOINT UNESCO-IUCN REACTIVE
MONITORING MISSION
RAPPORT DE MISSION DE SUIVI REACTIF CONJOINTE
DE L'UNESCO ET DE L'IUCN**

Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of Congo) (N136)/ Parc National Garamba
(République Démocratique du Congo) (N136)

30 March – 7 April 2006 / 30 mars – 7 avril 2006

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☐ WHC-06/30.COM/7B.Add

MISSION REPORT

***Reactive Monitoring Mission to Garamba National Park
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)***

30 March - 7 April, 2006



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May 2006**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), a UNESCO/IUCN monitoring mission to the property took place from 30 March – April 7, 2006 to undertake a balanced and objective assessment of the State of Conservation of the Garamba National Park and develop recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the State Party to address the threats and improve the long term conservation of the site. Prior to the mission, a survey of the northern white rhino population and other large mammal populations in the property was conducted by the IUCN/SCC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) by the management authority ICCN and African Parks Foundation (APF) in cooperation with UNESCO. Preliminary results of the survey were studied and discussed with staff of ICCN, APF and AfRSG. During the survey, the presence of northern white rhino in the property was confirmed, but only 2 animals (1 male and 1 female) were sighted during the survey. The presence of rhino in the hunting area Gangala na Bodio (DCGnB), where rhino signs were reported at several occasions, could not be confirmed. However, no recent rhino carcasses (less than 1 year old) were found. Given the difficulty of viewing rhinos, especially in the densely wooded hunting area, it remains possible that certain individuals were not sighted during the survey, and therefore there may be one or more additional animals surviving. According to the specialists of the AfRSG, there is a chance of recovery provided rhinos can be protected; although it must be recognized that the lower the number of animals actually surviving, the lower the chances of recovery being successful in the long run. The fact that some animals might have been missed by the survey was confirmed later, since on 23 April, the Centre and IUCN received information from APF that a third rhino (male) was sighted close to the Gangala park station. Further surveys are required to clarify the exact number of rhinos within the park.

The survey further counted 3839 elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), 8145 buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), 2292 hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) and 70 Congolese giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis congoensis*) inside the property and DCGnB. Whilst these figures show a net decline compared to the estimates based on a 2004 census, they are more positive than the results of the August 2005 aerial count and than was expected by the mission team. It is also very important to note that during the 2006 survey no active poaching camps could be observed in the southern sector of the park and only 3 recent elephant carcasses (less than 1 year old) were counted. This is a clear indication that poaching is currently under control and that the situation is improving. The mission was able to confirm this extremely positive development during its field visit. The mission recognises the importance of the agreement ICCN concluded with APF to stop the further degradation of the values of the property and the very important progress achieved in the conservation of the property since November 2005. Conservation activities have been strengthened, important investments have been made in infrastructure and equipment and a new anti-poaching strategy was introduced, consisting of the deployment of 4 well trained guard sections inside the vital rhino area under the command of an anti-poaching expert. Close cooperation has also been developed with the DRC army brigade that was sent by the government in July 2005 to assist in securing the park following its refusal of the translocation. Nevertheless, the instability in the region, together with the presence of the LRA in DCAz, the on-going infiltration of armed groups from Sudan, the presence of well organized poachers in the area and the wide distribution of war graded weapons within the local population underline the critical situation faced by the park and the essential need to further strengthen anti-poaching efforts within the park.

With regard to the possible delisting of the property from the World Heritage List and referring to the Committee decision 29 COM 7A.4, which sets the presence of northern white rhino in the property as a benchmark for a possible de-listing of the property from the World Heritage List, the mission notes that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is not only based on the presence of the northern white rhino. This is demonstrated by the fact that the property was inscribed under both criteria (iv) and (iii).

Based on the above, the mission believes that the decision made by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th session, to associate the Outstanding Universal Value of the property solely with the presence of northern white rhino is in fact contradictorily to the decision made at the time of inscription.

However, even, if the presence of the northern white rhino in the property is kept as a benchmark to decide about a possible delisting of Garamba national park from the World Heritage List, the mission considers such a possibility is currently premature. Further efforts are needed to clarify if a viable population of northern white rhino is still present in the property and adjacent hunting areas. Once the final results are available, it is recommended that ICCN and APF organise a workshop to discuss management options for the remaining population, inviting all relevant stakeholders, including the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and AfRSG. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN therefore recommend the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee defer any decision on the possible delisting of Garamba National Park from the World Heritage List until its 31st session in 2007.

The UNESCO/IUCN mission feels that, given the state of conservation of the property, the instability in the region and the rapidly changing situation in the field, it is unlikely that the property can be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger in the foreseeable future and therefore it is currently impossible to define benchmarks that will clearly lead to this removal. However the mission developed recommendations to the State Party which can be used by the Committee as benchmarks to support the efforts of the State Party to further improve the state of conservation of the property. These recommendations are included in the report.

The mission also takes note of the increased presence of United Nations Organisation Mission to DRC (MONUC) in the region. Whilst this can be extremely beneficial for the park, it is noted that cooperation between MONUC and park authorities is insufficient and should be improved. The mission also notes that the region of the park is extremely isolated and that very limited humanitarian assistance or development activities are taking place. There is therefore a need to request donor agencies to increase their investment in the region, not only for conservation activities but also by supporting development programmes that can help alleviate the extreme poverty of local communities.

1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

The Garamba National Park (GNP) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 under natural criterion (iii) and (iv). The main reason supporting inscription was the presence of important populations of rare and endangered species, including an important elephant population, and the last remaining populations of an endemic subspecies of Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis congoensis*) and of the Northern White Rhino (*Carathotherium sinum cottoni*).

There have been many threats to the integrity of the property, particularly from the impacts of armed conflict in and around the property. Following a reduction of the population to 15 individuals as a result of heavy poaching, the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1984. To reverse this trend a project was started by WWF, Frankfurt Zoological Society and UNESCO. The project strengthened park management and anti-poaching activities and as a result the rhino population slowly recovered. By 1991, the rhino population had doubled and, in 1992, the World Heritage Committee removed the Garamba National Park from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Poaching pressure increased in 1996 with the start of the civil conflict and the World Heritage Committee decided to re-inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1997.

In 1999, UNESCO participated in a meeting organized to discuss the State of Conservation of the DRC World Heritage sites. At the meeting an action plan was developed to halt further degradation to the properties, based on a double strategy of providing direct support to field staff and activities and using the World Heritage Convention as a tool to sensitize the warring factions for the conservation of the properties. In 2000 the United Nations Foundation approved financial support of 2,9 million US\$ for the implementation of this action plan. Since 2000, UNESCO has been working closely with ICCN and conservation NGO partners to halt further degradation of the properties and have been reporting regularly to the World Heritage Committee on progress made. From 2000 – 2004, payments to guard staff in all 5 properties have been ensured through this programme and UNESCO has fielded several international missions and taken other actions to address specific threats to the properties. This allowed a further stabilization of the situation in the park, although poaching pressure remained high, especially by SPLA elements from Sudan. However, till July 2003, the population of northern white rhino remained stable at approximately 30 individuals and the elephant, buffalo and hippo populations started to recover.

