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**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed
on the World Heritage List and/or on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

**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**

MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION

Los Katios National Park (Colombia) (N 711)
Parc national de Los Katios (Colombie) (N 711)

22 – 24 November 2011

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document:
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant:

WHC-12/36 COM/7A.Add

**Report on the Reactive Monitoring Mission
Los Katios National Park (Colombia)**

22 – 24 November 2011



Tilman Jaeger - IUCN World Heritage Programme

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAR	Corporacion Autonoma Regional (<i>Autonomous Regional Corporation</i>)
CI	Conservation International
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CODECHOCO	Corporacion Autonoma Regional para el Desarrollo Sostenible de Choco (<i>Autonomous Regional Corporation for Sustainable Development of the Choco</i>)
CONPES	Consejo Nacional de Politica Economica y Social Republica de Colombia (DNP) (<i>National Council for Economic and Social Policy of the Republic of Colombia</i>)
DNP	Departamento Nacional de Planeacion (<i>National Planning Department</i>)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
IDEAM	Instituto de Hidrologia, Meteorologia y Estudios Ambientales de Colombia (<i>Institute for Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies of Colombia</i>)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
PA-SINAP	Action Plan for SINAP
PNN	Parque Nacional Natural (<i>National Natural Park</i>)
PNNK	Parque Nacional Natural Los Katios (<i>Los Katios National Natural Park</i>)
POWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas (CBD)
SINA	Sistema Nacional Ambiental (<i>National Environmental System</i>)
SINAP	Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas (<i>National Protected Areas System</i>)
UAESPNN	Unidad Administrativa Especial del Sistema de Parques Nacionales Naturales (<i>Special Administrative Unit of the National Natural Parks System</i>)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHC	World Heritage Centre (Secretariat of the <i>World Heritage Convention</i>)
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Non-official translations by IUCN author in brackets. Please note that Spanish accents have been omitted on purpose in place names and other terms throughout this report.

SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Los Katios National Park is a World Heritage property of 72,000 ha inscribed in 1994 and located in the extreme northwest of Colombia bordering Panama. It is contiguous with Panama's much larger Darien National Park (597,000 ha), likewise a World Heritage property, although the two properties do not constitute a joint transboundary property. The Darien Gap and the Choco Forests are part of a region well-known for its global conservation significance. Both sides of the international border are home to communities of indigenous and African origin, whose rights and needs are increasingly recognized in protected areas and natural resource management in Colombia.

Threats to the outstanding biodiversity – and the cultural diversity - include the complex effects of the overall security situation after many years of civil strife, various controversial infrastructure plans, the land use dynamics in the broader landscape and uncontrolled illegal resource use within the property.

The threats to Los Katios made the Colombian government decide to proactively request inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger to draw attention to the situation and to trigger national and international support. In 2009, the property was inscribed to the List of World Heritage in Danger by the World Heritage Committee.

The mission documented in this report is a contribution to the joint efforts to improve the conservation and management of Los Katios. Due to United Nations security concerns, the mission had to be restricted to the capital of Bogota. It is hoped that the strong efforts by the Colombian government will allow site visits in the future.

There are clear indications that the overall situation has improved and it is expected that this encouraging development will allow the removal of Los Katios from the List of World Heritage in Danger in the medium term. At the same time, there are ongoing concerns and future potential threats which need to be monitored and addressed based on existing efforts.

Despite the demobilization of armed groups, the security situation is far from excellent. While the Park Service is again in a position to operate freely in the entire Park, relatively small groups reportedly continue to pass through the protected area. "Latent" threats such as major infrastructure plans require continuing attention but most are not imminent and not an immediate concern at this stage in terms of the *World Heritage Convention*. Large infrastructure projects would face major challenges, including the constitutional protection of protected areas and legal consultation requirements with local communities. Such projects would undoubtedly spark criticism from civil society organizations from the local to the international level over social and environmental concerns. Still, given the strong interests associated with these projects and the exceptional strategic location of the region, the debates will likely continue.

There are a number of important and acute threats both in the property and its surroundings which are affecting the current conservation status of Los Katios and

require immediate management responses. They encompass uncontrolled resource use, including logging, harvesting of wild resources and fishing by residents living in the vicinity of the Park. A relatively small group of indigenous Wounaan has recently entered the Park, living in an area of the Park which they consider their ancestral land. Their land claim in the Park was recently recognized. This is compatible with Colombian legislation and protected area policies and can also be justified according to the *Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention*, provided that conservation objectives are not compromised. However, striking the balance between use and conservation remains a challenge. There is no clear-cut mechanism to define sustainable use of wild resources and agricultural practices in protected areas. Clear negotiated agreements are needed, including provisions for communication, some type of participatory monitoring and the management of disputes and conflicts. An agreement on resource use is the next step and until this has been finalized, there is on-going concern over how this newly established community may affect the property's values over time.

In the longer term it is clear that the future of Los Katios will be tightly linked to the development of the broader landscape, including the conservation status of the massive Darien National Park World Heritage property just across the international border. It is important to understand that the establishment and the reserve design of Los Katios National Park were not primarily based on a conservation rationale or analysis. Rather, the history of Los Katios is related to concerns about the spreading of livestock diseases across the Isthmus of Panama, the dense forests from coast to coast serving as a natural barrier between the Americas. When forests were cleared for cattle ranching in what is now the Park, this was perceived as risking the functioning of the natural buffer. The ranchers were bought out and the forests were left to regenerate. This history may be a justification to re-visit the boundaries taking into account conservation planning and reserve design criteria.

The transboundary setting lends itself to international coordination and cooperation, which is of course the very spirit of the *World Heritage Convention*. This is not a new idea. After all, Los Katios was originally nominated and evaluated as an extension to the Darien National Park World Heritage property. While Los Katios was eventually inscribed on the World Heritage List as a single property, the Committee is on record for repeatedly encouraging increased cooperation and eventually creating a single transboundary site. It is hoped that the improving security situation may provide a basis for intensifying cooperation.

The integrity and value of the relatively small park not only benefits from the contiguity with Darien National Park, Central America's largest forest protected area, but from the size and high conservation values of the surrounding landscape within Colombia. Within Colombia the policy frameworks developed for the country's protected areas system SINAP explicitly encourage integration of parks into broader land use planning. Los Katios, embedded within a much larger region of high conservation interest, could serve as an example to further test and put in practice the new thinking. All specific current threats are related to resource use of adjacent communities who may not have many legal alternatives to cover their subsistence and income needs. Therefore, the conservation of Los Katios cannot rely exclusively

on increased control and law enforcement but must further promote the ongoing efforts to improve the livelihood systems of at the landscape level. This will require an approach beyond the protected area, both spatially and institutionally. This is fully compatible with - and in fact called for - under Colombia's legal and policy framework starting with the Constitution.

The following recommendations are extracted from the report's main body to provide an overview. They are all put in context and explained in the text. Please note that the recommendations refer to two levels which can be distinguished for the purpose of this report.

- The long-term governance and management recommendations represent IUCN's technical view and are intended to address broader issues to be considered in the future management and conservation of Los Katios National Park.
- The second set of recommendations refers to the acute challenges which had led to the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In the sense and wording of the *Operational Guidelines* these constitute the basis of the "programme of corrective measures" against which the State Party will be requested to report. Jointly with the "Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the Property from the List of World Heritage in Danger" the corrective measures are intended to contribute to the eventual removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (see paragraphs 183 and following).

A. LONG TERM GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

(IUCN)

RECOMMENDATION A1

Continue the ongoing efforts to fully restore and maintain the security situation jointly with other actors and institutions, including in coordination with Panama to the degree possible.

RECOMMENDATION A2

Strengthen the communication, coordination and cooperation with Panama in transboundary conservation and natural resource management with the eventual objective to create a joint transboundary property.

RECOMMENDATION A3

Consider options to further embed the conservation and management of the property into a broader landscape approach and into the regional protected areas system.

RECOMMENDATION A4

Consider the extension of PNNK taking into account significant conservation values in the adjacent landscape and ongoing land use planning efforts.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS LINKED TO CORRECTIVE MEASURES**RECOMMENDATION B1**

Further clarify the status of the national and international power line projects, ensure that World Heritage concerns are integrated into the Environmental Impact Assessment, and share the results of this study with the World Heritage Centre so that it may be evaluated by IUCN.

RECOMMENDATION B2

Invest in monitoring, control and law enforcement to further implement the Action Plan "*Plan Choque*" while increasing the involvement of local communities in the governance of PNNK and promoting legal livelihood alternatives for them in the surrounding landscape.

RECOMMENDATION B3

Consider the Wounaan settlement within the property in future management planning and monitoring; and negotiate agreements for natural resource use.

