The World Heritage Centre - UNESCO

Technical Mission to Ethiopia on Simen Mountains National Park and World Heritage Site 2 - 9 November 1996

Consultants' Report Including Agreed Minutes of Bahrdar Workshop



UNESCO-World Heritage Centre

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Background:

This document is the report of a technical mission by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre on the Simen Mountains World Heritage Site, carried out from 2-9 November 1996. It includes the agreed minutes of a workshop held in Bahrdar during the mission, on 6-7 November 1996, and involving about 20 stakeholders on the Simen area.

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UNESCO-World Heritage Centre Technical Mission to Ethiopia on Simen Mountains National Park and World Heritage Site 2 - 9 November 1996

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Terms of Reference of the Mission

Background

Based on the recommendations endorsed by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its twentieth session, held from 24-29 June 1996 in Paris, namely 1) to support a planning and co-ordinating meeting at the regional level, 2) to organise a technical mission, and 3) to provide financial support for the finalisation of the Simen Mountains Baseline Study, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is initiating herewith an expert mission to Ethiopia in collaboration with the IUCN Regional Office and UNCDF, which should take place in the week of 13-19 October 1996. The mission will work closely with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation (EWCO) in Addis Abeba and the Regional Wildlife Office in Amhara Region in Bahr Dar.

Objectives of the Mission

- 1. To identify the current status of the management and administration of Simen Mountains National Park and to produce a summary of current development activities and plans inside and around the Simen Mountains National Park;
- 2. To evaluate and report on the nature and extent of current threats to the Simen Mountains National Park (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1978) in accordance with the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World heritage Convention and to propose measures to be taken to mitigate threats. The review will include analysis if the site should be included in the "List of World Heritage in Danger";
- 3. To assist Ethiopian institutions responsible for the Park and its surrounding rural area in the formulation of a technical assistance request, including a planning and co-ordination meeting at the regional level. Such a meeting should involve major stakeholders of the Simen Mountains National Park and surrounding area, and its general objective is to update management planning of the Park and its buffer zone;
- 4. To provide a detailed report to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) on activities carried out, including draft recommendations to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee;
- 5. Provide a full financial statement on all activities carried out.

Executive Summary and Draft Recommendations for Approval by the World Heritage (WH) Committee

Executive Summary

Based on Recommendation 2) endorsed by the World Heritage Centre (WHC) at the 20th session of the WH Committee held in Paris 24-29 June 1996, a technical mission by WHC was organised from 2-9 November 1996. The main objective of the mission was to assist in the formulation of a proposal to WHC for technical assistance in order to support a planning and co-ordination meeting in the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP). The meeting will involve major stakeholders and update management planning for the Park and its buffer zone (Recommendation 1)).

During a three-day workshop held in the regional capital Bahrdar from 6-3 November 1996, involving about 20 stakeholders from the Centre, as well as from Amhara Region, North Gonder Zone and the Simen Mountains National Park, the following issues were raised, and a common vision was developed.

Considering the need to alleviate poverty in the rural livelihood systems in Simen, as well as to reduce pressure from cultivation, livestock grazing, and wood and grass cutting on scarce and degrading natural resources inside and surrounding the SMNP and WH Site, the participants at the Bahrdar Workshop concluded that the following steps should be taken to mitigate conflicts between the Park and the rural population:

- Initiate emergency support for appropriate road construction methods for the rural road under construction through the highland parts of the Park and along its southern border;
- Provide technical assistance from WHC for an awareness creation, planning and coordination meeting in the SMNP in April 1997, involving stakeholders and donors;
- Provide financial support to finalise outputs of the baseline studies needed for the above meeting, in line with Recommendation 3) of the 20th WHC Session;
- Initiate and implement a multi-component and multi-donor programme consisting of
 a series of project components which are designed to improve the sustainable rural
 livelihood systems in a development zone surrounding the Park, including new access roads into the lowland parts of the development zone;
- Gradually reduce human and livestock impacts inside the Park, by relocating those
 people willing to accept offers of better conditions outside the Park;
- Provide appropriate management and possible extension of the Park, by supporting a project component for Park rehabilitation and consolidation

It has to be stressed that the recommended multi-component programme implies and bases on a spatial pattern with a national park zone, a buffer zone and a development zone. Each of these zones requires a different and specific approach.

A set of draft recommendations was formulated for endorsement by the World Heritage Committee, and a request for technical assistance was developed and submitted by the Ethiopian Government to WHC for financing. A further recommendation to finalise the Simen baseline studies was made by the Bahrdar Workshop, and a request is being forwarded to UNESCO-WHC and UNCDF for joint financing by these two organisations.

Draft Recommendations proposed for approval by the World Heritage Committee

- 1. In support of the need to create awareness both at the local and the international level, and in view of the complexity of the situation, which requires a carefully co-ordinated and concerted approach whereby each initiative and measure must have its position within an overall plan, the WH Committee has agreed to co-sponsor an international workshop in the Simen area, to be organised by the Regional Bureau of Agriculture as the main institution responsible for a majority of development activities in the area, in co-operation with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation.
- 2. Considering the urgent need to rehabilitate and consolidate infrastructure and administrative set-up in the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP), the WHC is asked to alert suitable donor agencies to embark on a supporting programme to be implemented through SMNP management on the one hand, and the respective regional institutions and NGO's on the other hand, with technical advice relating to Park management provided by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation.
- 3. In view of the deteriorating situation of human livelihood and natural resources in the Simen area inside and surrounding the Park, the WHC is requested to create supportive awareness among the international donor community, in order to initiate and enhance a multi-component development programme by different donors, to be implemented in the development zone surrounding the WH Site. For detailed co-ordination of donor involvement, the Simen WHC-Workshop in April 1997 is foreseen as a suitable event to which donors should be invited. Components of the "buffer and development zone programme" are described in the UNESCO-WHC Technical Mission Report (November 1996). It is important to see that a common view on how to solve major problems was reached in the Bahrdar workshop of that mission, held on 6-7 November 1996.
- 4. In order to allow for sound preparation of the workshop, and in line with the agreed minutes of the Bahrdar Workshop held from 6-7 November 1996 during the UNESCO Technical Mission, the WH Committee has agreed to support a technical request forwarded by the University of Berne relating to the cofinancing of the finalisation and publication of the SMBS, the results of which will be used in the Simen WHC Workshop for programme development and management planning. A published report by the University of Zurich, with title: "A Survey on the Flora and Fauna of the Simen Mountains National Park", shall be ready for the workshop.
- 5. In line with its monitoring activities in Africa, enforced by the feed-back from the Bahrdar Workshop of 6-7 November that the site is actually in danger, the WHC shall emphasise enhanced monitoring and research in Simen aimed at evaluating the present and potential impacts of land use and development activities in the area.
- 6. The WHC is asked to make available and provide assistance in the form of resource persons for the Simen WHC Workshop, as well as technical advice relating to experiences in other, similar areas at its sites on sustainable conservation

and development activities.

