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ቀን 26 JAN 2018  
Date

**To: UNESCO World Heritage Center**

**7, place de Fontenoty**

**75352 Paris 07 SP,**

**France**

**Subject:-Submission of Annual State of Conservation Report World Heritage Property Simien Mountains National Park(N9).**

It can be recalled that the World Heritage Center informed the state party by the letter with Ref. No. CLT/HER/WHC/ETH/17/136/EM dated 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2017 addressed to H.E. Ambassador NegaTsegaye, permanent delegate of Ethiopia to UNESCO with the subject "State of Conservation of the world Heritage property Simien Mountains National Park(N9) based on the Decision of the world Heritage committee at its 41<sup>st</sup> session (Krakow-2017) which requested the state party to submit an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of its recommendation by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 for consideration at its 42<sup>nd</sup> session in 2018.

Accordingly, on behalf of and by representing the state party, the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority would like to express its appreciation and great thanks to the WHC for valuable supports, feedback and directions given to the state party, on the matters pertaining to the conservation of the property.

Accordingly attached here to this letter is the annual state of conservation report of the world Heritage property Simien Mountains National Park(N9) of Ethiopia and implementations of the recommendations in Decision 41 COM 7A.13

With Best Regards,

  
**Kumara Wakjira**  
**Director General**



Cc

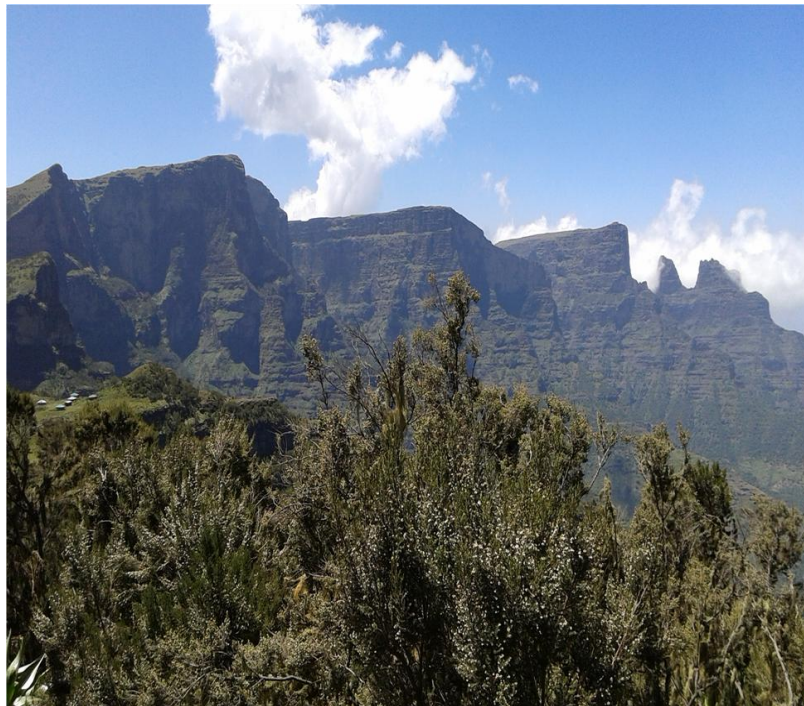
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism  
Addis Ababa
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Addis Ababa
- Amhara National Regional State  
Behirdar
- H.E. Mr- NegaTsegaye (Ambassador)  
Permanent Delegate of Ethiopia to UNESCO  
UNESCO HOUSE
- National Commission of Ethiopia to UNESCO  
UNESCO Office in Addis Ababa
- International Union for Conservation of Nature-IUCN  
IUNC
- Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage  
Addis Ababa
- Wildlife development and Protection Directorate

EWCA



**Ethiopian Government**  
**State Party Report on the Conservation of the**  
**World Natural Heritage Site, Simien Mountains**  
**National Park (Ethiopia)**

**PROPERTY ID N9**



**Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA)**

**IN RESPONSE TO**  
**WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION 41 COM 7A.13**  
**FOR SUBMISSION BY 1 February 2018**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*This report on the state of conservation of the Simen Mountains National Park World Heritage property responds to the World Heritage Committee's decision 41 COM 7A.13 that was taken at the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee in Krakow, Poland in July 2017.*

*The Ethiopian government is fully committed to protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. All of the recommendations of the 2017 Reactive Monitoring Mission and requests of the World Heritage Committee are being implemented and considered in the plan of the national park and our development partners working in Simien Mountains National Park.*

*The removal of the SMNP from the World Heritage endangered list was celebrated at the occasion of its 50th year anniversary in October 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This event was very important in view of recognizing individuals, institutions and development partners who contributed in addressing the corrective measures set by the state parties and ensure the commitment of government and development partners for future development and management of the property.*