RECOMMENDATION B4

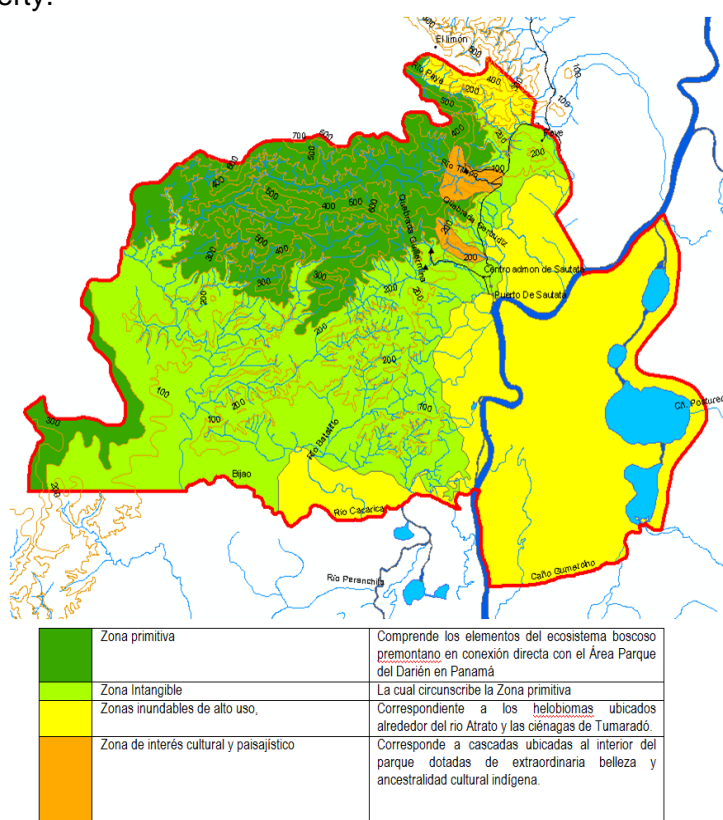
Guarantee a minimum stable number of staff reflective of the requirements for the implementation of the management plan and for the monitoring and surveillance of the property.

RECOMMENDATION B5

Ensure that the property will not be negatively affected by the electrical utilities corridor slated to be constructed nearby - an Environmental Impact Assessment in this regard is recommended.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

Los Katios National Natural Park (Parque Nacional Natural Los Katios, PNNK) in north-western Colombia was originally established in 1974 covering 52,000 ha. Following an extension in 1980 (Executive Decree No. 91), the size of the protected area is today 72,000 ha. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1994 according to natural World Heritage criteria (ix) and (x) and is comprised mostly of montane forests, lowland forests and wetlands in the eastern plains, including lakes and areas seasonally flooded by the Atrato River. The property is adjacent to the much larger Darien National Park and World Heritage site (597,000 ha) in neighboring Panama. Darien National Park, also recognized by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve, was inscribed on the World Heritage List as early as 1981 according to what today are Criteria (vii), (ix) and (x). While contiguous and functionally linked the two adjacent parks are not formally a transboundary World Heritage property.



Map 1. Zonation of KNNP. Source: UAESPNN (In: Restrepo, 2011).

Colombia is one of a globally 17 "megadiverse" countries identified by Conservation International (CI) (or only 12 according to other schemes). Within Colombia, PNNK is located in one of the most biologically and culturally diverse regions, the Darien-Choco Moist Forests. These forests are one of the WWF's "Global 200 ecoregions" and part of the much broader "Choco-Darien Ecoregional Complex" according to WWF's classification. In a major and widely used regional review of conservation priorities by the World Bank and WWF the Darien-Choco Forests of Colombia and Panama were ranked among the highest conservation priorities of Latin America and the Caribbean (Dinerstein *et al.* 1995). According to CI's hotspot approach, Los Katios is located within the Tumbes-Choco-Magdalena Hotspot, formerly known as

the Choco-Darien-Western Ecuador Hotspot. In addition to the recognition as a World Heritage property, there is clear and consistent evidence that Los Katios is situated within a (much larger) area of global conservation significance, which also includes Darien National Park.

Furthermore, the region is home to several indigenous communities. In fact, the very name of Los Katios stems from the Embera-Katio group which used to inhabit what is now the Park and World Heritage property. Descendants of this group and other indigenous peoples and communities of African descent live on both sides of the international border in the Isthmus of Darien.

For a number of years there have been strong concerns about Los Katios due to illegal extraction of natural resources, in particular timber, but also related to major and controversial infrastructure plans and the overall security situation. In response, the Government of Colombia requested that the World Heritage Committee inscribe KNNP on the List of World Heritage in Danger in an effort to acknowledge and draw attention to the serious challenges and risks. The World Heritage Committee met this request in 2009, as detailed in Committee Decision **35 COM 7A.16** (see annex B).

According to the *Operational Guidelines* danger listing implies that a property is 'threatened by serious and specific danger; and that major operations are necessary for the conservation of the property'. By proactively requesting inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the Colombian government made a positive and constructive use of this procedure under the *Convention*. The State Party explicitly hopes to mobilize national and international financial and technical support through this step.

The brief mission documented in this report is an integral part of the joint efforts to gather facts on the situation and to propose solutions to conservation challenges. The ultimate objective is to contribute to improvements on the ground which will allow for the removal of Los Katios from the List of World Heritage in Danger in the medium term.

The mission was restricted to meetings in the capital of Bogota due to United Nations security concerns. It is hoped that access to the property and thereby direct communication with a broader range of regional and local stakeholders will be possible in the future. As detailed in the Terms of Reference and the above mentioned Committee Decision on PNNK (see annex) the mission had the objectives to:

- a) Develop agreed corrective measures, and assist the State Party to develop the "Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of the Property from the List of World Heritage in Danger";
- b) Contribute to a meeting between agencies and other stakeholders in the property in the evaluation of progress with the Emergency Action Plan.

2. BROADER CONTEXT AND NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

A detailed review of conservation legislation and policies is beyond the scope of this report. Yet it was considered useful to synthesize some key documents in order to convey a sense of the conceptual development in conservation thinking in Colombia over time.

Colombia's Constitution dated 1991, overrides all Colombian laws. It includes a remarkable reference to protected areas in Article 63 of its Chapter 2 (Concerning Social, Economic and Cultural Rights). This article states that "natural parks" (parques naturales) along with a number of other "goods" are "inalienable, imprescriptible, and unseizable" (note that the Spanish language terms used in the Constitution are "bienes", "inalienable", "imprescriptible" and "inembargable"; unofficial translation into English language by IUCN author for the purpose of this report). Furthermore, Articles 8, 58, 79, 80, 334 and 366 refer to the conservation and use of natural resources. Article 79, referring to the governmental duty to conserve ecologically important areas, and Article 80 about the duty to cooperate with other nations in the protection of transboundary ecosystems are particularly noteworthy. Both articles seem directly applicable to KNNP.

Article 63 also stipulates an identical level of strong constitutional protection to communal land of ethnic groups. This is likewise relevant to KNNP as the property is surrounded by formally recognized indigenous land (*resguardos*) and other forms of communal land of communities of African descent. There is also land within the Park which was previously inhabited and used by indigenous peoples. A group of *Wounaan* settled within the Park in 2004 and has since successfully claimed formal rights to what they consider to be their ancestral land. There are numerous additional references to indigenous communities and communities of African descent in the Constitution.

In short, the Colombian Constitution provides a very strong level of protection of natural parks and local communities, as well as guidance for sustainable natural resource management. It is considered a landmark in the country's history in terms acknowledging Colombia's cultural and ethnic diversity.

Relevant legislation includes the environmental law (Ley 99 de 1993) and the law on land use planning (Ley 388 de 1997). The former is a milestone in Colombia's history of environmental management in that it established the country's Ministry of the Environment, now the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible). This law defines Colombia's biodiversity as "national heritage" and "of interest to humankind", which is to be "protected and used sustainably". Environmental protection and restoration is defined as a joint task shared by the State, the community, non-governmental entities and the private sector.

According to "Ley 388" land use planning must be based on respect for ethnic and cultural diversity and serves to optimize the use of natural resources for the benefit of

the living conditions of current and future generations. Land use plans must take into account various forms of national and regional protected areas as a form of “special management”.

In terms of policies, Colombia, as a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), has developed a National Biodiversity Policy (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente *et al.*, 1995). The policy provides an overview of the importance and status of Colombia’s biodiversity, as well as direct and indirect threats to it. The policy also establishes objectives and principles derived from the CBD objectives. These principles include strong references to both conservation and sustainable use, the cultural dimension associated with biological diversity and the need for the involvement of civil society and all levels of government. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are seen as a task and challenge across sectors and are to be linked to ongoing decentralization efforts. The policy calls for the consolidation of the national protected areas system and better integration of traditional knowledge and practices.