- 7. In particular, the WHC shall contact UNCDF and invite this agency to reconsider its investment programme, based on the ideas and amendments provided by the Bahrdar Workshop of 6-7 November, particularly the Natural Resource Development Programme and a support programme for the regional road construction activities in Simen, which urgently needs environmentally sound practices and international support. WHC in principle endorses the current alignment through the Southern part of the Park. However, WHC insists that the modes of construction and the detailed alignments be changed in parts of the road already constructed, and that international support be reviewed and commented on by the WHC.
- 8. WHC shall follow up the recommendations made to the regional government by the professional expert group at Bahrdar Workshop relating to the listing of the Simen Mountains National Park as a "WH Site in Danger".

Chapter 1. Threats to the Simen Area, their Mitigation, and WH Convention's "List in Danger"

This chapter relates to the fulfilment of ToR Number 2:

To evaluate and report on the nature and extent of current threats to the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP) inscribed in the World Heritage (WH) List in 1978, in accordance with the operational guidelines for the implementation of the WH Convention, and to propose measures to be taken to mitigate threats. The review will include an analysis if the site should be included in the "List of WH in danger".

1.1. Nature and Extent of Current Threats to the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP)

1.1.1. General

It is important to see that the number and variety of current threats has many roots in an overall vulnerable and complex situation that requires special attention:

- the small size of the National Park (132 km2)
- the heterogeneity and richness in habitat and species within that small area
- the overlapping of nature protection and traditional human and livestock use
- the island character of natural habitats and ecosystem
- high human pressure in over 60% of Park area and in 30 villages around the Park, with a total population of bout 30,000 people (about 4,500 living on cultivated land inside the Park, and many more on its natural resources such as wood, water, and grass)

As a consequence, some of the larger ungulates like the Greater Kudu have disappeared from the Park area already before it was established, while others like the bushbuck in the lowland parts, and the Klipspringer in the highlands have almost disappeared due to human pressure.

The most important flagship species of SMNP, the Walya ibex, justifying the "outstanding universal value" of SMNP according to the WH Convention, had a considerable fluctuation both in numbers as well as in location over the past 25-30 years. In 1969, there were about 200 animals inside and outside the Park. In 1976, this number increased to 285 due to better protection, and again to 355 in 1983. Due to insecurity in 1989-1992, the number dropped to 230 in 1994. At present, a number of 250 animals should be a fair estimate, based on three counts in October 1994 (186 animals seen on a single day), in January 1996 (177 animals seen), and again in September 1996 (226 animals seen). This increase could be the result of reinstallation of protective measures, i.e. regular visits by Park staff to the area.

Other mammals like the Simen fox have become extremely rare, with less than five animals inside the Park. The Park's flora, finally, is threatened particularly along the upper edge of the escarpment and in the afro-alpine grassland, because of grazing pressure, wood cutting of very slow-growing Erica and Hypericum trees, and grass cutting for roof thatching. Finally, other natural resources such as the soils are degrading on cultivation land to a virtually irreversible state, and the water balance is also heavily

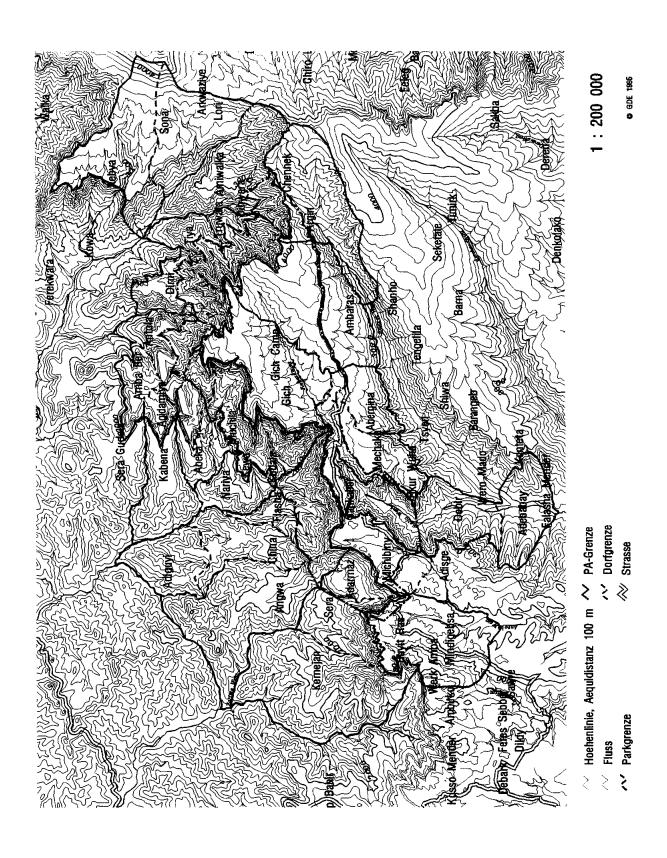


Figure: Overview of the Simen area including the Simen Mountains National Park and the surrounding rural villages inside and outside the Park



Figure: Observations of Walya ibex in 1968/69 (green) and in 1994 (red). Note that the slopes between the highland plateau and the escarpment were no more used due to human impact, and the regular distribution pattern has been broken.

distorted towards high peak runoff and sediment yield from cultivated land during the rainy season, and reduced base-flow during the dry season.

With regard to current threats the following sources have to be mentioned:

1.1.2. Land use in the highlands inside the Park

Due to expansion of the human and livestock population, and the degradation of cultivated land, important wildlife habitats such as the slopes above the escarpment are intensively used (clearing tree heather forest, cutting grass, grazing by cows and sheep). Due to this pressure in that core area of the Park the range for the Walya ibex became reduced to the cliffy habitats only, and the Klipspringer has given up large areas of the Park. The increased grazing pressure in the afro-alpine grassland, on the other hand, has changed most areas of that originally complex ecosystem with a rich natural dynamic (that is being important for the Simen fox) into a totally overgrazed short-grass steppe. At the same time, a trivialisation of the bird fauna can be observed there. Finally, considerable parts of the highland Park area have been cultivated over many centuries and are thus highly degraded due to soil erosion.

1.1.3. Land use in the lowlands inside the Park

There are several areas where nature could recover and secondary forest could grow after many villages along the Park border were destroyed and left fallow for several years (1978-1985). On the other hand, in the present growing process of these villages, the intensification of land use and the clearing and thinning of primary and secondary forest can not be overlooked. In this process, the natural patches of montane forests are shrinking, with negative consequences particularly to the larger animals (e.g. bushbucks), and the soil resource is being degraded also here. However, the pattern of land use and primary forest has increased species diversity there, particularly for invertebrates and birds

1.1.4 Threats to the human population

Inhabitants have undergone several threats during the history of the Park according to their statements recorded by SMBS. First, resettlement was mentioned again and again, with practical search of new locations for Gich Village since the early 1970's. Second, the lowland villages along the lowland boundary of the Park, from Muchila through Diwhara, were forced out in the period between 1978/79 and 1985/86. As a consequence, the relationship between the Park and the local human residents still needs considerable building up of confidence.