*Research and monitoring on the populations of *Walia ibex* and other endemic species have shown significant increment. The required livelihood improvement strategic document for the relocated Gich community has been completed and its implementation is underway with fund allocated by German Development Bank (KfW). Revision of the existing General Management plan (GMP) and the grazing pressure reduction strategy are underway and both are due to be completed in 2019 and 2018, respectively. We continued implementation of the existing grazing pressure reduction strategy which enables an increase of the no grazing zone of the national park.*

*The construction of the realigned road has not been yet completed but it is on promising progress in line with the suggestion made by 2017 IUCN reactive mission report.*

*Development partners like African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), joined the co-management partnership agreement with Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) to address the livelihood improvement and national park management issues. Accordingly, the Austrian development cooperation committed to allocate € 1 million per annum to the Simien Mountains and Alitash (located in the same district with the property) National Parks for three years from 2018. Significant amount of these funds will support management of the Simien mountains national park, specifically for tourism and livelihood development. Similarly, the German development Bank (KfW) committed to provide € 4.5 million for three years from 2018 for the Simen mountains national park management and development. The KfW fund in SMNP will be managed by AWF.*

*Apart from the German development Bank (KfW) and Austria development cooperation commitments to support the management of the property, the Ethiopian government continues to provide the resources necessary to support management of the property to ensure its Outstanding Universal Value is maintained.*

## INTRODUCTION

At its last meeting, the World Heritage Committee appreciated the relentless effort made by the State Party in order to address all the corrective measures set by UNESCO and decided to remove the Simen Mountains National park from the list of World Heritage endangered list during the 41<sup>st</sup> sessions. Moreover, the committee in its Decisions of **41 COM 7A.13** has also congratulated for the result achieved and encouraged the State Party to work hard to attain the suggested recommendations to maintain the outstanding universal value of the property.

Therefore, this is a progress report in accordance with Decision **41COM 7A.13** of the World Heritage Committee requesting the State Party to work on various states of conservation aspects in the heritage property in question and to report on the implementation of the recommendations, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42<sup>nd</sup> session in 2018.

### **Part I: GENERAL UPDATES**

#### ***1.1. The Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of SMNP and Its Removal from the World Heritage Endangered List***

The 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration that coincided with the removal of SMNP from the World Heritage endangered property list took place in Amara National Regional State, Simen Gonder zone Debark Town and inside the National Park from October 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> 2017. The event was organized with financial support from our development partners including Australian Development Cooperation, African Wildlife foundation, Lima Limo lodge and the event platinum sponsor Walia Beer Company. On this national event, the Federal and Regional governments' higher officials, parliamentarians, diplomats and ambassadors, representatives of civic societies and NGOs, local administration, local communities' leaders, and celebrities as well as different national and international Medias and journalists participated.



Fig 1: H.E Mr. Gedu Andargachewu and Dr. Hirut Woldemariam Opening the Photo exhibition program on the event; Sources: EWCA-PR (2017)

The removal of the SMNP from the World Heritage endangered list is a great reward and message to the local communities who contributed a lot for the natural resources conservation. It is also a great reward for regional and local leaders, wildlife experts who had been committed in addressing the corrective measures for the last two decades. It is a great achievement which will be used as a model to manage conservation issues of other similar protected areas in the country. Besides, the achievements positive triggering effect on other regional and local leaders in managing conservational issues of their respective protected areas.



Fig 2: Symposium on SMNP; Sources: EWCA-PR (2017)

As per the evaluation, the event had met its target and found very successful in many aspects. On the first day of the program all the invited guests (more than 2000 from federal, Region, Zone and woredas) were able to visit the photo exhibition which illustrate efforts made in addressing the UNESCO corrective measures and park management activities for the last two decades. The exhibition was arranged in the SMNP headquarter meeting hall. On the same day, participants had participated in the symposium organized at Debark town municipality meeting hall. The symposium was officially opened by H.E Ato Degu Andargachewu Amhara National Regional State President , Doctor Hirut Woldemariam Minister of Culture and Tourism and Ato Kumara Wakjira Director Genral of EWCA , which was followed by the key note addresses of the



Austrian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Country director of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), United Nation Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ( UNESCO) and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). UNESCO was represented by DR Yumiko Yokozeki, Director of the Addis Ababa Liaison Office who appreciated Ethiopia's effort in protecting its natural heritage and its relentless effort to remove Simien from the list of properties in danger and encouraged Ethiopia to keep on working on the remaining measures. Presentations on the Simien Mountains National Park 50<sup>th</sup> year journey and on its achievements and efforts in addressing UNESCO's corrective measures to remove the park from the world heritage endangered list were also given

This event created a very good opportunity to recognize and award those institutions, organizations, individuals, regional and local leaders who have special contribution in addressing the corrective measures set by UNESCO in SMNP. Besides, the symposium and the whole event used to mobilize the public on the importance of the national park for the well-being of local people, the country and future generation as a whole.