In terms of protected areas it is helpful to be aware of Decree 2811 which dates back to 1974, the year Los Katios was first declared a protected area and which at the time was a decisive legal reference for natural resource management. It includes a chapter on the national park system. While there is no direct reference to the *World Heritage Convention*, national parks are stated to “contribute to the preservation of humankind’s common heritage” among other objectives. Consumptive use is not addressed and local and indigenous communities are not mentioned in the context of protected areas in this early document. Three years later, in 1977, Decree 622 introduced several amendments. These include Article 7, stating that the declaration of national parks is not incompatible with “indigenous reserves”. If protected areas and “indigenous reserves” coincide or overlap, the Decree defines that special arrangements are needed for such cases to ensure the right to remain in the Park and to use renewable resources. Parks can explicitly contain “use zones”.

The normative and political guidance of the national protected areas system SINAP is today mostly based on two relatively recent documents, both dated 2010. The first of these is Decree 2372 (Decreto 2372) which guides the future consolidation of Colombia’s protected areas system as part of broader land use planning and within national conservation and sustainable development objectives. The second bears the name “Documento CONPES 3680”.

In Decree 2372 a strong reference to the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) is recognizable. This includes the overall objective, which is to establish a “complete, ecologically representative and effectively managed” system. The decree makes reference to several of the above mentioned articles of the Constitution and defines protected areas as a central element of Colombia’s approach to biodiversity conservation. The multiple public and private management categories within SINAP are defined.

The National Protected Areas Service UAESPNN is a special administrative unit under the Ministry of the Environment and has a coordinating function. The Decree

emphasizes SINAP is comprised of six regional subsystems. Los Katios is within the Pacific Subsystem and adjacent to the Caribbean Subsystem. All regional subsystems must develop regional action plans which are complementary to the national action plan for SINAP. With reference to the Environmental Law of 1993, Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR), as well as Corporations for Sustainable Development, are defined as key actors. In the case of Los Katios the relevant Corporation for Sustainable Development is CODECHOCO. This regional institution has the stated objective to work towards a balance between development and the environment for current and future generations, in particular indigenous peoples and Colombians of African descent.

The threefold objectives of SINAP are biodiversity conservation, the delivery of environmental goods and services for human well-being and the maintenance of the natural environment as a foundation of cultural diversity and societal appreciation of nature. Protected areas “may serve” to conserve material and non-material elements of the culture of ethnic groups. Article 28 specifically mentions World Heritage along with other international designations and suggests that the establishment of such sites should be given priority.

There is a noteworthy article referring to the buffering functions of the surroundings of protected areas. The management and planning in areas adjacent to protected areas must not harm the protected area and negative impacts must be mitigated. Regional authorities (CAR) must take this buffering function into account in their planning and action.

Management plans are to be developed in participatory fashion and shall contain analytical, prescriptive and strategic parts. Within protected areas there must be an internal zonation, including zones for sustainable use. Resource use must be defined in management planning and can only take place as long as it does not negatively impact on structure, composition and function of biodiversity.

The “Documento CONPES 3680” is a planning document of the National Planning Department (DNP). This Central Governmental Planning Agency under the President of the Republic of Colombia is comprised of various ministers and other high level governmental representatives. Document 3680 includes a comprehensive and clear problem analysis of SINAP. For example, there is a reference to major data deficiencies. The paper acknowledges that there is an extremely wide range of situations in terms of actors and stakeholders. It is furthermore acknowledged that local communities, indigenous, of African descent and/or peasants, are not sufficiently involved as actors in today’s reality despite the “opportunities or limitations which protected areas may signify for their land”.

While recognizing important achievements, the planning document essentially comes to the conclusion that none of the objectives of a complete, ecologically representative and effectively managed system has been met so far. The paper strongly suggests that more information is needed as a basis for decision-making. It is also stated that SINAP requires a better representation of Colombia’s wealth of

ecosystems and habitats and increased management effectiveness. The document makes the case for linking scientific knowledge and traditional approaches.

As a way forward a gap analysis as a joint effort of central and regional subsystems is suggested based on an existing national classification system of marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems (IDEAM, 2007).

There is also a strong reference to land use planning as a complementary conservation strategy to ensure connectivity of the units of SINAP. Regional environmental authorities should be provided with recommendations and be urged to establish corridors and buffer zones in the sense of a landscape approach. This section includes a specific reference to the potential for international designations, including World Heritage.

Institutionally, a high level national forum on conservation priorities deserves to be mentioned (Mesa Nacional de Prioridades de Conservacion). The forum or roundtable does not restrict its objectives to protected areas but emphasizes the need to integrate biodiversity consideration into other planning schemes. The forum is based on the conviction that there are important gaps in Colombia's SINAP system and that those gaps should be identified taking into account values, urgency and opportunities. It brings together a large number of governmental, non-governmental and academic institutions. The longer term vision is to increasingly refine the scale of a major gap analysis effort and to eventually work with regional and local levels.

Another relevant national forum or roundtable is the National Roundtable for Participation ("Mesa Nacional de Participacion") which brings together the Protected Areas Administration, regional institutions and non-governmental organizations.

In conclusion, a clear pattern in the development of the overall framework since the establishment of the Park and the later World Heritage inscription emerges. It is important to note that Colombia's protected areas legislation, policies and thinking have undergone major and ongoing changes since KNNP became a national natural park in 1974 (Executive Decree No. 172) as regards human presence and resource use. Increasing importance is given to the interlinkages between cultural and biological diversity and to the need to consider the landscape level beyond protected areas.

Colombia is in a phase of consolidating its national protected area system. Based on strong analytical efforts, there is increasing conceptual and strategic clarity, which could be synthesized as follows:

- Protected areas are a fundamental pillar of biodiversity conservation;
- The national system SINAP is still incomplete and leaves room for more effective management;
- Biodiversity conservation goes beyond protected areas and work is needed at the landscape level and across sectors;
- There is a need for a balance between use and conservation;
- Participation of local communities and all levels of government is needed;

- Regions should have a strong role in protected areas management and land use planning;
- The National Protected Areas Service has a coordinating and facilitating role.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES / THREATS

3.1 Overview

Over the last years, the State Party, as well as IUCN and the World Heritage Centre have produced a number of reports on the state of conservation of KNNP in line with World Heritage procedures. This report proposes a structured presentation of threats to reflect fundamentally different threat levels. Most importantly, potential threats which may occur in the future have been separated from acute threats which are already and concretely impacting on the values of the property.

The recommendations are structured accordingly, i.e. the first set of recommendations addresses long term governance and management questions from IUCN's technical perspective. The second set of recommendations refers to acute threats. In the sense of the *World Heritage Convention*, these are the basis of the "corrective measures" for consideration by the World Heritage Committee.

In addition to the written documents, representatives from UAESPNN Colombia provided the mission team with a detailed presentation on the current state of conservation of the property as a basis for discussion. Documents previously unknown to the mission were made available during the mission and considered in the report writing in addition to independent research.

3.2 Security situation

Both the Colombian and the Panamanian side of the Darien Gap are remote locations within the respective countries, which are difficult to access to this day. While there are no official border crossings; the boundary is known to be permeable and various armed groups, traffickers and refugees are reported to move across it. The region is of strategic importance for multiple reasons, including the sensitive international boundary, water, timber and mineral resources, the short distance between the Atlantic and the Pacific, drug cultivation and trafficking, and its function as a natural barrier to the transmission of livestock diseases. Colombia is the only South American state with direct access to both the Atlantic (Caribbean) and the Pacific giving rise to longstanding ideas and plans about a road or railway connection in this very area (see below).

Against this backdrop of a remote area of strategic importance there have been references to civil strife and armed conflict in and near this World Heritage property since the nomination dossier was submitted in 1993. The nomination document specifically mentions "social conflicts", the "presence of guerrillas" and uncontrolled crossing of the international boundary in both directions. At the time of nomination in the early 1990s the situation was described as "still needing to be resolved" and the hope was expressed that these issues would be considered in bilateral (i.e. bi-national) agreements. Later reports and Committee Decisions refer to "conflicts between armed groups", a "significant portion of the Park" being "off-limits to staff",

as well as “confrontation between guerrilla and paramilitary groups” resulting in “limited attention from the authorities” in several parts of the property (see for example documentation of 22 COM and 33 COM).

Credible sources, including UNHCR and Amnesty International, describe major violent conflict, forced displacement and movements of indigenous refugees from Colombian territory into Panama in the border area while not directly referring to the National Park (see for example UNHCR’s World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples).

There is little doubt that the longstanding and complex history of armed conflict has affected KNNP in many ways and continues to do so. One direct effect has been that conservation efforts have been impeded or reduced, simply because it was at times too dangerous for governmental and non-governmental conservation actors to operate in the region, both in Panama and Colombia. The same holds true for scientific research. Even though there has been a number of international conservation projects in the past, the security situation has served as a disincentive for investments in nature conservation and scientific investigation. Another effect of the conflicts is a lack of trust between actors, as well documented in conflict and post-conflict settings in Colombia and elsewhere.