Unfortunately since July 2003, the situation degraded significantly, with massive poaching pressure by armed groups apparently coming from Sudan. In 2005, the option of translocating a small number of the Northern White Rhinos to a safe location outside DRC, whilst at the same time pursuing efforts to protect the remaining animals in situ, was proposed to the Government. The Government advised in April, 2005 that it could not allow the translocation of part of the remaining population of Northern White Rhino but advised that it would send an army brigade to help secure the property and thus address poaching problems. All conservation NGOs, including the International Rhino Foundation, suspended their operations in the Garamba National Park in March 2005, due to rising tensions in the region related to the proposed translocation. In September 2005, the African Parks Foundation, a Dutch based NGO, concluded an agreement with ICCN to take over the management of the property.

The 2005 World Heritage Committee discussed the situation in GNP and agreed that: "if by 1 February, 2006 the presence of the Northern White Rhino has not been established, the property is no longer of Outstanding Value and the Committee will consider deleting it from the World Heritage List". The Committee further requested a mission to the property be carried out.

Accordingly a UNESCO/IUCN monitoring mission was undertaken to this site from 30 March - 7 April, 2006 involving Guy Debonnet (UNESCO) and David Sheppard (IUCN). The objective of the monitoring mission was to undertake a balanced and objective assessment of the State of Conservation of the Garamba National Park and develop recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the States Party to address the threats and improve the long term conservation of the site. The Terms of Reference and detailed agenda of the mission can be found in annex 1 and 2 of this report.

2 ASSESSMENT OF KEY ISSUES

The mission carefully reviewed the state of conservation of the property, including issues raised by previous sessions of the World Heritage Committee and by previous monitoring missions. The mission based its findings on the field inspection, review of relevant documents and consultations with relevant government and non government officials, in particular field staff working for ICCN and. The following key issues were identified by the mission:

1. Status of the northern white rhino population
2. Threats from armed groups in and around the GNP, particularly in relation to poaching
3. Governance issues within the Garamba National Park: capacity of ranger staff and financing
4. Support from local communities and key decision makers
5. Delisting of the GNP from the List of World Heritage

The mission team produced an aide mémoire, giving its major conclusions after the field visit and presenting detailed draft recommendations for the State Party. These recommendations were discussed with the senior management of ICCN, representatives of APF and the technical experts of ICCN during several meetings held in Kinshasa. The aide mémoire can be found in annex 3 of the report.

2.1 Status of the rhino population

A comprehensive aerial survey of key mammal species in the property, focussed on populations of the northern white rhino, elephants and congolese giraffe, was conducted from 16 to 31 March 2006 by the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, along with staff from ICCN and APF and in close cooperation with UNESCO World Heritage Centre.. Preliminary results of the survey were outlined to the mission team. The survey confirmed the presence of northern white rhino in the property, although only 2 animals (1 male and 1 female) were sighted during the survey. The presence of rhino in the hunting area adjacent to the property (Gangala na Bodio), where rhino signs were reported at several occasions, could not be confirmed during the survey. Significantly, no recent rhino carcasses (less than 1 year old) were found by the survey indicating a decrease in poaching pressure.

Given the difficulty of viewing rhinos, especially in densely wooded hunting areas adjacent to the property, it is possible there were rhinos which were not sighted during the survey, and therefore there may be additional animals surviving. The fact that some animals might have been missed by the survey was confirmed in April 2006 when a third rhino (male) was sighted close to the Gangala park station in GNP. It is possible that other rhinos are present in tall grass and bush thickets in the Park and surrounding park "hunting areas" (domaines de chasse). However, further surveys are required to clarify the exact number of rhinos within the park.

Specialists of the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group note there is a chance of recovery for the northern white rhino, provided rhinos can be effectively protected in their natural habitat. However, it is emphasized that the lower the number of animals (and the fewer the number of females), actually surviving, the lower the chances are of long term recovery. Very small populations are particularly at risk from extinction from chance demographic reasons (e.g. the single confirmed female just has male calves from now on). Populations built up from small founder numbers also have an increased chance of experiencing genetic problems (e.g. inbreeding of the population) in the future.

In addition to rhino populations, the survey counted 3,839 elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), 8,145 buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), 2,292 hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) and 70 Congolese giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis congoensis*) inside the property and DCGnB. Whilst these figures show a net decline compared to the estimates based on a 2004 census, they are more positive than the results of the August 2005 aerial count and the figures are also higher than was expected

by the mission team. It is also very important to note that during the 2006 survey no active poaching camps were observed in the southern sector of the park and only 3 recent elephant carcasses (less than 1 year old) were counted. This is a clear indication that poaching is currently under control and that the situation is improving.

The mission was able to confirm this positive development during its field visit. However there is no room for complacency given the nature and extent of the threats facing the property.

The Mission recommends:

1. Further surveys should be undertaken to clarify the viability of the remaining populations of Northern White Rhino in the property. These surveys should draw on the expertise of IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group and be undertaken before the start of May 2007
2. A workshop should be planned and implemented on management options for the northern white rhino population. This should be implemented as soon as possible after the survey results are available and should involve all relevant stakeholders, including the World Heritage Centre and IUCN. The subject of population viability should be reviewed as part of this workshop;
3. A specialized monitoring team should be developed within the Garamba National Park, to ensure more effective monitoring of the rhino population in the property and the development of capacity building skills within general park staff in this area;

2.2 Threats from armed groups in and around the GNP, particularly in relation to poaching

The mission notes the property still faces major threats, particularly as a result of armed insurgency within the region. In January 2006, the security situation in and around the property deteriorated, as rebels from the Uganda Lord Resistance Army (LRA) infiltrated the Azande Hunting Area (DCAz) to the east of the park. On 23 January, 8 Peacekeepers of MONUC (United Nations Organization Mission in DRC) were killed and 5 wounded in a clash with LRA rebels in DCAz), close to the border of the park.

A DRC army brigade was sent to enhance security in the park, following the decision by the government in July 2005 to refuse the option of translocation of the rhino population. The mission noted that the presence of the brigade has had limited effect on the conservation of the property, as the brigade is poorly trained and equipped and has no logistical support. However, since January there has been close cooperation between park staff and this army brigade. Currently 30 military of the brigade have been deployed with ICCN staff to secure a strategic entry point to the park and a further 60 troops have been deployed along the strategic Dungu-Nduro road. Although this cooperation is very positive, all 90 troops are receiving food and rations from the park and it will be difficult for the park to sustain this level of support to the military.