Fig 3. Some of the special awards for ANRS, ADC. UNDP, UNESCO and SMNP; Sources: EWCA-PR (2017)

On the second day all invited guests and journalists had visited the park. The program was concluded at Chenek community lodge inside the park after attending lunch ceremony prepared by the local community. H.E Mrs Meaza G/Medhin, State Minister of culture and tourism, and other higher officials of the federal Government of Ethiopia gave closing remarks at the event.



Fig 4. Closing Remarks by H.E Mrs Meza Ge/Medhin State Minister of MoCT; Sources: EWCA-PR (2017)

## **PART II:-RESPONSE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISION 41COM 7A.13**

Generally, the State Party together with its conservation partners has achieved the following progressive measures:

### ***2.1. Monitoring Protocol on Walia Ibex , Ethiopian wolf and Gelada population***

**Decision 41 COM 7A.13 Paragraph 5 :**Notes the possible increase in Walia ibex and Ethiopian wolf populations and requests the State Party to develop clear and agreed monitoring protocols for the populations of Walia ibex, Ethiopian wolf and gelada;

Effort is underway to implement the recommendations and to consider the required monitoring protocols in the new management plan of the property. Besides, monitoring of the target species are already underway by the research department of EWCA and the park as well as partners including Michigan University research project and Ethiopian wolf conservation projects.

#### **2.1.1. Walia Ibex**

The SMNP was established in 1969 with the primary aim of protecting the Walia ibex (*Capra ibex walie*), whose world population at the time was less than 130 individuals found only in the Simien Mountains. The

park was drawn out over an area of 136 km<sup>2</sup>, with roughly equal coverage of lowlands (1700-2800 m) and highlands (2800-4070 m), separated by a dramatic escarpment. Considering its outstanding value and the unique features, the property was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1978. The inscription was made on the basis of its importance for biodiversity (criterion x) and its exceptional natural beauty (criterion vii). It is known that the past heavy grazing and human use of the habitats as well as poaching were reasons for the decline of Walia Ibex population and other endemic wildlife of the SMNP. The situation has gradually changed specifically in the past decades as noted in the previous state reports the Walia Ibex population has shown gradual increment due to Government commitment towards ensuring effective management of the property and its key wildlife species in terms of protecting and extending important corridors and core habitats to the park for the species in question and restore the degraded areas as well as enforce laws against poaching and natural habitat destruction.



**Fig 5: Walia Ibex herd in SMNP; Source: EWCA-PR (2017)**

Population estimates of Walia Ibex(as a small population) is very important to determine whether its number is being maintained, in decline, or in recovery across time and thus for its proper conservation and management. Accordingly, apart from management and extension of its core habitats, periodic census and close follow up have been undertaken by the EWCA and the park monitoring team to determine the

population status of Walia Ibex in SMNP. Generally, the Walia Ibex population has shown increment from less than 250 in 2006 to close 950 in 2017(Fig. 6). However, this number needs to be confirmed by independent specific researcher as recommended repeatedly by the state parties. As outsourcing the questioned research to external researcher requires significant funding and it is planned to be considered in the action plan of the upcoming projects. Besides, the last four years total count census result of Walia Ibex population has shown no significant increment and more or less a constant result indicating the importance of further and specific study on the population status and structure.

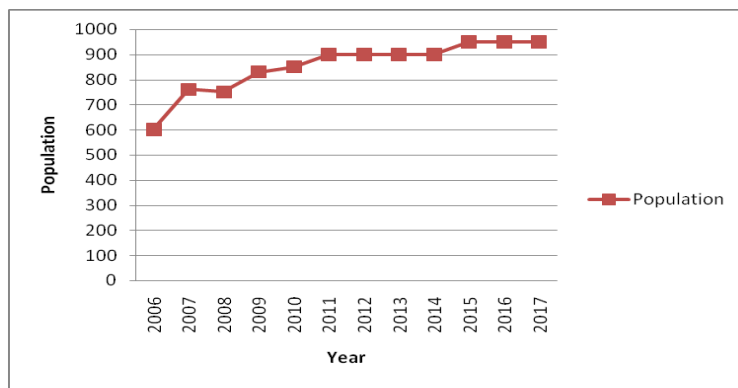


Fig 6 : Walia Ibex Population Trend, from 2006 to 2017; Source: SMNP office (2017)