In the long run, however, the process of degrading and overusing soil, wood and water resources will have negative consequences for most of the local population because of the lowering land productivity at the present level of farming system in this mountainous area. Already now, some of the villages have a structural deficit in their agricultural subsistence production, which leads to annual famine periods towards the end of the growing season, before the next harvest. A continuous process of accelerating poverty is the result of this environmental degradation, aggravated by population growth. Even if the high natural values of the Park area would not be emphasised by

the authorities, local land use systems would destroy their own basis of living in the medium term. Preserving natural resources and the biological heritage in this context of degrading human livelihood systems is an even bigger challenge to the international, national, and regional community outside Simen.

1.1.5 Road Construction

A critical issue for the Park and WH Site is the rural road under construction between Debark and Mekane Berhan, leading through the Southern part of the SMNP. Plans for the road were developed by the Regional Government several years back. In 1994, UNCDF was invited to support a 120 km road, the alignment of which was planned in a first mission. Based on the fact that the new road, which should link important rural areas yet inaccessible with the main road in Debark, should lead through and much along a World Heritage Site, nearby important biomes and habitats of the Walya ibex and other important wildlife, EWCO strongly resisted the plans.

A second mission was thus initiated in May 1995, including an environmental assessment, with the objective of looking for alternative alignments not touching the Park. Results of that second mission indicated that the first alignment was the most economic, while alternatives would be as much as double the cost in construction and maintenance.

In the mean time, however, a highest-level decision was taken by the Central Government to pursue the first alignment and to initiate construction with local finances, not waiting for UNCDF funding. In 1995-1996 the first section of the road from Sankaber to Debark was constructed. The detailed alignment chosen, however, did not conform with issues of wildlife and nature protection. This particularly concerned a section near the village of Michibiny inside the Park, where the road was constructed along the escarpment and only Walya habitat, thus preventing free movement of this wildlife.

A third, high-level mission by UNCDF in April 1996 came to the conclusion not to support the road construction because of this implication with the World Heritage Site, and the feared negative environmental impacts. This decision, however, forced the regional road department to continue with its restricted means and ways of construction, thereby threatening more areas inside the Park.

A further threat to nature and to the costly arable land is resulting due to the inadequate technical standard of the road being under construction along the southern border of the Park.

1.1.6. Tourism

The increasing tourism has already reached a level which requires measures to minimise negative implications such as wastes, direct disturbance of animals, and use of wood for camp fires and cooking.



Figure: Observations of Klipspringer in 1968/69 (blue) and in 1996 (green). Note that almost all animals have left the slopes between the highland plateau and the escarpment due to human impact.



Figure: Walya ibex. Photo by B. Nievergelt

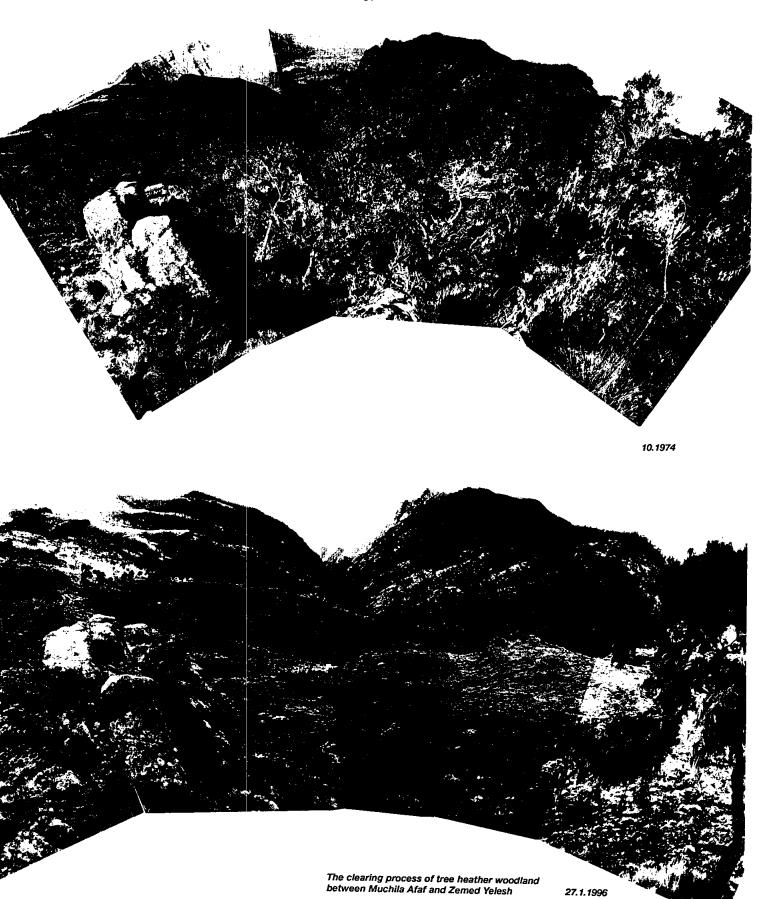


Figure: Changes in Erica/Hypericum tree stand in the uppermost Walya and main Klipspringer habitat due to hum an impact between October 1974 (upper photo) and January 1996 (lower photo, both by B. Nievergelt)





Figure: Impact of inappropriate road construction through the central Park Camp at Sankaber, where World Heritage requirements have not been taken into account. Photo by A. Mizuno, May-June 1996

1.2. Why shall the SMNP be improved?

- the SMNP, with its variety in natural habitats is an ecosystem that houses a large number of (partly unknown) animal and plant species
- the biodiversity of the area may serve as a genetic storage/pool
- the species richness in the natural ecosystem has a balancing effect in the surrounding cultivated areas, so that the potential for natural recovery is high
- the dynamics in natural ecosystems (changes in the distribution pattern of species, altitude of tree line, etc.) is indicating large-scale changes, e.g. in global climate
- comparative research in natural and used habitats (of the same type) serves to learn about the problems, and even potentials of cultivated land
- a successful protection of animals, e.g. Walya, Simen fox, Klipspringer, etc., so that disturbance is minimised or predictable, leads to habituation. Thus, animals will be easily observable.
- a national park in this afro-alpine ecozone serves to preserve the hydrological cycle of a much larger area
- tourism as an economic asset will only succeed if the touristic values are preserved
- an expansion of the Park towards the eastern highlands around Bwahit Mountain, and even the inclusion of other high mountain parts of Simen (Ras Dejen area) should be considered because of their biology and historic value in natural science
- The Simen area, finally, has outstanding importance also for research, and serves as a model of mitigating conflicts between Park and people in a high-pressure context with low economic activity.

1.3. Measures to mitigate threats

Any measures to be implemented in the Simen area necessitate a common vision on sustainable conservation and development. As there were no land users present at the Bahrdar Workshop, their vision could not be heard at this time. However, the SMBS assessed needs and opportunities as seen by individuals and groups in the 30 villages inside and around the Park, the implied vision of whom could be taken into account at the workshop. In principle a dual strategy comprising of short-term as well as long-term measures appeared appropriate.

1.3.1. Reducing human and livestock impact in the Park:

Among workshop participants it appeared to be a shared vision to see the SMNP with greatly reduced negative impact of human and livestock activities. This general goal is to be achieved in the medium term, although some measures will be needed already in the short term.