The instability in the region, together with the presence of the LRA, the on-going infiltration of armed groups from Sudan, the presence of well organized poachers in the area and the wide distribution of weapons within the local population underline the critical security situation faced by the park. These issues relating to border incursions from Sudan and Uganda underline the importance of ensuring adequate protection of the DRC border with Sudan and Uganda. Effective dialogue with the Government of Sudan is required in relation to this issue.

It is essential to strengthen anti-poaching efforts within the park. Recent efforts undertaken to ensure better training of staff within the park, under the leadership of ICCN and the Africa Parks Foundation, have been very positive but further training and capacity building is required.

The mission also noted the increased presence of the United Nations Organisation Mission to DRC (MONUC) in the region. Whilst this can potentially be extremely beneficial for the park, the mission notes that cooperation between MONUC and park authorities is currently insufficient and should be improved. Clearer working relationships and better communication are required. There is a particularly valuable role that MOUNC could play in relation to disarmament of local populations in and around the Garamba National Park, in a similar way to the role played by MONUC with local communities in and around some other World Heritage properties in the DRC.

The Mission recommends:

1. Cooperation and cooperation should be improved between staff from the Garamba National Park and the United Nations Organisation Mission to DRC (MONUC). Particular focus should be placed on implementing a disarmament campaign within communities living around the Garamba National Park, while also aiming to improve the security situation in the region;
2. The efficiency of the military brigade currently posted around the property should be improved to ensure better protection of the park and adjacent hunting areas. Increased efficiency could be achieved by replacing the current brigade by a brigade that has undertaken the DRC Reunification and Retraining Programme ("brassage") and by ensuring the brigade is more effectively equipped, supplied regularly with rations and has adequate logistical support;
3. Efforts to secure the DRC border with Sudan and Uganda should be accelerated, with particular attention to reinforcing cooperation with the Government of Sudan to better control incursions of armed groups into the property;
4. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre should facilitate a high level meeting between the State Party and the Government of Sudan, to discuss the persistent problem of transborder poaching and resource exploitation in the region.

2.3 Governance issues within the GNP: capacity of ranger staff and financing

The Mission Team noted the management of the Garamba National Park is improving, as a consequence of the recent involvement of the Africa Parks Foundation (APF). The DRC Government and ICCN agreed in 2005 to entrust the management of the property for a period of 5 years to the Foundation. APF is a Dutch foundation, which has a mission to manage protected areas in Africa, at the request of governments, in a public-private partnership and based on a business approach. The agreement with the DRC Government defines the objective of the partnership between APF and ICCN as to: "rehabilitate the Garamba National Park, a World Heritage site in danger, and the 3 adjacent hunting areas". APF commenced operations in the park in November 2005 and announced they were mobilizing substantial financial resources for the park from a number of donors, including the European Union, the World Bank and the German Development Bank.

Since that time a range of activities have been undertaken, including recruitment of a Park Director, initiation of a number of important investments in infrastructure and equipment; and the development of a new anti-poaching strategy. This strategy comprises the deployment of four well trained guard sections (so called advanced anti-poaching force), within the main area where rhinos are located, under the command of an anti-poaching expert together with the deployment of the remaining guards (composed of the older and less well trained elements) around the stations of Nagero and Gangala to control infiltrations through the Gangala Hunting area. However, there is a need to further improve the efficiency of anti-poaching, in particular through the installation of a more performing communication system and better coordination between the advanced anti-poaching force and anti-poaching patrols deployed around the stations. It is further important to develop an intelligence system, to collect information on planned poaching operations through an informant network in the local villages. Finally, a law enforcement monitoring system needs to be put back in place in order to assist strategic anti-poaching decisions.

A key problem remains the age structure of the guard force. It is therefore vital to replace the older guards through the recruitment of new elements who need to be properly trained. The planned recruitment of 30 new guards among demobilised soldiers and their training in the guard training facilities in the Virunga national park, in close cooperation with FZS and thanks to financial support through the UNESCO/UNF Rapid response Facility, is an important step in this regard. It is also particularly important to ensure the continued payment of salaries of park staff, building on previous initiatives and support from the United Nations Foundation.

The mission notes the involvement of the Africa Parks Foundation is a positive initiative which has already resulted in improved management of the Garamba National Park, including a reduction of

poaching impacts. However the remaining management challenge is substantial and there is a major management and funding challenge. The involvement of a wide range of partners and donors is essential to support and accelerate the work undertaken by the Africa Parks Foundation.

It is also particularly important to maintain a strong level of political support for the management of the Garamba National park and for the DRC park system in general. The mission noted the high level of interest and commitment previously expressed by senior political leaders in the DRC, particularly at the time of discussions within the DRC regarding the potential translocation of the rhino population in September 2005. These discussions included the DRC Vice President (Z'Ahidi Ngoma), the Director of Cabinet of the President, (Mr. O Kitundu), the Minister for Environment, (Mr Anselme Enerunga) and the Director-General of ICCN (Pasteur Cosma Balongelwa). Strong expressions of political will and support for the protection of the rhino population within the Garamba national Park were made at this meeting. It is important that high levels of political support are continued and are backed up by action to protect the property.

The Mission recommends:

1. The State Party should be commended for taking urgent measures to improve the state of conservation of the property and the in-situ conservation of the northern white rhino, in particular the five year agreement with the African Parks Foundation for the management of the property;
2. The African Parks Foundation (APF) should be commended for its support for management of the Garamba National Park and adjacent hunting areas;
3. International donors and partners should be requested to support efforts to conserve the population of northern white rhinos in particular, and the management of the Garamba National Park in general. In this respect, the mission team calls on the World Heritage Centre to disburse as soon as possible its support to the emergency phase of the Garamba National Park, for which it has secured funding from the Government of Italy. The missions further suggest that UNESCO continues to work with the various donors to have pledged or are looking into providing funding for the rehabilitation of the Park, in particular European Union, World Bank GEF and German Reconstruction bank (KfW), to ensure that this funding is secured and disbursed as soon as possible.⁴) Anti-poaching efforts should be continued and strengthened, particularly in the southern sector of the park where the presence of northern white rhino was confirmed by the 2006 survey;
4. Efforts to reinforce and rejuvenate the Garamba guard force should be taken, building on initiatives undertaken to date by the Africa Parks Foundation; and
5. To ensure the efficiency of anti-poaching, it is especially important to ensure that the ICCN guard force is adequately equipped and in particular has adequate arms and ammunition.