### 2.1.2. Ethiopian wolf

The SMNP wolf population is the second in importance after Bale Mountains National Park's and the one with highest genetic diversity. It was noted in the past state report to the world heritage committee the SMNP wolves' population has shown a gradual increment due to relative improvement of the afro-alpine habitats and grazing control. Based on the census conducted inside the park and the surrounding buffer zone (average 5km) by the park experts the total population of the wolve's population in the property is estimated 140 in 2016 (Fig 7). Whereas, the 2016-17 systematic censuses conducted by the Ethiopian wolves' Conservation Project (EWCP) reveals the population of wolves in the property is less than the park report. The EWCP team observed 16 packs, totaling 67 wolves and 6 juveniles (less than 1 year old). Assuming that another 4 wolf packs exist in the Simien Mountains, the population current estimate is of around 87 Ethiopian wolves, excluding juveniles. It is found that the possible reason for the difference related with the methodology of census used by EWCP which underestimate the number of wolves in

the park. According to the park wardens the areas considered by the EWCP for the census of wolves were those areas known as wolf habitats inside the park and also juveniles were not included in the total population. EWCP is one of the development partners working on the conservation of Ethiopian wolves in the country.

The EWCP's monitoring data indicate that wolf numbers have been stable over the past 10 years in many areas. Breeding was also confirmed in two packs in 2017 but locating dens in Simien has been particularly difficult. Important progress has been made over the last years to remove livestock from key wolf areas in the park that were previously overgrazed, and in Chenek and Buahit the vegetation is recovering quickly. On the other hand, habitat degradation, with consequent loss of rodent prey, continues, mainly along the margins of the park. As a result, there are now fewer packs in Gich-Aynameda now than 10 years ago, and wolves are disappearing from areas previously used by wolves, such as in Zana and around Mizma outpost. But in general local wolf populations are largely healthy and stable in SMNP.

There are no proven records or other evidence of wolf mortality due to rabies or canine distemper viruses in SMNP. The sporadic killing of wolves over last few years is raising concerns. Killings occurred in the park two years ago, for commercialization of the skin, and again this year. Park and police authorities have reacted quickly (culprits were identified) and EWCP intensified its awareness campaign. There have been also rumors of wolves killed by local people because of conflict over livestock predation in Ras Dejen. EWCP has confirmed that this conflict exists (and is working to mitigate it) but found no evidence of retaliatory killings so far. In addition to monitoring the status of wolf packs, EWCP's work in Simien seeks to understand and raise awareness of conservation problems affecting Ethiopian wolves (e.g. diseases transmitted by domestic dogs, livestock predation conflicts, etc.) working closely with the park, local communities, governments and schools. With regards to research, EWCP has started two specific projects in Simien. One is an ecological study to understand the effects of land uses upon Afroalpine habitats and rodent populations, by comparing vegetation condition and rodent abundance in areas under intense livestock grazing, areas set aside by communities, and areas where livestock has been removed (as part of an MSc by a member of EWCA staff). The other is a behavioral study of Ethiopian wolves' activity patterns, ranging and foraging behavior, to understand the responses of wolves to

variations in prey availability, proximity of villages and people, including tourists (the next step is to deploy GPS collars on wolves to obtain more detailed behavioral data).

As mentioned above EWCA take into consideration to develop comprehensive monitoring protocol for census and monitoring of the endemic species like the Ethiopian Wolf population and will continue working in partnership with EWCP in this regards.

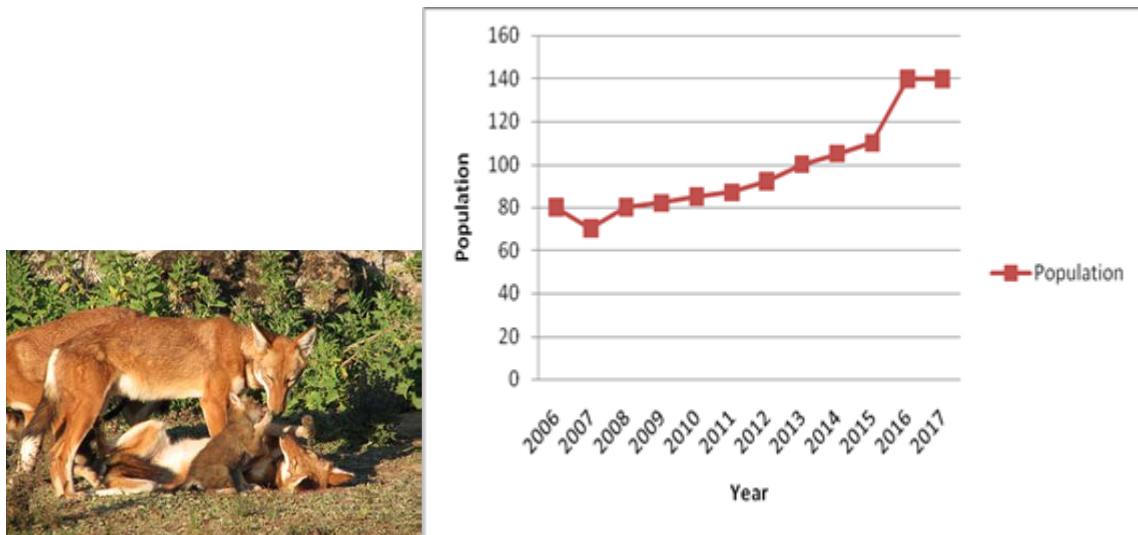


Fig 7: Ethiopian wolf Population in SMNP Trend, from 2006- 2017; Source: SMNP office (2017)