Next to these very serious social and environmental concerns, tourism seems like a secondary issue. Still, it deserves to be pointed out that the security situation has impeded the development of nature-based tourism; a major source of revenues for Colombia’s protected areas system.

The State Party reported to the mission team that a recent agreement with the Ministry of Defense and cooperation with police led to a greater presence of patrols in the area. The meetings in the capital suggest that the Park Service is again in a position to operate in the entire Park unhindered. Five control posts have been refurbished and are now operational, and efforts are underway to install additional such posts at strategic locations, including through external support. At the same time, State Party representatives, including a security advisor of the Park Service, reported that there are still occasional movements of small armed groups through the Park, as they transit between regions. The groups were described as “criminal gangs”, which reportedly have formed after the demobilization of “political” groups.

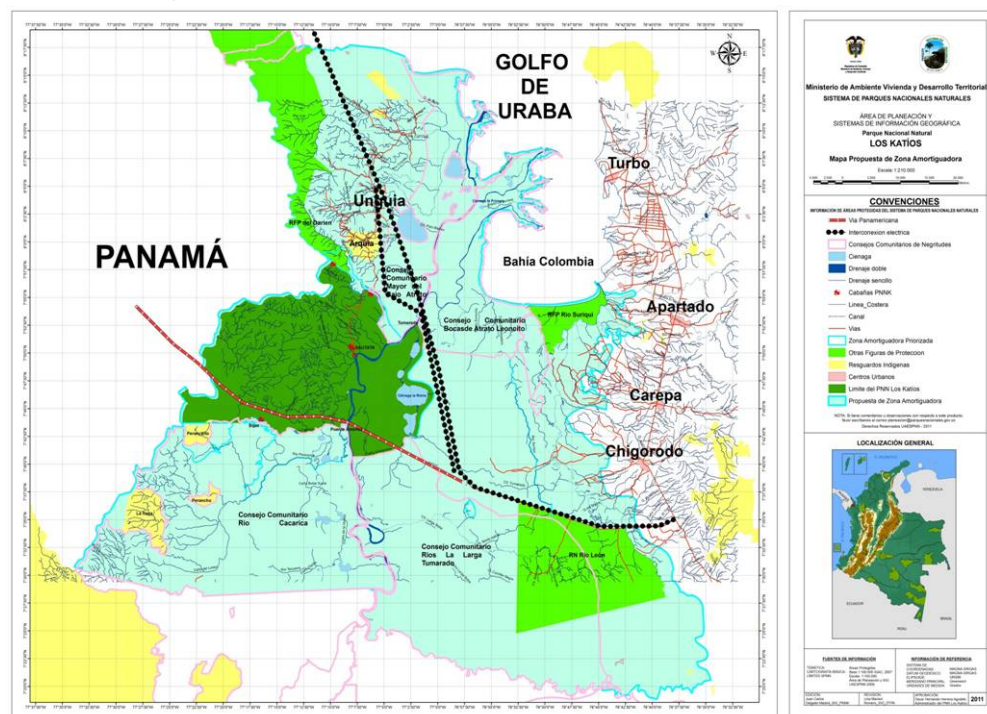
While the judgment of the security situation is difficult to make and beyond the scope of the brief mission, it seems fair to conclude that the overall situation has considerably improved after years of severely limited governmental presence. At the same time, there continue to be serious security concerns. The UN security assessment impeding the mission to visit the actual park is taken as an indication that the situation is not entirely under control. While clearly influencing conservation on both sides of the international boundary in general and the integrity of both World Heritage properties in particular, the solution to this problem is well beyond nature conservation. The situation is likely to benefit from or may even require a bi-national approach.

RECOMMENDATION A1 (IUCN)

Continue the ongoing efforts to fully restore and maintain the security situation jointly with other actors and institutions, including in coordination with Panama to the degree possible.

3.3 Potential threats from large development projects

For many decades there have been controversial proposals for several large infrastructure projects which would most likely have major direct and/or indirect impacts on Los Katios National Park, as well as neighboring Darien National Park. To the best of the knowledge of the mission team and as explicitly confirmed by representatives of the Colombian government, none of these plans appear to be imminent or close to implementation stage, except for an electrical utilities corridor. It was categorically suggested that the above mentioned Colombian Constitution would leave no room for such projects within the property. However, in the view of the mission, the potential threats deserve to be documented.



Map 2. Possible infrastructure projects with direct and indirect impacts on KNNP. Location of a possible road connecting Colombia with neighboring Panama through KNNP in red color; the black dotted lines refer to planned power supply lines. *Source: UAESPNN.*

While the likelihood of project implementation seems low, the discussions have not disappeared altogether and the possible impacts could be very severe. Furthermore, noteworthy impacts could occur without an infrastructure project being physically located within the boundaries.

Road construction

Even though the Darien Gap geographically links North and Central America with South America there is no road infrastructure linking Panama and Colombia to this day. The only missing link today in the Pan-American Highway between Alaska and Tierra del Fuego, there is still a road-less stretch of roughly 100 km between Turbo in Colombia and Vaviza in Panama. This lack of road access is certainly one of several reasons why the control over the territory has been so challenging. At the same time, the lack of road infrastructure probably has major environmental benefits by reducing commercial pressure on natural resources. The lack of roads limits access and thus the well-known secondary “door-opener” effects of road construction in tropical forest areas.

Until the 1970s, Darien Province in Panama was largely isolated and access to the Colombian part of the transboundary region was likewise difficult and restricted to river transportation. Since then road construction has advanced on both sides of the border, accompanied by strong environmental and social concerns. Social concerns were mostly related to indigenous communities and communities of African descent. IUCN is on record for detailed recommendations and a formal resolution on the missing stretch of the Pan-American Highway in 2004 and 1994, respectively (see Annex D).

The plans and corresponding debates seem to come and go. The road project was last proposed by the then President of Colombia in 2005, but did not result in any action. In addition to environmental and social concerns, political sensitivities may have played a role in the decision-making. The views not only change over time but there appear to be differing views in the two countries involved as regards the risks and benefits of road construction. Since an estimated 85% of the international border coincides with the border of Darien National Park on the Panamanian side, road construction would have to proceed through the remaining 15% of the border to avoid directly affecting Darien World Heritage property – though this part of the border is located within an indigenous territory in Panama. In the end, the road poses a potential future risk, but until there is a firm agreement on the part of both Panama and Colombia to move forward with it, it remains a distant issue. At this point, the mission is unaware of any firm intention on the part of either of the countries involved to move forward on this issue, and neither have Government representatives informed the mission that such plans were being considered. Under these circumstances, the mission considers this issue as closed for the time being, and no Environmental Impact Assessment, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, is warranted.

However, IUCN and the World Heritage Centre remind the State Party that as per Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the World Heritage Centre should be notified immediately should a formal decision to proceed with such a road be taken.

Electrical utilities corridors

The State Party confirmed earlier written statements that the permission for an electrical power line between Panama and Colombia (Conexion electrica binacional) was not granted by the Colombian Ministry of the Environment in 2010. In addition,

Colombia's Constitutional Court found that required consultations with indigenous communities outside of PNNK had not taken place and that no consent had been obtained to carry out feasibility work on indigenous territories (ruling T-129 of 03 March 2011). Despite this reassurance, a Colombian government website¹ announced that an agreement was signed with the Government of Panama in August 2011, defining the shared financing of the US\$420 million project which would consist of a 600km corridor, with an expected completion in 2014. Based on the above, it appears that this project remains active though currently held back by regulatory oversight procedures.

The State Party reported to the mission team that another electrical utilities corridor project within Colombia (Tendido Electrico Unguia – Acandi), providing electricity to communities on the western shores of the Gulf of Uraba would likely proceed. The corridor is set to pass within a few hundred meters of the property's eastern boundary, following it for a distance of approximately five kilometers. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is reportedly being carried out. The mission team recommended that the EIA focus specifically on assessing the potential impacts on the property's conservation values and integrity, including connectivity in the broader landscape. Until the results of the EIA are shared with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, no opinion can be formed on the potential impacts of this project on the property. The mission team therefore recommends further clarifications as detailed in the corrective measures below.

Inter-Oceanic Connections

As Colombia is the only South American country with access to both the Pacific and the Atlantic, there have long been ideas and debates about an alternative to the monopoly of the Panama Canal linking the coasts via a combination of a canal, riverway, road and/or railway for nearly a century. The extent to which any of these proposals have ever been taken seriously is uncertain, but the mission was informed by the Government representatives that this project had no formal support and was extremely unlikely at this time. With the current expansion taking place at the Panama Canal, any immediacy for a 2nd inter-oceanic route, let alone interest in financing it, would be in doubt. Under these circumstances, the mission considers this issue to be closed at this point in time. As the security situation improves and at a time of increasing international investment in Colombia it seems possible that such plans may resurface. The mission could not establish coherent and confirmed facts about the status of possible project plans and whether these would cause impacts on Los Katios.