2.4 Support from local communities and key decision makers

The mission noted that past relations between the Garamba National Park and surrounding communities have often been marked by conflict and hostility. In particular there have been some issues associated with anti poaching activities by local communities which have caused friction and antagonism in relation to the park. In many cases these reflect the broader context of extreme poverty of local communities and issues associated with the armed conflict within the region. The mission also notes the location of the park is extremely isolated and there is currently very limited humanitarian assistance and development activities taking place in the region. There is a clear and important role that donor agencies could play in this regard. The mission considers there is therefore a need to request donor agencies to increase their investment in the region, particularly in relation to supporting programmes which link development and conservation objectives and help in alleviating the extreme poverty of local communities in the region. A key activity in this respect is the rehabilitation of some of the major road axes, in particular the road linking Dungu to Faradj.

There is an increasing awareness of the need to improve relations between the park and local communities and some activities, such as the development of the small medical centre within the Garamba National Park, have been initiated and have had positive results. The mission noted that

a socio economic survey of communities around the park has commenced by Fauna and Flora International with support from UNESCO and this is creating a more positive attitude from the side of local communities towards the park. APF also put in place a so called "Anti-poaching fund", setting aside US\$ 5000 a month to support small projects in the villages adjacent to the park. Activities such as these should be strengthened and increased. It will be important that any community conservation programme will ensure a clear linkage to increased support of the local communities for the conservation of the property. The mission noted that Italy has announced some support for developing a community conservation programme through UNESCO in addition to its support for the emergency activities to support the anti-poaching. There is an urgent need to mobilize more donor funding to enlarge the scope of this planned programme.

The Mission recommends:

1. The park authorities should develop a community conservation programme based on the results of the on-going socio-economic survey. The Italian Government should be commended for their announced support for such a programme;
2. Donor agencies and partners should increase their investment in the Garamba National Park and in the region, particularly in relation to programmes which link development and conservation objectives and help in alleviating the extreme poverty of local communities; and
3. Donors should be mobilized to rehabilitate urgently the road system in the area, in particular the Dungu –Faradj road, as this is key to jumpstart local development and to alleviate poverty of the local communities.

2.5 Delisting of the Garamba National Park from the World Heritage List

With regard to the possible delisting of the property from the World Heritage List an referring to the Committee decision 29 COM 7A.4, which sets the presence of northern white rhino in the property as a benchmark for a possible de-listing of the property from the World Heritage List, the mission notes that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is not only based on the presence of the northern white rhino. This is demonstrated by the fact that the property was inscribed under both criteria (iv) and (iii). According to the IUCN evaluation, the inscription under criterion (iv) was justified on the basis of the presence of rare and endangered species. Whilst the northern white rhino certainly is the most rare and endangered species in the property, the mission notes that the property protects important populations of other key mammal species including African elephants and the endemic Congolese giraffe, which were mentioned in the original nomination file. These populations support the overall natural heritage values of the park. It is also important to note that together with Manovo Gounda St. Floris National Park in CAR, Garamba National Park is probably the last important stronghold of a number of species or sub-species characteristic of the Soudano-Guinean Ecoregion. At the same time, the Committee inscribed the property also under criterion (iii) in recognition of the superlative natural phenomena associated with large herds of elephants and other large mammals, which can be seen in such formations in very few sites in Africa.

Based on the above, the mission believes that the decision made by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th session, to associate the Outstanding Universal Value of the property solely with the presence of northern white rhino is in fact contradictorily to the decision made at the time of inscription.

However, even, if the presence of the northern white rhino in the property is kept as a benchmark to decide about a possible delisting of Garamba national park from the World Heritage List, the mission considers such a possibility is currently premature. Further efforts are needed to clarify if a viable population of northern white rhino is still present in the property and adjacent hunting areas. In particular, it is necessary to undertake a detailed ground reconnaissance of the hunting areas adjacent to the property, particularly the Gangala Hunting Area (DCGnB) and to repeat the aerial survey of the property to evaluate the presence of other individuals in the park before April 2007.

Once the final results are available, it is recommended that ICCN and APF organise a workshop to discuss management options for the remaining population, inviting all relevant stakeholders, including the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and AfRSG. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN therefore recommend the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee defer any decision on the possible delisting of Garamba National Park from the World Heritage List until its 31st session in 2007.

The Mission agreed that given the state of conservation of the property, the instability in the region and the rapidly changing situation in the field, it was unlikely that the property can be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger in the foreseeable future and therefore it was currently impossible to define benchmarks that will clearly lead to this removal. However the mission developed recommendations to the State Party which can be used by the Committee as benchmarks to support the efforts of the State Party to further improve the state of conservation of the property.

The Mission recommends:

- 1) The World Heritage Committee to reconsider its decision 29 COM 7A.4 to use the presence of the northern white rhino as the only benchmark to guide its decision about a possible de-listing of the property from the World Heritage List.
- 2) A decision on the possible removal of the property from the World Heritage List should be deferred until the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee (2007) in order to allow the State Party to conduct the necessary research to establish the viability of the remaining population of Northern White Rhino in the property and adjacent hunting areas;
- 3) The Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo) should be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

3 CONCLUSION

The mission noted that the Garamba National Park faces serious problems and that the population of the Northern White Rhino appears to be at a perilously low level. There have been recent positive developments to strengthen the management of the property, particularly through the involvement of the Africa Parks Foundation. However substantial challenges remain and increased involvement from the international community and particularly from donors is essential. Given the uncertainty that exists in relation to the exact status of the rhino population, the mission recommends that a decision to remove the property from the World heritage List should be deferred to the 2007 Meeting of the World Heritage Committee.

ANNEXES

1. Terms of Reference of the Mission
2. Agenda of the mission
3. Aide mémoire presented to the DRC authorities at the end of the mission

ANNEX 1

Terms of Reference Monitoring Mission to Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of Congo) March 31 – April 7, 2006

Background

The Committee at its 28th session (July, 2004) requested UNESCO and IUCN to organize monitoring missions to Kahuzi-Biega, Virunga and Garamba National Parks and to the Okapi Faunal Reserve. Due to logistical difficulties and security problems, these missions could not be organized before the 29th session (July, 2005) and the Committee reiterated its request for these missions to be organized as soon as possible. The Committee also discussed the situation in the Garamba National Park in detail and expressed its serious concern about the survival of the northern white rhino and the refusal of the proposed translocation by the Government. In its decision 29COM7A.4, the Committee clearly stated that it would consider deleting the Garamba National Park from the World Heritage List if the property lost its population of northern white rhino.

The current monitoring mission will be in direct follow up to a survey of large mammals in the property, with particular emphasis on northern white rhino which will be conducted during the month of March 2006 by African Parks in close cooperation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the African Rhino Specialist Group. The results from this survey will inform and feed into the UNESCO/IUCN monitoring mission as requested by the Committee at its 29th session and invited by the State Party.