### 2.1.3. Gelada

Ethiopia is fortunate to have an endemic Cercopithecine genus and species, the gelada (*Theropithecus gelada*). Geladas, represent the last extant species of a primate genus once found throughout eastern and southern Africa (Jolly, 1972). Today, geladas are found only in a few areas throughout the northern Ethiopian highlands, and one isolated population south of the Rift Valley in Arsi province (Mori and Belay, 1990). It is estimated that only about 50,000-60,000 geladas remain in the wild, and their numbers are thought to be declining. *However, the gelada has a large range and is still abundant despite increasing threats to the species and is hence listed as Least Concern by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and an Appendix II listing in the Convention of the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).*



Fig. 8 Gelada in SMNP; Sources: EWCA-PR (2017)

It is known that viable population of geladas lives in the SMNP and two community conservancies in Amhara national regional state of Ethiopia. Although the impacts are not very well known it is evident that the prevailed anthropogenic activities cultivation, heavy domestic grazing is among the threats which affects the population of the gelada in the SMNP. In the recent decades due to the relentless effort made by government and development partners to reduce human activities and further expansion of the SMNP boundaries the situation has become more conducive for the gelada population.

Gelada's population has shown increment due to improvement of the afro-alpine habitats and grazing control. Based on the census conducted inside the park and the surrounding buffer zone (average 5km) by the park experts the total population of the gelada's population in the property is estimated 20000 in 2017.

Although it is controversial and still not approved, recent research report made by University of Michigan Gelada Research Project the gelada population of SMNP has shown a slight increase between 2006 and 2015(Thore and Jacinta, 2018). A total of 7252 geladas were counted in the entire area with a total of 914 adult males (not including sub adults but including bachelor males) and 2793 adult females (not including sub adults), and 3545 juveniles (including all infants, juveniles, and sub adults). The 2006 census conducted within the old boundaries of the park and counted 4264 in total where as the 2015 census was able to access many more areas (which are re-demarcated and extended to be part of the park). These areas were home to 2592 geladas in the 2015 census (Thore and Jacinta, 2018). Based on long-term research made by the University of Michigan Gelada Research Project, the overall health of the current population is in a promising condition. According to census made by the Michigan University study group from 2012-2017 at Sanakber area in the park the groups grow from 218 total animals in 2012

to 278 total in 2017, a growth rate of almost 5% per year. Most of this growth is due to an increase in juveniles (Table 3). These study groups live around Sankaber and might indicate that the Sankaber geladas are doing particularly well perhaps because of the recent grazing restrictions

As mentioned above EWCA take into consideration to develop comprehensive monitoring protocol for census and monitoring of the endemic species like the gelada and will continue working in partnership with our development partners including AWF and ADC in this regards.

Table 1: Gelada Numbers by Age and sex at Sanakber area; Sources Michigan University Research Project (2017)

Gelada by Age and Sex/Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adult Female	80	86	97	88	102	87
Adult Male	32	30	39	29	41	34
Immature	106	118	163	135	166	157
Total gelada /units	218	234	299	252	309	278

## 2.2. *The Gich Relocated Community and Livelihood Restoration plan*

**Decision 41 COM 7A.13 Paragraph 6:** Also notes that the voluntary relocation of the Gich community has been completed, and establishment of alternative livelihood options is underway, and also requests the State Party to ensure the application of the highest standards in concluding all the remaining commitments;

It is to be recalled that EWCA reported the successful process of the voluntary relocation of the Gich community in its reports of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> sessions of the world Heritage Committee. The guiding principles for Gich community resettlement programme was designed to occur on a voluntary basis and in accordance with national Law and international standards on resettlement and human rights as indicated in the general management plan of the SMNP and the resettlement action plan. Currently all the Gich community members are established on the new resettlement site at Debark town. In 2017 all the remaining individuals of the Gich relocated community



members have secured their compensation by the help of the Gich relocation program committee. Consensus has also been reached with community members of the relocated community with regards to the compensation payment of mosques which was delayed because of difficulties on the estimation of the values associated with the mosque.

However, as these people have relocated from a rural to an urban area the expected change of lifestyle and livelihoods are the most challenging. In 2017 as the implementation of the required livelihood improvement activities have been delayed due to various reasons a number of consecutive discussions and meetings were undertaken between government officials and the Gich community. It is possible to use the opportunities to inform the community members on the implementation of the upcoming development projects in and around the property with the commitment of AWF, KfW and ADC which will be launched soon in the area. Alongside, strong attention has been given to develop and finalize the required livelihood restoration strategic plan with the collaboration of the German development Bank (KfW) and EWCA.