Reasons for this reduction are the need to greatly reduce the negative impact of deforestation and land degradation on flora and fauna in this unique, but small Park area of 130 km2 only, over 80% of which is already having strong human interference. In fact, in the Negarit Gazetta of 1969, the Park area was estimated to be 225 km2, based on imprecise topographic information now greatly improved.

In the short term, excessive grazing as well as wood and grass cutting should no be permitted in Walya habitat areas. (Shifting) cultivation on steep slopes involving the burning down of secondary (and affecting primary) forest should not be allowed. Hence, in the short-term, a firm wildlife conservation proclamation will be needed (and is being prepared to date), including rules and regulations, and respective laws. Also, firewood provision from primary forests, or cultivation into such forest areas, should be totally banned inside the Park. Provision of alternative firewood production might have to be tolerated even within the Park, however strictly as homestead plantations only.

Obviously, such a vision would, or would not, be shared by local land users at present circumstances, since all their livelihood depends on natural resources in the SMNP. However, it is believed that the generally worsening circumstances of natural resource degradation, coupled with population increase (a doubling within the next 25 years appears a reasonable scenario), will affect their livelihood system to an extent forcing many people to emigrate. If good provision is made to people willing to dislocate, at new places for settlement, this could have a positive pull effect. Because there will also be pressure to better regulate the use of Park resources by land users, this will serve as a push factor, at least to some extent.

The above vision was considered to be a most critical issue for improving the general status of the World Heritage Site. Thus, measures designed to achieve the vision will need very careful attention and monitoring when implemented. The principle of participation, negotiation, and free decision-making to accept alternatives was considered a prerequisite of implementing this vision. Considerable concern was raised relating to the new places where local residents of the Park could be offered relocation. As the best option, new localities would be as near to the home village as possible, i.e. within the same Peasant Association (PA). Results of SMBS show that such opportunities actually exist for about 24 out of the 30 villages around the Park. This leaves about 6 villages without nearby alternatives, hence they will be the most critical for finding a sustainable solution. Much negotiation might be needed to convince land users to move to new sites, even if attractive infrastructure would be offered there.

Another option listed was the provision of alternative employment in the short and medium term, particularly in tourism and Park management and improvement, but also in weaving, wood carving, black smith activities, or pottery for sale to tourists. Again, the Regional Government is encouraged to develop by-laws for an income-sharing mechanism from tourist fees from Park visits, between Government and the concerned villages. Such benefit-sharing of Park revenues, i.e. as much as 50-70% of the tourist fees, with all villages having land inside the Park, was considered to have great potential to mitigate and improve the relationship between Park and people.

Finally, the provision of vocational training opportunities for students, to be developed within the development zone, was seen as an opportunity to specialise with needed professional development relating to requirements of the area.

1.3.2. Some extension of Park area:

Considering the unique altitudinal cross-section with a rather undisturbed flora extending in a small strip from about 2000 m asl to 4400 m asl on Bwahit area, it was recommended to include the area between Chennek and the top of Bwahit at the Eastern

end of the Park. It is actually a key place of reference, where samples of afro-alpine flora were collected and described in the last century by W.G. Schimper, between 1838 and 1863. This land is currently used for grazing and wood-cutting, and a major trail (and the future road) are passing it as well. A further proposal was to include high mountain areas around Ras Dejen and other mountains as additional conservation areas (only outside cultivation areas), although implementation would be rendered difficult due to the even farther distance from road access.

1.3.3. Development and Buffer Zones around the Park:

Another shared vision is to support a development zone around the Park, and to eventually introduce a small buffer zone between the Park and the development zone. The development zone might eventually act as a pull factor for land users currently operating inside the SMNP area. A multi-component programme of development activities in different sectors was considered necessary for realising such idea. Because in the development zone not all inhabitants from inside the SMNP may be absorbed in the medium term, given the increasing population, a sustainable solution must be found outside the development zone as well.

The programme components in the development zone outside the Park could consist of:

- immediate support to improve the present road construction through the Park
- road access to the development zone, particularly from the northern lowlands by building small rural roads from the main highway Debark Adi Arkay
- infrastructure and participatory planning support for village development according to priority needs of the population (local clinics, schools, extension offices, small markets), to be co-ordinated between communities at development zone level
- agricultural intensification on suitable cultivation land in the development zone according to resource potentials in each village, using low-external input methods for soil fertility improvement. This will enhance subsistence food security and allow for moderate production of suitable "export" products such as citrus, coffee, cashew, mango, papaya, and other fruit tress for the growing local markets in nearby towns
- soil conservation and agricultural intensification on moderately suitable cultivation slopes in the development zone (as above, but with a one-time investment into terrace development, basically with agroforestry systems)
- participatory community land use planning in those villages and PAs which are
 mostly outside the SMNP, but have land inside. This land, once the latter zone has a
 higher productivity, would have to be rezoned into natural areas, in order to accommodate all land users in the development zone, with the possibility of alleviating
 the Park from human and livestock pressure
- eventual preparation of sites where people from inside the SMNP could be offered alternative farmland within their PA outside the Park
- natural rehabilitation on rezoned land inside the Park and the buffer zone, i.e. reforestation with indigenous tree species where appropriate
- small-scale irrigation to provide specific support for local intensification of cash crops
- Experimentation, monitoring, staff training and specific education for the rural population, as well as impact assessments for all components of the programme

Simen Conservation and Development Programme (SCDP): Proposed Management Zones

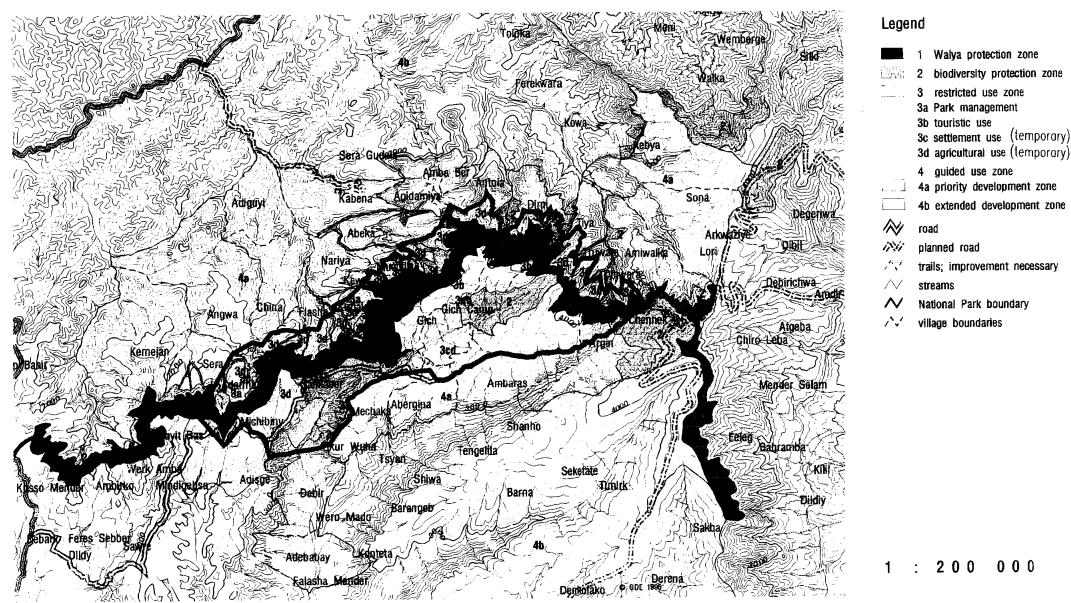




Figure:
Steep mountain slopes are used in the lowland parts of the Park for cultivation of cereals. Photo H. Hurni, October 1994

1.3.4. Appropriate Use of the Park

Relating to Park administration, tourism, research and infrastructure development, it was agreed that also there the principle of minimum impact on nature should be followed, including the effort to maintain the aesthetic beauty of the area as a touristic value.