Objective of the monitoring mission

The objective of the monitoring mission is to undertake a balanced and objective assessment of the State of Conservation of the Garamba National Park as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 28th session (Decision 28COM 15A.3) and its 29th session (Decision 29COM 7A.4) and develop recommendations on actions to be undertaken by the States Party to address the threats and improve the long term conservation of the site.

Terms of Reference

Determine and describe the threats to the integrity and outstanding universal values of the property, based on a field visit, review of available documents, and discussions with relevant stakeholders¹

In particular, the mission team should evaluate, based on the results of the large mammal survey planned for March 2006, the status of the population of the Northern White Rhino and in particular its viability in view of presenting a recommendation to the World Heritage Committee, to respond to decision 29COM7.A.4, on the possible deletion of the property from the World Heritage List. In this respect, the mission will review the available options to guarantee the survival of the remaining northern white rhinos, as well as their feasibility in the current circumstances.

The mission will also review the following conservation issues:

- (i) The population of other large mammals, in particular of the endemic Congo giraffe and of elephants
- (ii) The presence of other internal and external armed groups (including rebel and armed groups originating from Sudan and Uganda) within and in the immediate vicinity of the

¹ ICCN staff, staff of the conservation NGO working with ICCN on the conservation of the property, in particular African Parks Foundation and Fauna and Flora International and other relevant agencies and individuals

- property and their impact on the property as well as efforts by the DRC Army and MONUC to address the issue;
- (iii) The status of illegal poaching within the property and the impact on large mammal populations, in particular elephants, Congo giraffes and northern white rhinos
 - (iv) An assessment of the efforts of the DRC authorities, ICCN, African Parks and other partners to address the issues;
 - (v) An assessment of the current level of management of the property (funding levels, staff numbers, capacity of staff to counter the threats, etc), in particular of the extent of the property controlled by the park authorities; and
 - (vi) An assessment of future options.

The mission will develop recommendations to the State Party, to address the above mentioned threats, including benchmarks and indicators for the State Party to guide future conservation efforts and to follow up in yearly State of Conservation report.

The mission will also meet with Government authorities and ICCN management in Kinshasa and present its major findings and recommendations.

The mission team will prepare a concise report (maximum 10 – 15 pages) on the State of Conservation of the property and the Recommendations that will be presented to the Committee at its 30th session

Organization of the mission

- (1) The mission schedule will have to include visits to Kinshasa as well as a field visit to relevant areas in the property, taking into account the security situation and logistical issues.
- (2) The mission should be able to meet representatives of the Government in Kinshasa (if possible Vice President Zaidi N'Goma and the Minister of Environment, representatives of the Direction Générale ICCN, staff both properties and staff of the conservation NGO assisting ICCN in the properties, regional authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

Information Documents:

- previous Decisions by the Committee
- previous reports presented to the Committee
- report submitted by ICCN on 1 February 2006
- documentation on the proposed translocation of a small group of northern white rhinos
- Summary report on general aerial counts 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003 as well as on the aerial survey of August 2005
- report on the WWF/IUCN/AfRSG technical assistance mission (1996) on the protection and conservation of the northern white rhino

ANNEX 2

Agenda of the mission

30 March 2006	Flight of the mission team from Brussels (Guy Debonnet) and Geneva (David Sheppard) to Kinshasa
1 April 2006	Flight to Goma via Mbandaka on a World Food Programme / ECHO flight. Meeting up with Robert Muir (FZS) and José Kalpers (APF). Preliminary discussions on the programme of the mission and the logistics.
2 April 2006	Flight to Garamba National Park, Nagero Park station by FZS plane. Discussions with José Tello, Director Garamba National Park. Receipt of the preliminary results of the AfRSG survey results and discussion of the results with José Kalpers and José Tello. Evening game drive in the park.
3 April 2006	Field visit in the Garamba National park; visit of ranger posts PK15, Bac Garamba and advanced ranger base
4 April 2006	Meeting with various staff of ICCN, APF and FFI Study of background documents.
5 April 2006	Aerial flight over park Meeting with various staff of ICCN, APF and FFI Preparation of draft aide mémoire
6 April 2006	Flight back to Goma with FZS plane Discussion of draft Aide Mémoire with José Kalpers and José Tello
7 April 2006	Flight back to Kinshasa via Lubumbashi on a World Food Programme / ECHO flight, finalization of Aide Mémoire and preparation of debriefing meetings
8 April 2006	Meeting with director of UNESCO Kinshasa Office Presentation and discussion of Mission results to Director General and deputy Director General of ICCN in presence of José Kalpers and José Tello Presentation and discussion of Mission results with ICCN senior technical staff Departure of Mission Team for Brussels (Guy Debonnet) and Geneva (David Sheppard)

ANNEX 3

Aide-mémoire presented during the meetings in Kinshasa

Aide-mémoire Mission de Monitoring au Site du Patrimoine mondial « Parc National de Garamba » République Démocratique du Congo (RDC) 30 Mars – 7 Avril 2006

Le Comité du Patrimoine mondial, à sa 29 Session qui s'est tenue en Juillet 2005 à Durban, Afrique du Sud, dans sa décision 20 COM 7A.4 a demandé au Centre du Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO et à l'UICN d'entreprendre une mission de monitoring au Parc National de la Garamba. La décision précise également qu'au cas où la présence d'une population de rhinocéros blanc du nord ne pourrait pas être confirmée au 1^{er} Février 2006, le site ne serait plus de valeur universelle exceptionnelle et le Comité considérerait le retrait du site de la Liste du Patrimoine mondial. L'objectif de la mission de monitoring était d'évaluer l'état de conservation du site, en particulier l'état de la population du rhinocéros blanc du nord, afin de présenter une recommandation au Comité concernant un retrait éventuel du site de la Liste du Patrimoine mondial et de développer des recommandations à l'intention de l'Etat partie en vue de la sauvegarde des valeurs et de l'intégrité du site.

Du 16 au 30 Mars 2006, un recensement des espèces phares du parc, et en particulier des populations du rhinocéros blanc du nord, de l'éléphant et de la girafe du Congo, a été effectué par l'ICCN, la Fondation African Parks (APF) et le Groupe des Spécialistes des Rhinocéros africains de l'UICN (AfRSG), en étroite collaboration avec le Centre du Patrimoine mondial.

La mission de monitoring, composée de Guy Debonnet du Centre du Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO et David Sheppard de l'UICN a visité le site du 1^{er} au 5 Avril 2006. Les membres de la mission ont pu effectuer des visites de terrain dans le secteur sud du parc ainsi qu'un survol aérien et ont pu s'entretenir avec le personnel de gestion du site. Ils ont aussi pu étudier les résultats du recensement et les discuter avec le personnel du site et avec Richard Emslie, le chargé scientifique du AfRSG.