According to the approved livelihood strategic document the Gich resettled House Holds (HHs) divided into three categories based on their level of vulnerability due to resettlement in a new environment (rural to urban). These include: High Risk / Vulnerable (54 HHs), potentially Vulnerable (33 HHs) and Other 125 HHs are least vulnerable but still require support and close follow up. Accordingly, a three year project with the corresponding budget has been designed to be implemented in three phases. Priority has been considered for high risk /vulnerable HHs in the project. Accordingly, the project for High risk/vulnerable HHs, potentially vulnerable HHs and low vulnerable HHs will be implemented from January to June 2018, July to December 2018 and January to June 2019, respectively. The period from July 2019 to December 2020 is considered as a follow up and exit period of the livelihood restoration project of the Gich relocated community.

This strategic plan identified farming, Bee-Keeping, Animal Fattening and/or Dairy, Poultry, Urban Horticulture, Weaving and Handicraft, Improved stove, Bakery, Furniture and Mill, Trade and Sewing as the key fundamentals of the Livelihood Program. Dedicated Business Plans have been prepared for each Program, and households participating in each Program will be formed

into Cooperatives. The required budget for each program estimated based on similar previous project experience in the area and expected raise in costs.

Based on the small scale and medium sized regulation of the country the beneficiaries should cover 30% of the total cost, but special supports have been considered in the strategy for the high risk/vulnerable HHs in Phase 1 as they cannot afford this. Besides, many of the high risk/vulnerable HHs are supposed to get benefit as social and housing supports. Phase 3 incorporates HHs who received adequate money compensation for resettlement but may need trainings on entrepreneurship, technical skills business administration and financial management. The required Land for projects is expected to be provided by the municipality free of charge. According to the strategic livelihood restoration plan a total of \$ 442,900 is estimated to realize the implementation of the identified livelihood improvement programs in which 184,400 USD for phase 1, 123,500 USD for phase 2 and 100,000 USD for phase 3 have been estimated in the project. Besides, an estimated 35,000 USD have been allocated for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phase project periods for additional trainings, follow-up and monitoring activities.

The planed Livelihood programs will be managed in cooperation through integrated institutional frameworks, involving government agencies, donors, and the beneficiaries. The overall livelihood program is expected to be managed by Debark town MSE Office with the close cooperation of Geech community, SMNP Office, Cooperatives Office, Mayor's Office, Municipality, Woreda administration, Utility companies, Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) centers, Credit Associations and funding organizations among others.

The Expected Duties and responsibilities of the Stakeholders in the Livelihood Program Management have been proposed in the strategic document (Table 2). Currently, EWCA have approved the livelihood restoration strategic plan which was developed by the consultant commissioned by KfW together with expert from EWCA.

**EWCA and KfW have planned to organize project kickoff stakeholder's workshop at Debark in February 2017. However, the implementation of the strategy will be continued soon after the approval of the required co-management agreement that will be signed between**

EWCA and AWF. AWF being the implementing agent to KfW in SMNP, KfW is committed to provide the estimated required budget for the implementation of the livelihood restoration project of the Gich Community. Currently the two parties (EWCA and AWF) are developing the co-management agreement and an action plan which is considered as a prerequisite to get the funds from KfW. It is going to be a four year project which will start from February 2018.

Table 2: Expected Duties of Stakeholders in the Livelihood Program Management ; Sources: Resettlement Action Plan (2017)

No.	Institution	Duty
1	EWCA	Monitor and evaluate the overall progress of the program, Give the required support from federal level
2	Zone and Woreda Administrations	Monitor and evaluate the overall progress of the program, Give Administrative support
3	Mayor's Office	Monitor and evaluate the overall progress of the program in consultation with the Woreda, SMNP, SME office and other partners, Give Administrative support
4	SMNP Office	Monitor and evaluate the overall progress of the program in consultation with the Woreda, Municipality and other partners, Document the resettlement data and process, Give administrative support specific to its mandate
5	SME Office	Identify visible projects, Consult the beneficiaries on their preference and skills, Organize HHs in project components, Investigate training needs, Follow up and report on progress
6	Municipality Office	Identify, develop and provide urban land, Provide access roads and drainage
7	Cooperatives Office	Give legal status to organized households, Supervise the function of cooperatives
8	Credit Associations	Provide loans Promote saving culture amongst beneficiaries
9	TVETs	Provide training Provide improved machineries and tools
10	Utility Companies	Provide water and electricity as required
11	Beneficiary Households	Identify choice of program component in relation to their skill and interest, Organize in cooperatives, Provide 30% matching fund
12	Donors	Provide capacity building Provide funding for program components Monitor and Evaluate the progress of funded projects in consultation/collaboration with the local stakeholders