1.3.5. Road Construction Through the Park

Taking the government decision to provide access to remote areas of Simen by choosing the apparently most economic alignment leading through Sankaber and the Southern part of the Park, observations and reports on the constructed parts of the road showed that it is necessary and urgent to better co-ordinate alignment, design, method of construction, and support structures to the road. Particularly, the need for an adjustment of the present alignment in the area of Michibiny village, about 4 km away from the Walya habitat and following the old trail, was seen indispensable provided that the Rural Roads Department would get support for improved standards of construction. In addition, no blasting, heavy machinery, road camps, quarries, or excessive cuts should be allowed in the Park. Mountain standards of alignment and construction should be applied throughout. Features of natural history such as important habitats and vegetational features should be fully respected. Geologic history monuments such as moraines, which are rare and unique in Ethiopia, should not be traversed. Eventually, the construction of a tunnel at the top part of Bwahit mountain (as proposed by UNCDF) should be envisaged if access to the Mesheha Valley and to Beyeda is planned. This would allow the Walya habitat to remain untouched in this area, which otherwise would be cut into to "island" parts.

The participants are convinced that much additional expertise will be needed at shortest notice in order to assist the local construction to meet these international standards in such a unique WH Site.

1.4. Should the SMNP be listed in UNESCO-WH Convention's "List of World Heritage in Danger"?

Given the current and imminent threats described in the above sections, participants were convinced that the site should be included in the List.

In particular, the following issues would justify this recommendation (according to the Operational Guidelines of WHC):

- The SMNP is listed as World Heritage Site since 1978
- Serious and specific danger exists from the intensifying human use of over 80% of the Park area, including degradation processes of fauna, flora, and natural resources, which must be considered at stake. Although through presently existing protective measures the Walya ibex might recover in number, other larger mammals, invertebrates and plants are impacted to a great extent. Documentation on studies carried out recently, both on flora and fauna as well as on people, natural resources and land use, should be urgently finalised and made available to regional authorities for decision-making.
- Operations necessary for mitigation activities as described above would necessitate an annual input into the Park and the surrounding development zone in the order of estimated US \$ 1-3 million per year, assuming a target area of 3-500 km2, a population of 30-50,000 people, the additional road improvement, and the Park management component. Obviously, further detailed planning by donors which are interested to embark on one or more components of the programme will be needed.
- Although many of these threats were already existing at the time when the last management plan was discussed, i.e. in 1983, lack of appropriate action over the past 10 years, aggravated by the population increase in the area of about 30% in that same period, indicate that the urgency was in fact accelerated despite many positive government actions in the recent past.

Several concerns, however, were raised during the Workshop discussion relating to the proposed inclusion of the SMNP in WH Convention's "List in Danger". Would this listing not have negative connotations on current government efforts to create awareness, develop access, and improve Park infrastructure, while at the same time ibex numbers appear to be increasing?

The external consultants expressed their views that on the contrary, such listing would stimulate international attention on support needed to safeguard the area in a comprehensive, multi-component programme, which puts much emphasis on human livelihoods and economic improvement. For example, project proposals could relate to the fact of an endangered Park and thus be easier acceptable to donors. In the consultants' view, it would even do more harm if the site would not be put on the "List of WH Sites in Danger", because it may eventually be removed from the World Heritage List because it may soon have lost its outstanding value for which it was selected.

A majority of participants endorsed the recommendation that the SMNP should be listed as a "WH Site in Danger". This recommendation is forwarded to the Regional Government and to the Central Government through EWCO, because the final decision and request to UNESCO will have to be endorsed by these institutions.

The workshop participants further recommended that the studies which deal with the problem and possible solutions of Simen, be finalised and made available to these institutions for decision-making within the next months. The participants also recommended that UNESCO-WHC follows this matter with regular monitoring and evaluation, to keep the Simen area in the List of World Heritage Sites before it has lost its unique universal value.

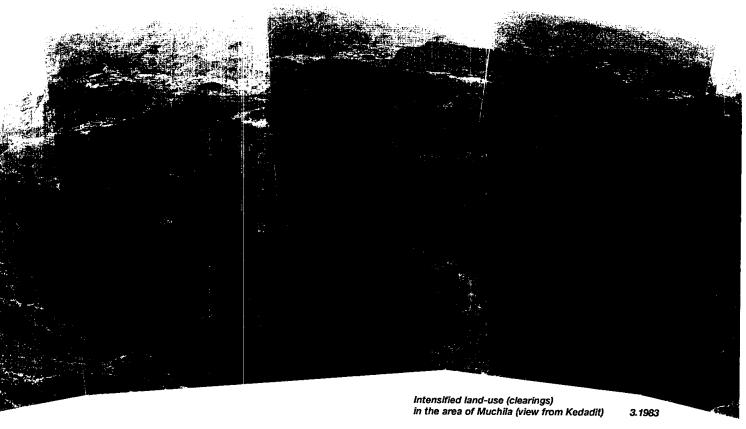




Figure: Lowland parts of SMNP used for shifting cultivation. Although a centuryold practice, recent pressure on last forest resources inside the Park make this activity unsustainable in the medium term. Photo by B. Nievergelt, 1983 (upper) and 1996 (lower)





Impressions from the Bahrdar Workshop 6-7 November 1996

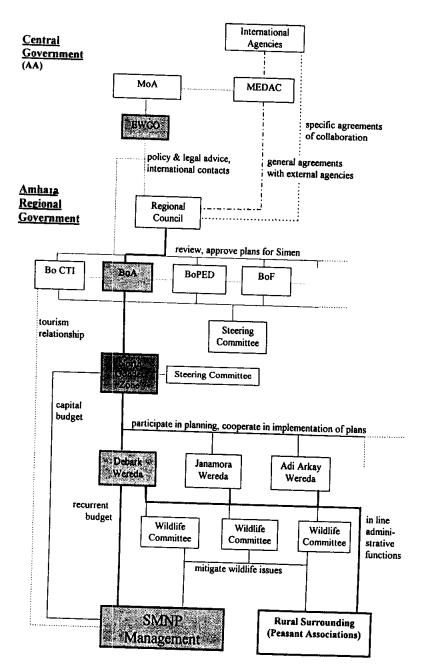
Chapter 2. Status of Management and Development Plans

This chapter relates to the fulfilment of ToR Number 1:

To identify the current status of the management and administration of Simen Mountains National Park and to produce a summary of current development activities and plans inside and around the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP)

2.1. Current status of the management and administration of the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP)

During the Bahrdar Workshop, the following organigram was developed based on information from the participants:



Explanations to the "Organigram":

The full responsibility for managing the SMNP has been transferred from EWCO to the regional BoA in 1996, and the structure legally approved by Region 3. Capital and recurrent budgets could be obtained from the Region for the current budget year July 1996 to June 1997. While the capital budget of Ethiopian Birr 144,000 (about. US \$ 22,000) is co-ordinated between SMNP and North Gonder Zone, the recurrent budget of 133,000 Eth. Birr (about US \$ 21,000) is administered through Debark Wereda.