Lors du recensement, seulement 2 rhinocéros blancs (un male et une femelle) ont été directement observés dans le site. Aucune trace n'a été trouvée dans le Domaine de chasse de Gangala na Bodio (DCGnB). Cependant, aucune carcasse récente (< 1 an) de rhinocéros n'a été trouvée. Etant donné la visibilité difficile de l'espèce, et notamment au niveau du Domaine de chasse, il reste possible que tous les individus n'aient pas été observés. Pour le moment, il est donc impossible de totalement exclure qu'un noyau viable d'animaux ne soit plus présent dans le site. ***Il est cependant clair que le rhinocéros blanc du nord est en danger imminent d'extinction.*** Des recherches supplémentaires pour confirmer l'absence de l'espèce du domaine de chasse et confirmer le nombre exact au niveau du parc sont nécessaires. Sur base des résultats de ces recherches, le AfRSG pourra faire une recommandation sur la viabilité de la population et sur les mesures à prendre. Sur la base des résultats du recensement la mission propose de recommander au Comité du Patrimoine mondial de remettre sa décision sur le retrait du Parc National de la Garamba de la Liste du Patrimoine mondial à sa 31^{ème} Session en 2007, afin de permettre à l'Etat partie d'effectuer les recherches supplémentaires nécessaires. Cette proposition de recommandation devra être discutée et confirmée avec le Centre et l'UICN. ***Au même moment, la mission recommande avec instance à l'Etat partie une série de mesures détaillées par après, afin de renforcer la protection du site et des derniers rhinocéros.***

Le recensement a aussi trouvé un total minimum de 3839 éléphants, 8145 buffles, 2292 hippos et 70 girafes du Congo dans le PNG et DCGnB. Ces chiffres montrent une forte diminution par rapport aux estimations des populations de 2004 mais sont clairement plus positives que le recensement d'août 2005². En plus aucun camp de braconnier n'a été constaté dans le PNG

² Il faut noter que les chiffres ne sont pas tout à fait comparables. Les chiffres de 2004 sont des estimations basées sur un comptage recce (systematic sample count) d'avril 2004 et pas un comptage total. Les résultats d'août 2005 sont basés sur un comptage total, mais celui-ci a été effectué en saison d'herbes hautes, résultant en une visibilité réduite.

pendant le recensement et seulement 3 carcasses récentes (< 1 année) d'éléphant ont été trouvées dans le secteur sud du PNG. La mission a pu constater que le braconnage dans le secteur sud du parc est actuellement maîtrisé. Cette évolution extrêmement positive a été possible grâce à la reprise de la gestion du PNG par APF. La mission reconnaît l'importance de l'accord de gestion entre l'ICCN et APF pour arrêter la dégradation des valeurs du site de Patrimoine mondial. Elle reconnaît également les progrès importants réalisés depuis, notamment l'intensification des activités de conservation, la réalisation d'importants investissements au niveau de l'équipement et de l'infrastructure, la mise en place d'un nouveau système de Lutte Anti-Braconnage (LAB) avec le déploiement de 4 sections de gardes pour la LAB dans le secteur sud du parc sous l'autorité d'un expert LAB et la collaboration avec le régiment de FARDC qui a été déployé autour du parc. Néanmoins, l'instabilité dans la région, avec la présence de la Lord Resistance Army (LRA) dans la partie nord ouest du Domaine de Chasse des Azande, les infiltrations des groupes armés en provenance du Soudan, la présence de quelques groupes organisés de braconniers dans le milieu et la prolifération des armes de guerre dans la population font qu'une vigilance continue et un renforcement des efforts LAB soient nécessaires.

Afin de capitaliser les acquis des derniers mois et de renforcer la conservation du Site du Patrimoine mondial, la mission a préparé un premier draft de recommandations à l'Etat partie, notamment le Gouvernement et l'ICCN, ainsi qu'à la MONUC et aux bailleurs de fonds.

Recommandations au niveau du Gouvernement de la RDC :

- ***Assurer la protection de la frontière de la RDC avec le Soudan au niveau du Parc National de la Garamba.***

En Octobre 2005, le Gouvernement de la RDC a envoyé un régiment militaire à Aba pour contrôler la frontière de la RDC avec le Soudan, au nord-nord-est du PNG, et notamment prévenir des infiltrations de la LRA. Ces militaires sont bien entraînés, disciplinés et disposent des équipements ainsi que des approvisionnements nécessaires pour effectuer leur mission, et ils bénéficient de l'appui de la MONUC. Leur présence a une influence très positive sur le parc, en diminuant fortement les incursions par le domaine de chasse de Mondo Missa en provenance du Soudan. Il est important de maintenir cette opération et de l'élargir pour aussi contrôler toute la frontière nord du parc avec le Soudan, entre Delele et Bagbele.

- ***Améliorer l'efficacité du régiment militaire déployé autour du PNG.***

En Juillet 2005, le Gouvernement de la RDC a déployé un régiment militaire à Faradje, dénommé « régiment parc » pour assister l'ICCN dans la sécurisation du parc. Malheureusement, ce régiment n'est pas composé de troupes brassées, est mal approvisionné, ne dispose d'aucun moyen logistique et a déjà connu des problèmes de discipline. Au début de leur déploiement, ces troupes sont restées à Faradje et Dungu et ont eu peu d'impact sur la sécurisation du parc. Depuis Janvier, une collaboration a été développée avec le parc : une trentaine de militaires ont été déployés avec 5 gardes de l'ICCN sur un point stratégique d'accès au parc, et un groupe de soixante militaires a été déployé sur l'axe Dungu – Duru pour arrêter des incursions à partir du Soudan par le Domaine de Chasse des Azande. Pour le moment, étant donné leur problème d'approvisionnement, ces 90 militaires ont été ravitaillés par le Parc, afin d'éviter que leur déploiement crée des conflits avec les populations locales. Néanmoins le parc n'a pas les moyens nécessaires pour continuer à prendre en charge ces militaires. Pour améliorer l'efficacité de cette action très importante du Gouvernement, il est nécessaire d'assurer que ces troupes soient suffisamment approvisionnées et disposent des moyens de transport et des équipements de communication. Il serait aussi souhaitable qu'un régiment brassé et mieux entraîné soit déployé et qu'ils bénéficient d'un appui logistique de la part de la MONUC, comme c'est le cas à Aba. La mission recommande aussi de détacher une petite équipe de militaires (environ 60 personnes) directement au Parc, sous l'autorité de l'ICCN, pour contrôler des points névralgiques d'accès dans le parc.