### 2.3. *Updating the Progress of Road Re-alignment*

**Decision 41 COM 7A.13 Paragraph 7:** Notes with appreciation the State Party's commitment to complete the construction of the alternative road aiming at reducing disturbance of the existing main road in important afro-alpine habitats, and to re-align the power line with this new road, and further requests the State Party to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the part of the new road crossing the national park in line with IUCN's World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, and submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN;

It is recalled that we noted a delay in the re-alignment of road construction progress due to a capacity limitation of the contracting companies. Currently the construction from Mekane-Birhan town to Dilyibza town which in the middle cross the park land is almost completed. **The environmental impact assessment (EIA) process participate EWCA and the park experts and** considers the required mitigation measures or managing negative impacts of the roads on the wildlife resources of the property. The EIA document will be submitted to the world heritage center as per the request. The construction of road from Debark Town to Mekane-Birhan which is designed completely outside the park land will be completed by the end of 2018. The new alternative route design would significantly reduce the adverse impacts of the existing road on core natural ecosystem of the property.

The required assessment and realigning the associated electric pole and lines is considered in the action plan of the upcoming projects. Upon the completion of the new road, the realignment of the structure will be the immediate tasks. The work will be carried out together with the Ethiopian Electric power corporation.

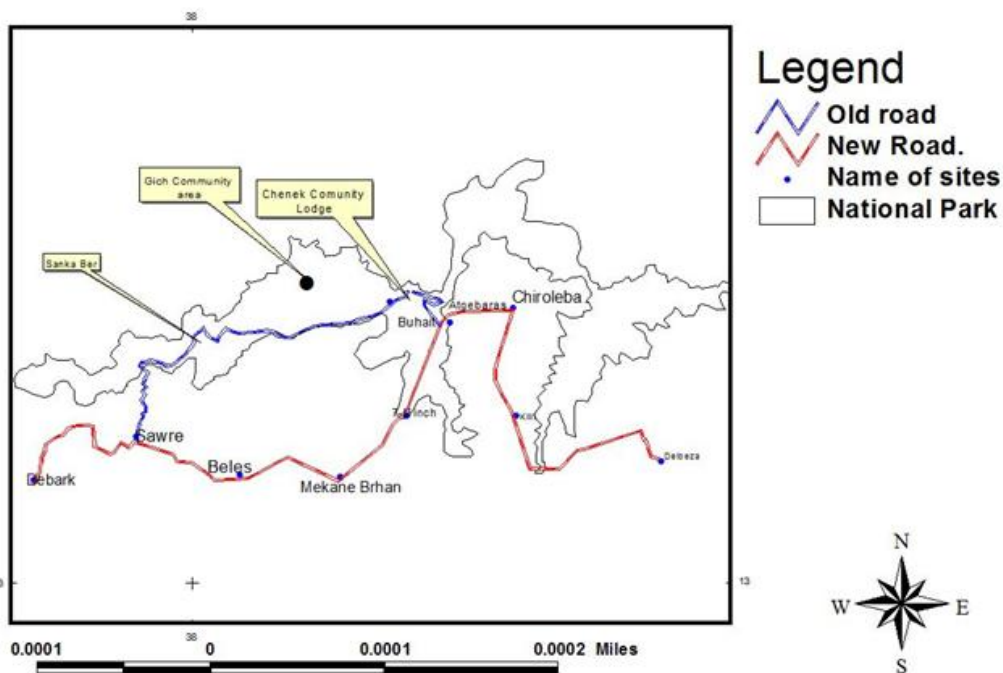


Fig.7: Picture showing the new road under construction and the existing (old) road.

Source; Source: EWCA (2017)

#### 2.4. Development Ppartners

Decision 41COM 7A.13 Paragraph 8: Also notes with appreciation that multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental partners cooperate with the State Party on the conservation of the property and strongly encourages all current and future partners to fully coordinate their efforts under the leadership of the State Party:

As noted in the state report of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> sessions of the World Heritage committee long term partnership had already been in place between EWCA and AWF for the management of SMNP. Besides AWF will become the implementing partner of the German Government owned bank (KfW) which has shown its curiosity to allocate significant financial support for livelihood development interventions of the Gich relocated community. Besides, KfW has signed separate agreement with EWCA for the management of SMNP, Halaydege Asebot National park, Awash national Park and Bale mountains national park for an amount of € 20 million fund in which the SMNP secured € 4.5 million. The implementing partner for this fund in SMNP will be AWF.

Currently both EWCA and AWF are working on the required co-management agreement and action plan which will be developed within the framework of a separate agreement signed between EWCA and KfW. Both livelihood restoration project and park management project will be started soon in February 2018.