Technically, the SMNP management is accountable directly to the regional BoA for the day-to-day management routine, although technical advice is also given from EWCO to SMNP directly, through radio communication. EWCO sees itself as technical backstopping agency, also providing legal advice through proclamations relating to wildlife development, and making the liaison to international agencies and donors. General agreements between international agencies and Ethiopia are handled through MEDAC, while follow-up agreements can be directly made between the international agency and Region 3 (Council).

For development programmes to be implemented within the area, it was considered necessary to create semi-autonomous management bodies, which will have to be coordinated in a common management unit, but administered separately in order to ease implementation. This particularly relates to activities in the development zone outside the Park, while inside the Park the Park authorities will have to take this reponsibility of co-ordination.

Steering Committees relating to programmes in Simen (Park and surrounding rural area) exist at Wereda and Zonal levels. The three Weredas sharing the SMNP area among themselves, also have steering committees which act according to guidelines provided by the Zonal and Regional Committees.

A Steering Committee at regional level will have to deal with major issues relating to all activities in the area.

Because of the World Heritage designation of the Simen area and the urgency to undertake co-ordinated action, the workshop participants recommended that the BoA, being the lead agency for implementation, should be responsible for the Secretariat of the Steering Committee, and that the Regional Council should chair the Committee at the regional level.

Furthermore, the Workshop participants strongly recommended that the Regional Steering Committee should look into benefit-sharing mechanisms for revenues from tourism to Simen. They considered it important that more than half of the revenues be directly made available to all communities which have a share of their land inside the Park.

2.2. Summary of current development activities and plans inside and around the Simen Mountains National Park (SMNP)

Note: The following inputs are not based on actual documentation available to the workshop participants, but on oral inputs of persons directly or indirectly involved in these activities and planning.

2.2.1. Inside the SMNP

(a) Park rehabilitation:

UNESCO inputs through the UNDP wildlife rehabilitation programme amounting to US \$ 50,000 were used to re-establish most of the destroyed houses in the highland camps of the SMNP (Sankaber, Gich, and Chennek). Some additional US \$ 20,000 were invested from UNDP to date for continuing the construction works. A considerable additional capital input will be needed to rehabilitate all camps of SMNP, particularly also those in the lowlands (Dirni, Muchila, and Adarmaz).

The workshop participants recommended to seek funding for these capital investments.

(b) Park consolidation:

In addition to the rehabilitation works, the camps will have to be enhanced according to a consolidated management plan, relating to tourist facilities, an exhibition and information hall, and a Park entrance gate. Although funding is open, UNDP has been approached. Furthermore, through the GEF country allocation, Ethiopia may receive as much as US \$ 300,000 for all its protected areas, particularly to support enabling activities towards Park development.

Furthermore, an agreement has been developed between Austrian Aid and the Ethiopian Government, amounting to approximately US \$ 500,000, including a Park component for the development of ecotourism and respective equipment, and a livestock development component outside the Park.

The workshop participants recommended to develop a single specific component of the Simen programme which should particularly focus on these investments inside the Park, including accompanying activities on training and education, which are needed at all levels.

(c) Road construction:

Problems of planning and construction of the road Debark - Mekane Birhan leading through parts of the Park have been described in Section 1.1.(d) above, and mitigation activities listed in 1.3.5.

Concerning the general alignment through the Park, the external consultants argued that larger ungulates like the Walya ibex are able to learn quickly, and that a road may not threaten them if they are not hunted. Also, it was stated that the road will also serve to have better access and control over the Park, and that tourism can be enhanced. One point of concern, however, was the need for establishing a set of rules and

regulations for management of traffic and related development, including tourism, in relation to Park requirements.

The workshop participants, with their expert knowledge on the issue and area, concluded that the present alignment is acceptable in principle, and that UNESCO-WHC should be made aware of this statement. At the same time the Bahrdar workshop concluded that negative environmental impacts may be outweighed by potential benefits, particularly in the preservation of the Park habitats and wildlife. However, this statement assumes that the road is constructed with best standards of a mountain road, and an alignment which takes the specific requirements of a World Heritage Site into account.

In particular,

- no quarries and road camps should be established inside the Park
- no excavations should be pushed over the edge of the road. Instead, dump truck deposition methods should be applied
- no heavy explosives should be used. Instead, as much as possible, manual labour and small machinery should be employed
- the alignment should be approved by wildlife and conservation experts before construction.

Thirdly, there is immediate need that the Regional Rural Roads Department be supported to enhance its skills, tools, and financial inputs into this important road. The workshop participants recommended that UNCDF, and other donors, be invited again, indicating the urgent need to reconsider an involvement in the highland road, because improvements in the mode of construction and detailed alignment is of utmost importance to reduce present threats of damage.

2.2.2. Around the SMNP

While no immediate implementation has taken place in the surroundings of the Park to date, development plans have been furthered to some extent.

For example, the Wereda Development Fund, to be funded by UNCDF, is nearing Government agreement. This programme component will enhance infrastructure development such as schools, clinics, etc., based on community requirements in needing Weredas of North Gonder Zone including the Simen area. An amount of about US \$ 4 million is earmarked for this activity.

As mentioned above, Austrian Aid is said to intend to implement a livestock development programme in the development zone around the Park, although no details were available to judge the possible impact of that programme.

UNDP, through its wildlife rehabilitation programme, finally, is making small investments into a school near the Park, in the village of Abergina, thus enabling Park staff to send their children to a school.

UNCDF, as a third component of their programme plans for Simen, prepared an agroforestry development project to be implemented in the villages surrounding the Park. Several planning mission were sent to the area, and a co-ordination workshop

was held with farmers, weredea, zonal, regional, national and international stakeholders in February 1995 in Gonder. At that meeting, conflicting views over the idea to carry out development activities with villages, not only outside, but also inside the Park, could not be resolved satisfactorily. In addition, mission reports indicated that objectives might not be achieved given the ruggedness and remoteness of the area. Recently, UNCDF indicated that preparations are at a standstill because of these factors.

The workshop participants, based on the descriptions provided in Section 1.3.3., did not share this opinion, but indicated that a multi-component programme in the area would have realistic chances of success provided that scientific information is made available and that co-ordinated planning is being carried out. Such a programme should clearly differentiate between activities to be implemented inside the Park in a separate component of rehabilitation, consolidation, and education, and activities outside the buffer zone, in a development zone to be determined during the Simen WHC Workshop envisaged for April 1997.