Lastly, there are some reports about plans for a hydropower project named after the Tilupo River. The Tilupo River forms a waterfall in the property known for its scenic beauty and as a sacred site of the Kuna-Yala according to the Current Local Action Plan for PNNK. There is no indication of any serious proposal to this effect, as

¹ <http://www.regiones.gov.co/Mesoamerica/Prensa/Paginas/110829a-interconexion-electrica-colombia-panama.aspx>

corroborated by Government representatives during the mission. The mission team considers this issue closed at this point in time.

3.4. Land use dynamics in the broader landscape

In IUCN's view, there is little doubt that the future of Los Katios in the longer term will be strongly affected by the development of the broader landscape. This includes the future conservation status of the large Darien National Park and World Heritage property just across the international border in Panama.

It is important to understand that the establishment and design of PNNK were not primarily based on a conservation rationale or analysis, such as distribution of biodiversity, population ranges, gradients or connectivity. Rather, the history of Los Katios goes back to concerns about the spreading of livestock diseases, in particular foot and mouth disease, across the Isthmus of Panama, the dense forests from coast to coast serving as a natural barrier between the Americas.

The transboundary setting of a shared ecosystem with a common cultural heritage lends itself to international coordination and cooperation. This is not a new idea and can certainly be justified by the objectives and the "spirit" of the *World Heritage Convention*. After all, PNNK was originally nominated and evaluated by IUCN as an extension to Darien National Park World Heritage property. While eventually inscribed on the World Heritage List as a single property, the Committee is on record for repeatedly encouraging increased cooperation and eventually creating a single transboundary site (see for example the 1993 nomination dossier, 1993 IUCN technical evaluation report, the Committee Decision to inscribe the property, and Committee recommendations and requests in 1997 and 1998). There are also repeated references to transboundary meetings and a bi-national commission in the World Heritage documentation. It is hoped that the improving security situation may provide a basis for intensifying cooperation.

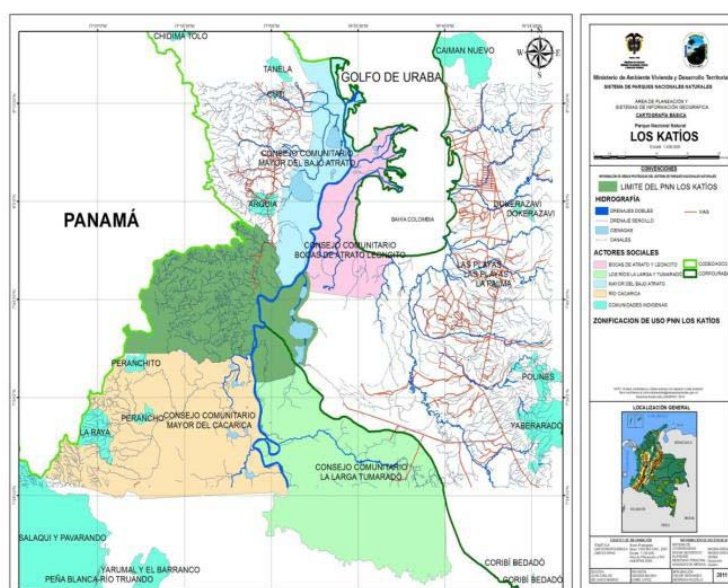
RECOMMENDATION A2 (IUCN)

Strengthen the communication, coordination and cooperation with Panama in transboundary conservation and natural resource management with the eventual objective to create a joint transboundary property.

The integrity and value of the relatively small park not only benefits from the contiguity with Darien National Park, Central America's largest forest protected area, but from the high conservation values of the surrounding landscape on the Colombian side. As detailed in a key planning document (Parque Nacional Natural Los Katios, 2011) PNNK is surrounded in its entirety by lands under formally recognized titles of communities of African origin (*Cacarica, La Larga-Tumaradocito, Bocas del Atrato-Leoncito* and *Mayor del Bajo Atrato* totalling roughly 280,000 ha). Jointly with the Indigenous "resguardos" (*Arquíá, Peranchito, Perancho* and *La Raya*) of slightly more than 10,000 ha this means that roughly 300,000 ha of land are "inalienable, imprescriptible, and unseizable" in addition to the 72,000 ha protected as PNNK). These lands connect PNNK to the coastal and marine ecosystems of the

Caribbean and the higher elevations of the Serrania del Darien mountain range, both areas of major conservation interest.

Colombia's legal and policy framework for the protected areas system SINAP explicitly calls for buffer zones and integration of parks into broader land use planning. Vice-versa, land use planning has to consider conservation aspects, including but not limited to protected areas. Los Katios could serve as an example to test and put in practice this new thinking and guidance. Literally all acute and specific current threats are in various ways linked to the livelihood needs of adjacent communities despite more complex underlying factors, such as demand for precious timber.



Map 3. Location of collective lands of communities of African descent and indigenous “resguardos”. *Source: UAESPNN.*

Improved control, surveillance and law enforcement are necessary but the conservation of PNNK cannot exclusively rely on it. The ongoing efforts to improve the livelihood systems at the landscape level are a key strategy for PNNK, inevitably requiring an approach beyond the property, both spatially and institutionally. A landscape conservation project is an encouraging step into this direction (Proyecto Paisajes de Conservacion, USAID).

RECOMMENDATION A3 (IUCN)

Consider options to further embed the conservation and management of the property into a broader landscape approach and into the regional protected areas system.

A 2003 review of conservation gaps (WWF Colombia *et al.*, 2003) pointed out important gaps in SINAP and suggested conservation priorities. The publication clearly indicates that areas of highest conservation important remain unprotected in the region, including the Northern Serrania de Darien Range in Northwestern Choco, which is adjacent to both PNNK and Darien National Park. It also covers much higher altitudes all the way to Cerro Tacarcuna at 1,875 m.a.s.l.

Darien National Park World Heritage property in Panama extends along most of the international border all the way to the Pacific Coast. By contrast, the comparatively small property in Colombia is restricted to a small section of the boundary and does not extend to the Pacific or Caribbean Coast. There is no reason to assume that the high conservation values in Panama suddenly cease to exist on the other side of the international border.

While beyond the mandate of this mission, IUCN would like to encourage the State Party to consider re-visiting the boundary design of PNNK with a view to give more reflection to biodiversity aspects which seem to have been neglected when the protected area was first established. A possible extension would in principle be compatible with land under “*resguardo*” status.

PNNK is also very close to the Caribbean coast and the Gulf of Urabá, into which the Atrato River flows. It seems far-fetched but a connection to the Caribbean Coast of Colombia, likewise known to harbour significant conservation values, would be a fascinating idea. As Darien National Park includes part of the Pacific Coast, a link to the Caribbean would complement the joint conservation complex as an effort from coast to coast.

RECOMMENDATION A4 (IUCN)

Consider the extension of PNNP taking into account significant conservation values in the adjacent landscape and ongoing land use planning efforts.

3.5 Acute threats in the property

Further to the above long term threats which in the view of the mission are not acutely impacting on KNNP, there are a number of specific and acute threats both in the property and its surroundings. They are affecting the current conservation status of Los Katios and require immediate management responses. The State Party reports that illegal logging, poaching, wildlife trade and excessive fishing in the rivers and lagoons in the eastern parts of PNNK take place. There is an advancing agricultural frontier in the Choco region and encroachment appears to have reached the Park. Commercial agricultural activities advancing in the broader region include cattle ranching and planting of banana and oil palm. There is a particular case of a legally recognized indigenous settlement within the property.

Illegal and uncontrolled resource use

Illegal logging is consistently described as a key problem in formal and informal communication by the State Party, as well as in management plans and in the “*Plan Choque*” Action Plan.

Temporary camps are set up for the logging operations and the rivers are used for transportation. People working in the camps hunt wildlife for food provision. The underlying problems are both the demand for precious timber and the limited legal income opportunities for local people. The combination of a location in a remote poverty-stricken area, limited governmental presence and services and armed conflict over many years has aggravated the problem, as control and law enforcement has long been weak or non-existent.

The mission team was informed that there have also been coordination issues between central and regional authorities. Apparently, some timber extraction appears to have taken place based on regionally granted permissions to communities adjacent to PNNK.

In response there are efforts to encourage and promote sustainable forest management based on management plans in the communities while increasing control and law enforcement in the actual park. The situation has improved in that increased monitoring and patrolling is taking place, communication with the relevant regional institutions has been intensified and park infrastructure is being consolidated, including through support from USAID and from the World Heritage Fund. The State Party indicates that illegal logging is circumscribed to relatively small areas of a few hundred hectares. While this is a relatively small area, the recently established settlement within the property raises further concerns about an increase in lands affected by logging. Notwithstanding the State Party's indication, it seems premature to conclude that illegal logging is under control.