- ***Assurer un approvisionnement adéquat en armes et munitions pour le PNG***

Récemment, les autorités de Parc ont reçu de la FARDC un lot d'armes, dont malheureusement une partie était en mauvais état. Néanmoins, pour assurer une efficacité sur le terrain, chaque garde doit disposer de son arme personnelle. Avec le recrutement de nouveaux gardes qui est planifié, il sera nécessaire d'augmenter le nombre d'armes en bon

état de marche disponibles pour la lutte anti-braconnage. Le Parc National des Virunga vient de recevoir des armes récupérées des militaires démobilisés par la MONUC en coopération avec les FARDC, afin de pouvoir assurer la sécurité dans le parc. Une action similaire est nécessaire pour le PNG. L'approvisionnement en munitions est aussi d'importance capitale, non seulement pour le fonctionnement de la lutte anti-braconnage, mais aussi pour assurer la formation et le recyclage des gardes.

- ***Prendre des mesures d'urgence pour renforcer et rajeunir l'effectif des gardes***

Actuellement, la majorité des gardes du PNG ont un âge avancé, limitant fortement leurs capacités physiques pour effectuer des opérations intensives de lutte anti-braconnage. En plus, 56 gardes ont déjà atteint l'âge de la retraite, mais restent en activité à cause de l'incapacité de l'ICCN à régulariser leur départ à la retraite comme prévu par la Convention collective. Cette situation est commune à travers la fonction publique en RDC. Il est important de régulariser cette situation d'urgence et de remplacer l'effectif ayant atteint l'âge de la retraite par de nouvelles recrues.

- ***Effectuer une campagne de désarmement des populations locales autour du PNG et dans les domaines de chasse avoisinants.***

A part le braconnage par des groupes armés en provenance du Soudan, le braconnage local avec la complicité des populations locales reste un problème très sérieux pour la gestion du Parc. Cette incidence du braconnage est directement liée à la présence massive d'armes de guerre dans la population, qui à son tour est liée à l'insécurité qui prévaut dans le milieu. Une sécurisation du milieu liée à un effort de récupération des armes de guerre parmi les populations locales est une condition pour pouvoir sécuriser à moyen terme le PNG.

- ***Renforcer la coopération avec le Gouvernement du Soudan pour mieux contrôler les incursions dans le PNG***

Dans le passé, les autorités du parc ont essayé d'établir une collaboration au niveau local avec les autorités militaires de la partie voisine du Soudan, notamment les commandants de la SPLA, afin de mieux contrôler les incursions de soudanais dans le parc. Avec la mise en place d'un Gouvernement unifié à Khartoum, la mission recommande au Gouvernement de la RDC de prendre contact avec le Gouvernement du Soudan, également Etat partie à la Convention du Patrimoine mondial, pour thématiser cette problématique afin d'identifier les mesures nécessaires pour arrêter ces incursions.

Recommandations au niveau de l'ICCN et d'APF:

- ***Clarifier la viabilité de la population du rhinocéros blanc du nord dans le PNG et le DCGnB et remettre en place un système de monitoring de la population***

Comme mentionné ci-haut, le recensement effectué récemment n'a pas encore pu démontrer l'existence d'un noyau viable de population du rhinocéros blanc du nord. L'AfRSG dans son rapport préliminaire préparé pour la mission recommande aux autorités du parc de répéter les comptages aériens dans le parc pour évaluer la présence d'autres individus, ainsi que de procéder à une exploration détaillée du DCGnB par reconnaissance terrestre pour clarifier la population exacte. La mission recommande que cette clarification soit faite avant le 30 Avril 2007, afin de pouvoir formuler une recommandation pour la 31^{ème} Session du Comité du Patrimoine mondial. La mission propose d'organiser un deuxième recensement aérien du PNG avant Juin³ 2006 et un troisième en Mars 2007 et de finaliser l'exploration détaillée du DCGnB avant Avril 2007.

Au même moment, il est nécessaire de mettre sur pied un système de monitoring de rhinos par une équipe spécialisée. Un tel système de monitoring était en place dans le site jusque 1998, basé sur une combinaison de patrouilles terrestres et un suivi aérien. Il est important que l'expertise déjà existant au sein de l'ICCN soit valorisée lors de la mise en place du système.

- ***Organiser un atelier sur les options de gestion de la population du rhinocéros blanc du nord au PNG***

³ Après Juin, les herbes dans le parc seront de nouveau hautes, réduisant fortement la visibilité.

Une fois que la question de la population existante est clarifiée, il est important que l'ICCN et APF organisent un atelier de réflexion sur les options de gestion, de monitoring et de conservation de la population du rhinocéros blanc du nord et de développer des recommandations pour le Gouvernement. Cet atelier devait inclure tous les parties prenantes ainsi que des représentants du AfRSG, des scientifiques spécialistes de rhinocéros, l'UICN et l'UNESCO.

- ***Continuer à renforcer la Lutte anti-braconnage, notamment dans le secteur sud du PNG et dans les blocs où la présence des rhinocéros blancs a été confirmée.***

Depuis la reprise de la gestion du PNG par APF, la stratégie LAB a été révisée et rendue plus efficace. La base de la stratégie a été le déploiement de 4 sections de gardes, composées des meilleures éléments dans le secteur des rhinos sous le commandement d'un expert LAB et appuyées par une LAB rapprochée à partir des stations de Nagero et Gangala na Bodio dans le DCGnB. Ce système a déjà prouvé son efficacité, comme démontré par l'absence totale de camps de braconniers dans le secteur sud du parc lors du recensement. La maîtrise de la situation du braconnage en peu de temps malgré la complexité de la situation actuelle avec l'infiltration de la LRA est certainement une grande réussite. La mise en place d'une « base avancée » au sein du secteur rhino est un facteur qui va encore renforcer le système mis en place. Néanmoins, l'efficacité du système peut être améliorée davantage par la mise en place d'un système de communication performant. Une meilleure coordination des activités de la LAB rapprochée dans la DCGnB et de la LAB avancée est aussi nécessaire. Le développement d'un système de collecte de renseignements, notamment avec la mise en place d'un réseau d'informateurs, est un autre élément qui est indispensable pour renforcer l'efficacité de la LAB. Finalement, il est recommandé de re-mettre en place le système de monitoring de la surveillance (Law Enforcement Monitoring). Le PNG a été le site pilote en RDC où ce système a été développé. Bien que certaines fiches du LEM semblent toujours être utilisées, elles ne semblent pas être utilisées pour la gestion de la LAB. Il est recommandé de remettre en place le LEM, en utilisant des GPS avec les patrouilles et d'utiliser un GIS simple pour la visualisation géographique afin d'appuyer des décisions stratégiques de la LAB. Comme mentionné ci-haut, il est urgent de remplacer une partie des gardes à l'âge de la retraite par des nouvelles recrues. Un programme de mise à la retraite des gardes âgés, de recrutement de nouveaux éléments et de formation intensive doit être mis en place. Le recrutement de 30 militaires démobilisés, actuellement planifié, ainsi que la coopération établie entre le PNVi et le PNG pour la formation de ces nouvelles recrues est un premier pas dans cette direction. Surtout le déploiement de 2 sections d'intervention rapide, formées récemment au PNVi à travers le programme de la Société Zoologique de Francfort, avec l'appui de l'Union européenne et l'UNESCO, lors de la formation des gardes du PNG permettra de maintenir un effectif au PNG.