The workshop participants thus recommended that UNCDF should also be invited to resume its preparations of the "agroforestry project" by reformulating objectives and activities towards the multi-component programme described above.

Finally, the workshop participants recommended that the WHC invites potential international donors to participate in this Simen programme, and that the request to WHC for technical support be treated with highest priority in order to allow such concerted action.

Chapter 3. Proposed Simen WHC Workshop of April 1997

This chapter relates to the fulfilment of ToR Number 3:

To assist Ethiopian institutions responsible for the Park and its surrounding rural area in the formulation of a technical assistance request, including a planning and coordination meeting at the regional level. Such a meeting should involve major stakeholders of Simen Mountains national Park and surrounding area, and its general objective is to update management planning of the SMNP and its buffer zone.

A request for technical co-operation with WHC was developed during the Bahrdar workshop and will be submitted to UNESCO-WH Convention for consideration at its 27th meeting in November 1996 in Mexico. The submission should thus be processed through government channels and be forwarded to WHC latest by 20 November 1996.

The proposal is given as Annex 4 to this report. It basically consists of a workshop to be held in Simen in April 1997, bringing together national and international stakeholders for conservation and development in the area for updating management planning, awareness creation, donor pledges, and co-ordination of ongoing activities.

Chapter 4. Activity Report of the Mission

This chapter relates to the fulfilment of part of ToR Number 4: Report of activities carried out. (The draft recommendations to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee are placed in the executive summary).

Saturday, 2.11.1996

04:00 - 23:00 Travel of external consultants H. Hurni and B. Nievergelt from Switzerland to Ethiopia

Sunday, 3.11.1996

10:00 - 12:00 Introductory meeting with Small Mammals Research Team heading for Simen (Mr. Güttinger, Mr. Mumenthaler, Mr. Wehrli and Ms. Winkenjohann)

15:00 - 17:00 Meeting of Hurni with Dr. Kassaye and Dr. Solomon on issues of conservation-based development, the SMBS, and NGO involvement in buffer zone development in Simen

17:00 - 19:00 Meeting of Hurni and Nievergelt with Mr. Gebremarkos to introduce mission objectives, explain background of EWCO-WHC communication since May 1996, find common vision for Simen, identify needs and opportunities for development, and discuss organisational matters and membership of mission.

20:00 - 22:00 Drafting Agenda for Bahrdar Workshop (Hurni, Nievergelt)

Monday, 4.11.1996

8:30 - 10:00 Meeting of Hurni and Nievergelt with Mr. Gebremarkos and Mr. Getachew at the EWCO office, discussing agenda for Bahrdar workshop, preparing travel

10:00 - 12:00 Administration and preparation of meetings during the weeks, phone calls to Bahrdar for local arrangements

14:00 - 15:30 Meeting of Hurni, Nievergelt, and Gebremarkos with Mr. Mohamed Abdulwahab at MWR together with Mr. Gebremarkos, discussion of UNDP's Programme 2, including EWCO's project 7, as well as results of SMBS in 1994 led by H. Hurni, and study on flora and fauna led by B. Niervergelt in 1996. Development of common vision for park conservation and buffer zone development, including critical issues for negotiation

15:30 - 17:00 Meeting of Hurni and Nievergelt with Mr. Condé, RR of UNESCO and Mr. Lehembre, DRR of UNDP in order to discuss mission objectives, UNESCO-WHC's role as a catalist for larger donors, status of UNCDF's project plans for Simen, the road issue, and a vision for conservation and sustainable development whereby local land users' needs are taken as a priority for programme implementation in a way that conservation of wildlife habitats can follow. The idea of a programme develop-

ment workshop, with UNESCO-WHC's assistance, to be held in Simen in 1997 was also raised.

20:00 - 23:00 Drafting report

Tuesday, 5.11.1996

8:00 - 10:00 Meeting of Hurni with Dr. Nurhussen Taha, MoA, on watershed development and soil conservation research; administrative preparation of field trip (Nievergelt).

10:00 - 12:00 Meeting of Hurni with Prof. Dr. Shibru Tedla, on NGO competence and capacity to lead a multi-component development programme in Simen and the role of the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society; administrative preparation of field trip (Nievergelt).

13:00 - 19:00 Travel by air from Addis Abeba to Bahrdar

19:00 - 21:00 Meeting of AA team with Mr. Gete Zeleke of BoA, Bahrdar to set organisational status of Bahrdar Workshop

Wednesday, 6.11.1996

Bahrdar Workshop 6.-7.11.1996, 9:00 - 12:00 and 13:00 16:00 (Participants: see list of people contacted, * mark, totalling about 20 people)

Agenda Items:

- 1. To report on and evaluate the nature and extent of current threats to the Simen Mountains National Park and World Heritage Site and to propose measures to be taken to mitigate threats. The review will include an analysis if the site should be included in the "List of World Heritage in Danger".
- 2. To discuss each problem identified in the area according to possible different visions and solutions.
- 3. To develop a common vision on sustainable conservation and development for the Simen area.

Thursday, 7.11.1996, 9:00 - 13:30, and 14:30 - 17:00

- 4. To identify the current status of the management and administration of SMNP and to produce a summary of current development activities and plans inside and around the Park. In order to reach this, we need a list of stakeholders with their functions and possible impacts.
- 5. To identify, with regard to priority problems, the institutional set-ups, procedures, schedule and finances needed for implementing a mitigation programme.
- 6. To formulate recommendations, and a technical assistance request, particularly for a programme formulation workshop, on behalf of UNESCO.

Public presentation by Mr. Gebremarkos Wolde Selassie, Bernhard Nievergelt, and Hans Hurni to members of BoA and other regional institutions in Bahrdar, on:

"Simen Mountains National Park - a World Heritage Site in Danger?"

About 100 people attended the presentation and slide show which was followed by a discussion. Guests included Mr David Crabtree from Gonder, and Mr Spike Millington of IUCN with MEDAC, who had arrived in Bahrdar for carrying out a regional conservation strategy workshop.

19:30 - 21:30 Dinner invitation of workshop participants, plus Dr. Belay Demissie, Head BoA, and Mr. Alemayehu G/Hiwot, Head, BoCTI. Informal discussions on workshop results.

Friday, 8 November 1996

8:00 - 10:00 Meeting with Dr. Belay Demissie, Head BoA, on workshop results and on finalisation of technical request for Simen meeting to be forwarded to WHC

10:00 - 11:00 Meeting with Mr. Ayalew Gobezie, Vice Administrator of the Amhara National Regional State, on workshop results, focusing on WHC issues relating to SMNP, on technical request to be submitted, on road construction in Simen and on the establishment of a regional steering committee chaired by the Regional Council, with BoA functioning as secretariat and lead agency in implementation both Park conservation and the development of the surrounding zone.