Subsistence hunting and wildlife trade are related to the same mix of limited and at times poor park management presence and restricted livelihood alternatives. In line with the approach taken to illegal logging, the efforts to respond have been intensified. A formal and conceptually clear monitoring strategy based on a Pressure-State-Response model was also adopted last year (Restrepo, 2011). There is now an improved framework for monitoring and law enforcement but it appears to require further consolidation and investment.

In the lakes and rivers of the eastern parts of the property, in particular the Tumarado swamp, fishing is a major part of the livelihood systems, both for subsistence and income. There are consistent references to over-fishing but there is little data and the exact effects on the Park are not clearly documented. The monitoring strategy for KNNP makes a reference to a Colombian information system developed for fishing named SIPEIN (Sistema de informacion pesquera). According to this strategy, fish catch monitoring has started in the Tumarado swamps in 2011. While in its infancy, the monitoring efforts are establishing a current baseline and proving to be a positive development which deserves further consolidation. If this monitoring continues over a few more years, the authorities should be able to gauge the impact of fishing on fish populations.

The overall situation seems comparable to many Latin American forest protected areas in remote rural settings where an agricultural frontier and illegal extraction change the landscape. Illegal activities are taking place against a backdrop of insufficient governmental responses to ensure law enforcement or to promote less destructive livelihood alternatives. Consequently, a structured long-term response has to combine law enforcement and rural development.

As detailed in Chapter 2 there has been an increasing formal recognition of indigenous communities and their claims to land and resources in Colombia over time, including at the level of the Constitution. There are four indigenous

“*resguardos*” adjacent or in the immediate proximity of PNNK. Even larger areas are under collective titles of communities of African descent. The latter are incompatible with protected area status so the discussion differs from the debate surrounding indigenous peoples and parks in Colombia. While the implications of this setting for PNNK, its buffer zones and broader landscape planning are described below, the particular situation of a group of indigenous *Wounaan* is described hereafter as it concerns resource use within the property.

A group of indigenous *Wounaan* entered the Park in 2004 according to formal communication by the State Party. While earlier State Party reports refer to 20 individuals the mission team learned that this group comprises up to 151 individuals (38 families). They are engaged in subsistence agriculture and extraction of wild forest products. In 2011, they were granted legal tenure based on ancestral land claims. The granting of tenure to indigenous groups within national parks is recognized within Colombian legislation and protected area policies.

This change is of utmost importance as almost all Colombian protected areas are located on originally native lands and the implications, both in terms of risks and opportunities, are only starting to surface.

From a formal *World Heritage Convention* perspective, one decisive yardstick is Paragraph 119 of the *Operational Guidelines* which states that “the State Party and its partners must ensure that such sustainable use or any other change does not impact adversely on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property”. However, striking the balance between use and conservation remains a challenge. There is no clear-cut mechanism to define sustainable use of wild resources and agricultural practices in protected areas. Clear negotiated agreements are needed, including provisions for communication, some type of participatory monitoring and the management of disputes and conflicts.

A legally recognized human settlement within the property is now a *fait accompli*. This was not the case at the time of inscription. Both indigenous communities and communities of African descent had to leave the area upon the declaration as a protected area. The challenge will be to ensure that the activities and resource use of the communities do not compromise the conservation values. In this regard, the State Party reports that the next step is to establish a Resource Use Plan with the community, ensuring that their presence within the National Park will be sustainable and will not undermine the property’s conservation values. The opportunity seen in such situations is that the local presence of people has conservation benefits on the grounds that they are knowledgeable, in a good position to monitor change and should have an incentive to defend their resources against external resource users. In the conservation literature, there is much reference to such “stewardship” and local communities serving as a “first line of defense” against external threats.

The actual experience is more complex and it would be simplistic to assume that indigenous settlements are *per se* beneficial for conservation. Both written reports and personal communication during the mission confirmed that the State Party is fully

aware of the complexity. Negotiated resource use agreements are probably the most promising approach. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that indigenous peoples as other local communities in the Choco have suffered from the violent conflicts and have often not received sufficient governmental support. The establishment of a relationship of mutual trust between the communities and governmental authorities is likely to require much effort and time. It is not clear whether there may be other indigenous claims to land within the property in the future.

Last but not least there are recurring references to river pollution in reports. The Atrato River is the major axis crossing the Park; it links the area to the ocean and generally serves as a major transportation route in an area with an extremely limited road infrastructure. The river is also rich in fish resources. For all these reasons the river attracts boat traffic and settlements along its banks. It is credible that there are localized problems with pollution and it is desirable to address such problems. Based on the information accessible to the mission team it could not be concluded that this constitutes a major concern requiring priority attention, largely due to the fact that pollution was reported to be in the form of domestic and human waste originating from relatively small settlements located downstream from the property. However, it was also noted that some fishing practices involved the dumping of toxins into the water to stun fish. No information was provided as to the extent and location of such practices.

The large, navigable river, originating outside the property, but passing through it to reach the sea, outside the property again serves as another reminder that eventually the balance between development and conservation in the broader landscape will largely define the future of PNNK as described in the following section.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

The brief visit to Bogota made it very clear that remarkable efforts have been made over the last years to regain control of the park management. For the first time in several years, the authorities are again in a position to operate in the entire property even though the security situation is far from solved.

The most acute concerns at this point in time are the improving but still unsatisfactory security situation, the illegal or legally unclear resource use, including in an indigenous settlement within the Park. So far, only relatively small areas appear to be affected and it seems feasible to respond to the challenges based on an adequate legal and policy framework and plausible planning efforts.

A less conspicuous but equally important development is the land use dynamics of the Choco region. Los Katios is relatively small in size and despite its conservation importance was not primarily selected and designed on grounds of nature conservation. If the Park is not to become an island in the long term, the challenging issue of integrating the property into the broader landscape management will have to be addressed.

Overall, the state of conservation does not justify removal from the World Heritage List in Danger based on the information available to the mission team. The steps taken, however, are going in the right direction.

From a strict *World Heritage Convention* perspective the following corrective measures are recommended:

B. RECOMMENDATIONS LINKED TO CORRECTIVE MEASURES

RECOMMENDATION B1

Further clarify the status of the national and international power line projects, ensure that World Heritage concerns are integrated into the Environmental Impact Assessment, and share the results of this study with the World Heritage Centre so that it may be evaluated by IUCN.

RECOMMENDATION B2

Invest in monitoring, control and law enforcement to further implement the Action Plan "*Plan Choque*" while increasing the involvement of local communities in the governance of PNNK and promoting legal livelihood alternatives for them in the surrounding landscape.

RECOMMENDATION B3

Consider the *Wounaan* settlement within the property in future management planning and monitoring; and negotiate agreements for natural resource use.

RECOMMENDATION B4

Guarantee a minimum stable number of staff reflective of the requirements for the implementation of the management plan and for the monitoring and surveillance of the property.

RECOMMENDATION B5

Ensure that the property will not be negatively affected by the electrical utilities corridor slated to be constructed nearby - an Environmental Impact Assessment in this regard is recommended.

In order to further specify the management response to the acute threats, a draft *Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the list of World Heritage in Danger* (DSOC) was jointly refined during the mission. The five indicators proposed to measure the recovery of the property's values and integrity are presented in Table 1, alongside the rationale for their selection and a proposed method of verification. These indicators are:

Current threats

1. Number of hectares affected by illegal logging and hunting does not surpass 2500 ha;
2. The average size of captured fish on a species by species basis does not diminish; capture per unit effort does not diminish;
3. Resource use agreements with *Wounaan* community are completed and implemented.

Potential threats

4. The property's Outstanding Universal Value is not threatened by megaprojects;
5. The National Parks staff is able to carry out its work without disturbance.