Depuis Janvier 2006, la coopération a été développée par les autorités du PNG avec le régiment parc. Il sera nécessaire de renforcer cette coopération au niveau des militaires stationnés autour du parc. La Direction Générale de l'ICCN de Kinshasa doit renforcer davantage la coopération avec le Commandement de la 9^{ème} région militaire à Kisangani et avec l'Etat major à Kinshasa pour adresser certaines des difficultés rencontrées actuellement sur le terrain.

- ***Renforcer les efforts pour améliorer les relations avec les populations locales et mettre sur place un programme conservation communautaire***

Les interventions de conservation au PNG se sont toujours focalisées sur la Lutte anti-braconnage et peu d'efforts ont été faits au niveau de l'implication des populations locales dans la conservation du site. Hors, une conservation effective du site sans la coopération de la population semble peu réaliste et peu durable. Récemment, Fauna and Flora International, avec des fonds de l'UNESCO, a démarré une étude socio-économique des populations vivant aux alentours du parc. Les premiers résultats de cette étude montrent que la population vit dans une extrême pauvreté et que l'enclavement rend un développement du milieu difficile. Néanmoins, l'étude montre aussi que les populations sont intéressées à coopérer avec le parc, malgré le fait qu'ils estiment que les relations dans le passé n'étaient pas bonnes. APF a également mis en place un fonds de lutte anti-braconnage de US\$ 5000 par mois pour financer des microprojets dans les villages aux alentours du parc qui appuient la conservation du site. La mise en place d'un programme de conservation communautaire plus ambitieux pourrait aider à créer un climat de confiance entre les autorités du parc et la population. Le programme

de conservation communautaire doit se baser sur les résultats de l'étude en cours et doit être clairement lié à un appui tangible des populations au niveau de la conservation, notamment en dénonçant les réseaux de braconnage commercial existants dans les villages et en facilitant le désarmement. Le programme devrait aussi développer des protocoles d'accord permettant aux villageois de pratiquer une chasse de subsistance de petit gibier dans les domaines de chasse en respectant des quotas et des normes à définir.

Cependant, pour relancer les activités économiques dans les alentours du PNG, il est nécessaire de désenclaver le milieu à travers la réfection de la piste Faradje – Dungu. Bien que la réalisation d'un tel projet ne relève pas de la responsabilité du parc, il présente une réelle opportunité pour améliorer les relations avec la population. Il est donc recommandé que APF continue ses efforts pour mobiliser un bailleur pour prendre en charge ce projet.

Recommandations au niveau de la MONUC:

La région du PNG connaît depuis longtemps des importantes incursions de troupes étrangères, en particulier du Sudanese People Liberation Army (SPLA). Cependant, ce n'est qu'après des incursions récentes des rebelles ougandais de la LRA que la MONUC a commencé à intervenir dans la région. La mission estime que la présence de la MONUC dans la région peut être extrêmement bénéfique pour le PNG, en limitant les incursions d'hommes armés à partir du Soudan. Malheureusement, pour le moment la coopération entre la MONUC et les autorités du PNG se limite actuellement à des demandes d'information et de renseignements de la situation dans le parc et domaines de chasse par la MONUC au PNG, mais ce flux d'information reste unilatéral. Les autorités du parc n'étaient même pas tenues au courant de l'opération militaire effectuée en Janvier contre la LRA par la MONUC dans le Domaine de Chasse des Azandé, où 9 casques bleus ont été tués.

La Mission recommande donc une plus grande coopération de la MONUC avec le parc, coopération qui peut être extrêmement bénéfique pour les deux parties et pour les populations locales. A part l'échange régulier de l'information, la MONUC pourrait aider le réarmement des gardes, comme cela a été déjà fait dans le Parc National de Virunga, et pourrait donner un appui logistique au parc. Il est évident que la présence d'une force de gardes bien équipée et entraînée dans le PNG et les domaines de chasse avoisinants contribuent à la sécurisation du milieu. Des reconnaissances par hélicoptère des frontières du parc avec les responsables du parc pourraient aussi aider à détecter d'avance des incursions dans le parc et permettre la planification des contre-opérations. Il est aussi important que la MONUC appuie logistiquement le « régiment parc » et pas seulement la force de commando déployée à Aba, afin de le rendre effectif pour le contrôle des incursions par l'axe Dungu - Duru et pour éviter qu'ils utilisent la population locale pour assurer leur approvisionnement.

Pour sécuriser à long terme le milieu, il est nécessaire que la MONUC en collaboration avec les autorités locales engagent une campagne de désarmement volontaire parmi la population locale et dans les camps de réfugiés soudanais.

Recommandations au niveau des bailleurs:

Après le retrait des ONG de conservation du PNG en Mars 2005, le parc n'a pratiquement plus bénéficié des appuis financiers de la part des bailleurs, à l'exception du paiement de la prime des gardes par l'UNESCO. Depuis la signature de l'accord entre l'ICCN et APF, APF a investi sur ses propres fonds un montant important pour le redémarrage des activités. Plusieurs bailleurs, notamment l'Union européenne, le Gouvernement de l'Italie à travers l'UNESCO, la Banque Mondiale avec le GEF et la Banque de Reconstruction allemande (KfW) ont manifesté leur intérêt à appuyer la gestion du PNG. Il est important que ces fonds soient mobilisés dans les plus brefs délais possibles, afin de pouvoir arrêter la dégradation de l'état de conservation du site. Ces investissements doivent se focaliser sur une sécurisation du parc à travers une lutte anti-braconnage performante mais doivent aussi être accompagnée d'un programme de conservation communautaire, afin d'améliorer les relations entre le PNG et les populations locales.

En parallèle à des investissements directs au niveau du PNG et des domaines de chasse, il faut envisager d'urgence des actions de développement de la région. La région du parc est extrêmement pauvre et enclavée et a été complètement délaissée aussi bien par le Gouvernement que par les acteurs de développement depuis des nombreuses années. L'insécurité dans le milieu

et les incursions régulières de groupes armés a aggravé davantage cette situation. La mise en place d'un programme de développement rural dans la région est nécessaire pour garantir à moyen terme la conservation du site. Le désenclavement du milieu, et notamment la réfection de la route Faradje - Dungu est la première priorité pour amorcer ce programme.

Fait à Kinshasa, le 7 Avril 2006.

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