11:00 - 12:00 Report writing

13:00 - 18:00 Return flight to Addis Abeba

Saturday, 9 November 1996

9:00 - 10:00 Meeting Dr Nurhussen Taha, WDLUD, on environmental rehabilitation

10:00 - 12:00 Report writing

12:30 - 15:30 Meeting over lunch with HE Mr. Paolo Brogini, the Ambassador of Switzerland in Ethiopia, and Mr. H. Spiess of the Embassy

16:00 - 20:00 Report writing, final discussions

20:30 Check-in and return flight to Switzerland (Hurni)

(Nievergelt to follow on Monday, 11 November 1996, after follow-up meetings with EWCO, forwarding of minutes of workshop to Region and EWCO in order to obtain agreed minutes)

Annex 1

Abbreviations

AA Addis Abeba
BoA Bureau of Agriculture (Region 3)
BoF Bureau of Finances (Region 3)

BoCTI
BoPED
Bureau of Culture, Tourism and Information (Region 3)
Bureau of Planning and Economic Development (Region 3)
CDE
Centre for Development and Environment (University of Berne)

DRR Deputy Resident Representative

EWCO Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation IUCN World Conservation Union (Switzerland)

JPO Junior Professional Officer

MEDAC Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation

MoA Ministry of Agriculture
MWR Ministry of Water Resources
RR Resident Representative

SMBS Simen Mountains Baseline Study (CDE)

SMNP Simen Mountains National Park (and World Heritage Site)

SSMT Simen Small Mammals Team (University of Zurich)

ToR Terms of Reference

UNCDF United Nations Capital Development Fund UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WDLUD Watershed Development and Lad Use Department (MoA)

WH World Heritage

WHC World Heritage Centre of UNESCO

WWF World Wide Fund for Nature (Switzerland)

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- 39. Mr. Woldegabriel* Gebre Kidan, Park Warden, SMNP, c/o Postal Agent, Debark
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UNESCO - CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

1. State Party (Country):

Ethiopia

2. Date of submission of request:

11 November 1996

3. Status of property concerned:

Inscribed on the World Heritage List

4. Details of property

a) Date of inscription:

8 September 1978

- b) Brief description of property highlighting its
- i) outstanding universal value:

Sole habitat of Walya ibex endemic to the Simen area, and unique afro-alpine biome

- ii) national legislative value: Registered as a national park in 1969
- iii) current management policy and state of conservation:

The Simen Mountains National Park is being administered by the Regional Bureau of Agriculture of Amhara Region which has in-line functions to the Park management team. Conservation of the Walya ibex has been considerably improved since 1992 after a period of political disturbance between 1977 and 1991. Nevertheless, the Park is interfered by human agricultural land use, livestock grazing and wood cutting, which affects the wildlife habitat.

- 5. Description of project:
- a) Justification:

The World Heritage Committee, at its twentieth session held in Paris on 24-29 June 1996, recommended that "a planning and co-ordination meeting be held at the regional level, involving major stakeholders of the Simen Park area, with the general objective to update management planning of the Park and its buffer zone". The technical mission also recommended by WH Convention was held from 4-8 November 1996. It showed that a workshop involving these stakeholders would indeed be needed as a follow-up to the 1995 workshop held in Gonder (see objectives below).

Objectives:

- create awareness among national institutional stakeholders and international donors on the need to enhance a multi-component sustainable conservation and development programme in the Simen area
- exchange experiences in the management of such a programme relating to a World Heritage Site, particularly among stakeholder institutions and the WHC formulate a multi-component programme by incorporating existing agreements and initiatives and enhancing them with complementary projects fitting into the overall concept
- discuss the finalised studies about the Simen World Heritage Site and the surrounding villages, and update the management plan developed under UNESCO-WHC in the period 1983-1986
- create co-ordinated donor interest and involvement in various components of the programme
- evaluate the progress of the implementation of last workshop recommendations
- b) Project activities to be undertaken:
 - i) Preparation of workshop
 - with national financing:
 - .create a workshop organising committee among a core group of stakeholders .describe activities in Simen as carried out or planned by different national stakeholders
 - invite existing and potential donors.
 - .prepare itinerary and organisation for workshop
 - produce a list of participants and resource persons who should attend the work-shop (a maximum of 20 nationals and 10 internationals is foreseen)
 - with assistance from WHC:
 - prepare exhibition for workshop produce proposal for zonation
 - ii) Workshop
 - with assistance from WHC:
 - travel to Ethiopia on 10 April 1997 (for chief executives on 13 April) for international participants
- travel to Gonder and Debark on 11 April 1997 (chief executives on 14 April) conduct a field trip to the Simen area, using local transport, for the majority of participants. Starting date is proposed to be the evening of 11 April 1997, at Debark near the Park. Inputs from resource persons as guides.
- provide the possibility of a one-day overview to chief executives who wish to attend a shortened version of the workshop, with starting date on 15 April 1997 in the morning, possibly by organising a helicopter service for a quick ground-touch in various parts of the area, including overnight with the first group at the centre of the Park in Gich Camp on 15 April 1997. This version will have to be budgeted separately and paid by participants' organisations.

- .common return via Sankaber to Gonder on 16 April 1997
- .two-day workshop in Gonder on 17/18 April 1997
- departure on 19 April 1997 early morning from Gonder; possibilities for air transport to Addis (and back to Europe on the same day is possible)

iii) After the workshop

- with assistance from WHC:

.prepare outcomes of workshop (see below)

c) Expected outcome:

- with assistance from WHC:

.updated management plan for the Simen Mountains National Park and surrounding buffer zone and development area, including a co-ordinated set of development components by different donors

.proceedings of workshop

national and international institutions and individuals aware of the development concept and programmes carried out to enhance sustainable conservation and development in the Simen area and World Heritage Site

Estimated costs of project activities:

- paid nationally

.costs of salaries of national participants in the preparation and implementation of workshop, including office facilities and communication costs (20 person-months à Eth. Birr 800.-/month, plus costs)

Ethiopian Birr approximately 25,000

(US \$ 4,000)

- requested under the Convention

.preparation:	US \$ 3,000
.workshop:	
Travel for international resource persons (3):	US \$ 5,000
Organisation, local travel, and accommodation of 30 participants:	US \$ 25,000
Preparation of updated management plan:	US \$ 8,000
Finalisation of proceedings:	US \$ 5,000
Total request:	US \$ 46,000

In addition, it is expected that UNESCO makes available the expertise of the international resource persons.

d) Timetable of activities:

Preparatory phase: 1.1.1997 - 10.4.1997

Workshop: 11.4. (resp. 14.4.) 1997 until 18.4.1997

Outputs: 30.9.1997

1. National body responsible for the project implementation:

Regional Bureau of Agriculture (BoA), Dr Belay Demissie, Head P.O. Box 437, Bahrdar, Tel. 0025 18 20 09 29 Fax 0025 18 20 15 10

in co-operation with the

Ministry of Agriculture P.O.Box 386 Addis Abeba Tel. 0025 11 51 69 38 Fax 0025 11 51 12 36

Signed on behalf of the regional Government:

Ayalew Gobezie, Vice-Chairman of the Transitional Government of Region Three (13/11/1996)

Signed on behalf of EWCO:

Gebremarkos W/Selassie, A/Manager (14/11/1996)