Table 1: Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of Los Katios National Park from the List of World Heritage in Danger

	Threat	Indicator	Justification	Means of Verification
CURRENT THREATS	Illegal Logging / Illegal Hunting	Number of hectares affected by these activities does not surpass 2500ha	The forest provides ecosystem services and maintains natural ecological processes therein - these are closely linked to the OUV. Illegal hunting is closely linked to illegal logging	Monitoring missions to various illegal logging hot spots; judicial processes implemented; annual report of area affected.
	Inappropriate use of fishing techniques	The average size of captured fish on a species by species basis does not diminish; capture per unit effort does not diminish	The sustainable use of aquatic resources on the part of local communities is permitted; this must not affect the overall ecosystem.	Regular monitoring of fish capture
	Settlements within the property	Resource use agreements with Wounaan community are completed and implemented.	Application of the ILO Convention No. 169, of CBD recommendations and of the 1991 Constitution of Colombia. Recognition of ancestral rights of the <i>Wounaan</i> community within the boundaries of the property. Community participation policy of the National Parks System.	Minutes of Agreement monitoring meetings; reports from field inspections.
POTENTIAL THREATS	Megaprojects	The OUV is not threatened by megaprojects	Megaprojects might affect the property's OUV and may also lead to the establishment of new settlements near the property, leading to illegal extraction of wood or wildlife, or to agricultural incursions into the Park.	Application of existing legislation; Results of Environmental Impact Assessments; Application of Paragraph 172 of the <i>World Heritage Convention Operational Guidelines</i>
	Security	The National Parks staff is able to carry out its work without disturbance	Access to the property to carry out effective management is critical to ensuring the conservation of OUV	Reports any challenges in carrying out park management work due to civil unrest

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Los Katios continues to be part of a global conservation highlight and priority. In fact, evidence for this has been strongly consolidated since the inscription. The various possible infrastructure projects attracting attention from the local to the international level are of a very large scale. While they do not affect the current state of conservation, they continue to require permanent attention. The property is not apparently threatened by major infrastructure projects for the foreseeable future, beyond the possible impacts generated by the electrical utilities corridor.

There is now an improved security situation enabling more conservation and management activities, a better understanding of the situation and an enhanced planning framework.

The indigenous settlement within the property is sensitive and will remain a focus of Park management. A landscape approach considering conservation values and land use in the surroundings of the property, both into neighboring Panama and within Colombia will require increased communication, coordination and cooperation and integrated planning.

In the view of the mission team there is a need for further consideration and action at three levels:

Large scale projects

- Potential large scale infrastructure projects continue to deserve attention but do not appear to constitute an urgent issue.
- There is, however, a need to clarify the status of various plans for power-line projects

Broader landscape

- Improve coordination with Panama.
- Analyse land use, livelihood needs, conservation values, including connectivity in coordination with surrounding administrative units and planning schemes.
- Promote alternative or more sustainable livelihood options.
- Consolidate the buffer zone management.
- Re-visit the boundary design of PNNK.

Park management

- Increase control, monitoring and law enforcement.
- Increase awareness-raising and communication.
- Further clarify the status of the *Wounaan* settlement and negotiate agreements on controlled use.

The ongoing elaboration of the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger should fully reflect the complexity of the transboundary setting, the conservation values and land use dynamics of the broader landscape

and the status of the property within its physical boundaries. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre stand ready to further assist upon request by the State Party.

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7. USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.cepf.net>, official website of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. Contains a detailed description of the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena biodiversity hotspot.

www.dnp.gov.co; official website of the National Planning Department DNP (Departamento Nacional de Planeación).

www.secretariassenado.gov.co; official website of the Colombia Senate providing the full text of the Constitution, including all amendments and numerous laws.

<http://whc.unesco.org>; official website of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre providing access to a wealth of information, including site-specific IUCN evaluations and technical reports and Committee decisions.

www.iucn.org; website of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, one of the advisory bodies under the World Heritage Convention specialized in natural World Heritage. Technical documents on protected areas and World Heritage available for download.

www.parquesnacionales.gov.co;

8. ANNEXES

- A. Terms of reference
- B. World Heritage Committee Decision 35COM 7A.16
- C. List of people met
- D. IUCN recommendations and resolutions

A. Terms of Reference

REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION LOS KATIOS NATIONAL PARK, COLOMBIA

Mission Background

At its 35th session in Paris (June 2011), the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party of Colombia to:

Invite a joint (World Heritage Centre, IUCN) mission to Bogotá in lieu of a mission to the property if (security) concerns cannot be addressed, in order to:

- a) Develop agreed corrective measures, and assist the State Party to develop the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger,
- b) Contribute to a meeting between agencies and other stakeholders in the property in the evaluation of progress with the Emergency Action Plan;

The World Heritage Committee had previously requested a site based reactive monitoring mission to the property, but UN Security protocols would not approve UN staff traveling to the property for security reasons. These Terms of Reference have been developed to define the objectives and expected outputs of the mission.

Conservation Issues

Los Katios National Park was inscribed onto the World Heritage list in 1994. The World Heritage Committee inscribed the property onto the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2009, following a formal request by the Government of Colombia in this regard. Threats to the property's Outstanding Universal Value have been identified by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN as:

- a) Illegal logging;
- b) Unauthorized settlements;
- c) Fishing and hunting;
- d) Threats from major infrastructure projects.

The property received support in the form of an International Assistance grant from the World Heritage Fund in 2009 for the mitigation of threats (US\$30,000).

Mission Objectives

The mission objectives have been clearly defined by the World Heritage committee (see Mission Background, above).

Mission Agenda

Monday, 21 November:

Arrival in Bogota, informal briefing with national counterparts

Tuesday, 22 November:

AM: Briefing meeting with senior government representatives. Presentation on background to the mission, objectives and expected outputs, including a description

of World Heritage processes such as “desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the list of World Heritage in Danger” and “corrective measures”. Ideally, presence of high level representatives from pertinent government ministries, and if relevant, representatives of civil society stakeholders.

PM: Presentation by appropriate government representatives and other stakeholders of a progress report on the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan for the property. Identification of issues remaining to be addressed and of measures required to deal with them. The presentation could include a report on the implementation of the \$30,000 International Assistance grant awarded to the State Party by UNESCO.

Wednesday, 23 November:

AM: Working meeting on the development of corrective measures and the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Prior drafts of these texts will have been circulated prior to the mission and information obtained from the previous day’s afternoon session will feed into the discussion. Participants should include technical representatives of ministries involved in addressing the various conservation challenges identified at the property, and if relevant, appropriate civil society representatives. Ideally, the size of the group should be limited to ensure effective use of limited time.

PM: Finalization of the morning’s work.

Thursday, 24 November:

AM: Debriefing before senior government representatives. Presentation of final results of working meetings, and of the proposals on the corrective measures and Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Agreement on next steps and on the report to the World Heritage Committee. The presence of senior government officials is recommended.

PM: Mission ends.

Mission Participants:

World Heritage Centre: Marc Patry, Programme Specialist

IUCN: Tilman Jaeger

Mission Logistics:

Preparation prior to the mission: The State Party, IUCN and the World Heritage Centre will carry out some advance work on drafting the desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, and on the corrective measures, so that the time on site may be more effectively used. This will be done via electronic communications / telephone.

Mission organization: The mission participants will make their way to Bogota. The State Party is expected to provide all local transportation when there are no commercial alternatives. A mission focal point should be communicated to the World Heritage Centre by the State Party as soon as possible to facilitate planning. The State Party is expected to ensure that all necessary meeting materials are available (meeting rooms, projectors).

B. World Heritage Committee Decision 35COM 7A.16, June 2011

The World Heritage Committee,
















1. Having examined Document WHC-11/35.COM/7A.Add,
2. Recalling Decision 34 COM 7A.14, adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),
3. Welcomes the State Party's efforts in implementing the preliminary corrective measures, and urges the international community to provide further support for the implementation of these measures;
4. Regrets that, despite the State Party's efforts, the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission was postponed once more due to security concerns, and requests the State Party to invite a joint mission to Bogotá in lieu of a mission to the property if these concerns cannot be addressed, in order to:
 - a) Develop agreed corrective measures, and assist the State Party to develop the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger,
 - b) Contribute to a meeting between agencies and other stakeholders in the property in the evaluation of progress with the Emergency Action Plan;
5. Also welcomes the State Party's report that the electric power line from Colombia to Panama was not approved, and also requests the State Party to provide a copy of the detailed proposal for the development of hydro-biological resources in the Tumarado swamp, as well as any Environmental Impact Assessments or studies of the Pan-American Highway proposal, including an assessment of its potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of Los Katíos National Park and Darien National Park in Panama;
6. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2012, a report on the state of conservation of the property, including on the progress achieved in the implementation of the interim corrective measures, as well as the other issues mentioned above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012;
7. **Decides to retain the Los Katios National Park (Colombia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

C. List of people met

 <p>Ministerio del Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible República de Costa Rica</p>	<p>LISTA DE ASISTENCIA</p>	<p>Código: GAINF_SGC_FO_0003</p> <p>Versión: 2</p> <p>Vigente desde dd/mm/aaaa:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">26/10/2011</p>
<p>PROCESO: GESTIÓN Y ADMINISTRACIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN</p>		

<p>OBJETIVO DEL EVENTO:</p>	<p>Misión Conjunta UNESCO - UICN de Seguimiento al Sitio Patrimonio mundial PNN Los Katons</p>	<p>Enseñado del Evento</p>	<p>Nombre</p> <p>Mano Ferrnand Cortes</p>	<p>Grupo o Área</p> <p>Dirección General</p>
<p>LUGAR DE LA REUNIÓN:</p>	<p>Auditorio 4° Piso - DIG - PNN</p>	<p>Fecha:</p> <p>22/11/2011</p>	<p>Hora Inicio:</p> <p>9:00 a.m</p>	<p>Hora Fin:</p> <p>1:00 p.m</p>



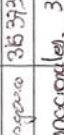
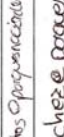
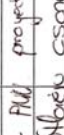
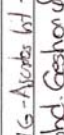
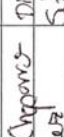

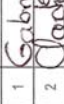




PARTICIPANTES

No.	NOMBRE Y APELLIDO	ENTIDAD, GRUPO O ÁREA FUNCIONAL, YEREDA U OTROS	CORREO ELECTRÓNICO	TELÉFONO	FIRMA
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12	Juan Carlos GARCIA	Cancillería	Juan.garcia@cancilleria.gov.cr	31085910325	
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 <p>Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible</p>	LISTA DE ASISTENCIA		Código: GAINF_SGC_FO_0003 Versión: 2 Vigente desde dd/mm/aaaa:
	PROCESO: GESTIÓN Y ADMINISTRACIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN		26/10/2011

OBJETIVO DEL EVENTO: Misión Conjunta UNESCO-UICN seguimiento al sitio Patrimonio Mundial PNN Los Lagos	Encargado del Evento: Nombre: María Fernanda Cepeda Dirección: Generoso
LUGAR DE LA REUNIÓN: Auditorio 4º piso - DIG - PNN	Fecha: 23/11/2011 Hora Inicio: 9:20 a.m. Hora Fin: 12:40 p.m.










PARTICIPANTES

No.	NOMBRE Y APELLIDO	ENTIDAD, GRUPO O AREA FUNCIONAL, VEREDA U OTROS	CORREO ELECTRONICO	TELEFONO	FRIMA
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 <p>Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Sostenible</p>	<p>LISTA DE ASISTENCIA</p>	<p>Código: GAINF_SGC_FO_0003</p>
		<p>Versión: 2</p>
		<p>Vigente desde: dd/mm/aaaa</p>
<p>PROCESO: GESTIÓN Y ADMINISTRACIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN</p>		<p>26/10/2011</p>

<p>Objetivo del Evento:</p>	<p>Misión conjunta UNESCO-UICN Seguimiento al Subio Patrimonio Mundial PNN Los Katies</p>	<p>Encargado del Evento:</p>	<p>Grupo o Área:</p>
<p>Lugar de la Reunión:</p>	<p>Asedio 4° Piso - DIG - PNN</p>	<p>Nombre:</p>	<p>Grupo o Área:</p>
<p>Fecha:</p>	<p>23 noviembre/11</p>	<p>Horario Inicio:</p>	<p>Horario Fin:</p>
<p>28:30 p.m</p>	<p>28:30 p.m</p>	<p>4:30 p.m</p>	<p>4:30 p.m</p>

PARTICIPANTES

No.	NOMBRE Y APELLIDO	ENTIDAD, GRUPO O AREA FUNCIONAL, VEREDA U OTROS	CORREO ELECTRONICO	TELÉFONO	FIRMA
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8	Gabriel Pérez Chiquero	DIG-AIC-PNN	gabriel@parquesnacionales.gov.co	314	
9	MARA F. CUMETAS	" "	maraf@parquesnacionales.gov.co	303	
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D. IUCN Recommendations and Resolutions

1. IUCN Recommendation 3.111. Impact of roads and other infrastructure through the ecosystems of Darién (Source: World Conservation Congress / Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004)

CONCERNED with conserving the biological, natural and human values that led the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to designate Darién as a World Heritage Site in 1982 and as a Biosphere Reserve in 1983;

RECALLING also that the construction in the 1970s of the existing stretch of the Pan-American Highway through part of the region of Darién triggered processes that resulted in very high annual deforestation rates and the loss of a great part of the forests in the region;

CONSIDERING that the expanse of contiguous forests centred around Darién constitutes the largest remaining mass of woodland in Panama, and that recent studies through the ecoregion of Chocó-Darién, including portions of Colombia and Ecuador, indicate that this mass of woodland, including the adjacent Colombian sectors, constitute the largest-remaining mass of woodland left in the entire ecoregion;

ALSO CONSIDERING the presence of various ethnic groups in the region and the legally formed indigenous territories, the populations of which have developed an interdependence with the land, coastal and marine ecosystems in the area;

OBSERVING the new and intensive dialogue and lobbying carried out by the Governments of Panama, Colombia and the governments of neighbouring countries, in order to build a stretch of highway to connect Colombia and Panama by land via Darién and to construct power-grid connections between the two countries as well; and RECALLING the considerations expressed by Resolution 19.66 Opening the Darién Plug, adopted by the 19th IUCN General Assembly (Buenos Aires, 1994); The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. URGES the Government of Panama and the Government of Colombia to:
 - (a) consider and evaluate the greatest possible number of alternative proposals to achieve the proposed interconnections of power supplies and transportation, including alternatives other than the immediate construction of a highway;
 - (b) publicize the considered options and call for ample consultation and debate in all sectors, well in advance, paying particular attention to the ethnic groups and indigenous peoples of the area;
 - (c) make sure that extensive evaluations are carried out on the ecological, social and cultural impact that each alternative might generate in Darién and the neighbouring regions, before making any decision about whether or not to construct infrastructure;
 - (d) make sure that the construction of the proposed infrastructure only takes place if and when an agreement is reached on the measures to be taken and the programmes to be established to guarantee the integrity and conservation of biological, natural and human values; and

(e) ensure the prior existence of official commitments and the resources necessary to execute these measures and establish those programmes in a long-term, sustained way; and

2. URGES the international financial institutions to lend their support to the above-mentioned considerations and to make sure that compliance with them is assured before financing the construction of the proposed infrastructure.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x). The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record: State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.

2. IUCN Resolution 19.66. Opening of the Tapon del Darien. (Source: Resolutions and Recommendations. General Assembly of IUCN at its 19th Session, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 17-26 January 1994)

CONSIDERING that no current, adequate environmental impact studies have yet been undertaken for the opening of the Tapon del Darien;

AWARE that the invaluable biological, ecological, cultural, economic, medicinal and other resources of the forest area known as Darien have been recognized in a World Heritage Site, a biosphere reserve and a national park;

CONCERNED that the management and protection of natural resources in the Darien have not yet provided adequately for the management of biological diversity and maintenance of the ecological integrity of the area;

CONSIDERING that the unique indigenous people of Darien and Choco would suffer an immediate and severe impact from the opening of the Tapon del Darien;

RECOGNIZING that the proposed opening of the Darien-Choco road with inadequate planning and preparation to counter its negative effects will affect not only Panama and Colombia, but also the other Latin-American countries and the world;

CONCERNED that the processes of colonization and environmental destruction caused by the construction of roads in nearby areas of Panama and Colombia have already been demonstrated to be of such magnitude that they invariably aggravate local marginalization and poverty in the short term;

CONSIDERING that it is a priority for humankind to guarantee the conservation of the Darien natural areas, given their unique biodiversity and the vital processes that take place in them, as well as their role in ultimately maintaining life on earth;

The General Assembly of IUCN - The World Conservation Union, at its 19th Session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 17-26 January 1994:

1. ENDORSES fully the position of those organizations that are opposed to the opening of the Tapon del Darien;
2. REQUESTS all IUCN members to adopt this call and to act in solidarity against the construction of the proposed road;
3. FURTHER REQUESTS them to support the appeal to those governments and financial agencies involved, to carry out a detailed public study on environmental impact with the cooperation of national and international non-governmental organizations and other governmental and academic bodies. Such a study should objectively evaluate the feasibility (from various perspectives—cultural, social, technical, ecological, economic, etc.) of implementing such a road-building project. It should consider alternatives to the construction of the road, and in the event of opting for it, should specify all the required prevention and mitigation standards and measures so as to reduce the negative impact of this project in all its phases of development (planning, marking out, building, operation, maintenance, inter alia). The study should present a thorough account of the commitments that governments, financial agencies, building and licensing companies, where applicable, and other organizations involved, have to make in order to enforce all suggested standards of

prevention and mitigation. It should also propose the follow-up mechanisms and procedures of these commitments in full so as to guarantee that all sectors of society participate in them;

4. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources:

(a) to request the Governments and financial agencies concerned to reconsider the construction of a road through the Tapon del Darien;

(b) to work with IUCN National Committees in Panama and Colombia to organize a public forum in which the controversial road-building project through the Tapon de Darien would be discussed and analyzed, thereby allowing both the participation of the international community and supporting the transparency of the consultation on the project;

(c) to work with IUCN National Committees in Panama and Colombia to study alternatives to the proposed road, including an open-skies policy and ferry service between Caribbean and Pacific ports of both Panama and Colombia.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Norway and Oman indicated that had there been a vote, they would have abstained.