The other longstanding collaboration we have in SMNP management is with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Austrian Development Agency is the Operational Unit of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) in charge of implementing all bilateral programmes and projects in ADC's partner countries. As noted in the previous state report, among the development partners the ADC intervention took the lion share in addressing the set of corrective measures of UNESCO in SMNP.

Currently, ADC and EWCA are working together on the next intervention of ADC on SMNP management. A Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Cooperation for the Conservation of Simien Mountains will be signed between EWCA and ADA at the end of January 2018. The planned ADA support project will be a three year project starting from 2018 and ADA has allocated € 1million per year for the implementation of the project. The purpose of this project will be the protection, sustainable use, management, conservation, and restoration of the SMNP and surrounding areas. Specifically the intended programme will be designed to *contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development through conservation and sustainable use of the SMNP natural resources and promotion of alternative livelihood opportunities through an integrated regional development approach and private sector involvement.*

Our existing partner AWF has been engaged in the provision of training and community awareness raising, the implementation of the Grazing Pressure Reduction Strategy, the development of community tourism and the development of a conservation school. As per the recommendation of the 2017 IUCN reactive mission recommendations, the Revision of the grazing pressure reduction strategy (GPRS) and revision/ development of the general management plan of the SMNP are taken into consideration in the action plan that will be implemented by the coming KfW funded project. Accordingly while implementing the exiting GPRS, its revision will be conducted and scheduled to be completed in the middle of 2018.

Similarly, as the life span of the existing General management plan (GMP) of the SMNP will be completed in the year 2019, it is the right time to start revision and development of GMP. Besides, the existing GMP considers only the old park boundaries. Accordingly, this activity is also considered in the action plan to be implemented using the coming KfW funded project. Similarly, while implementing the existing GMP, its revision /development will be conducted and scheduled to be completed at the end of 2019.

Generally the current international attention to support SMNP is very promising. Both the ADC and KfW's financial support commitment will be important for SMNP and surrounding community to ensure effective conservation and management of the property.

### **2.5. *Eco-lodges Development in SMNP***

Decision 41 COM 7A.13 Paragraph 9: Further notes the location of the proposed eco-lodge developments inside the park and requests furthermore the State Party to submit the EIAs including a thorough assessment of the potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property in line with IUCN's World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, to the World Heritage Centre for review in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

Currently there are only two standard eco-lodges located along the western border of the park namely Simien and Lima-limo Lodges. As we noted in the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> World Heritage committee meeting four new sites have been selected along the border of the property for the development of eco-lodges. The development of these lodges was delayed due to various reasons which need to be settled in advance both from the government and the private investor sides. So far only one of the investors has submitted the required environmental impact assessment document to EWCA. However, nothing has been started on the proposed sites as there are still issues from the local communities and local government sides that need to be clear on the location of the selected sites. Therefore, the state party has given strong attention for the required EIA of the development projects in the property and before the implementation of the projects the EIA document will be submitted to the world heritage center as per the request.

## **2.6. *Reducing Overgrazing, New Management Plan and Local Participation***

**Decision 41 COM 7A.13 Paragraph 10:** Requests moreover the State Party to implement the other recommendations of the 2017 mission, which build upon earlier mission recommendations, in particular to:

- a) Adopt a clear, realistic and funded plan to manage and substantially reduce overgrazing in the property to the levels that do not impact on its Outstanding Universal Value,
- b) Initiate the evaluation of the current 2009-2019 General Management Plan (GMP) to inform the next GMP,
- c) Strengthen the participation of local communities in the management and eventually the governance of the property

### **2.6.1. Reducing Overgrazing**

It is recalled that EWCA in collaboration with development partners AWF and ADC had developed a grazing pressure reduction strategy document and started implementation after introducing the strategy to the communities since 2016. So far promising result have been recorded by the implementations of the GPRS and major portions of land inside the park have been set aside as no livestock grazing zones such as Limalimo, Buyit Ras, Michibign, Sankaber, Set Derek, Chenneck, Siliki, Mesarerya, Kidus Yared, and Ras-Dashen and Gich area(Faha, Emetgogo, Gidilgot). The vegetation recovery in these areas is visible and the endemic wildlife species like Walia ibex, Ethiopian wolf and gelada have been observed expanding their home range.

Although, in 2017 the no grazing protected zone has not been expanded, the existing GPRS implementation is continued and focused on maintaining and rehabilitation of land prohibited for free grazing in the past two years.

As per the recommendation of the 2017 IUCN reactive mission, revision of the existing Grazing Pressure Reduction Strategy is taken into consideration in the action plan of the upcoming projects and will be completed in 2018. Accordingly, it is expected to have a more realistic and workable strategy which is inline with the recent IUCN guideline in responding community and wildlife needs in the property.





*Fig. 9: SMNP rehabilitated Afro-alpine no grazing zone; Sources: EWCA-PR (2017)*

### **2.6.2. Initiate Development of New General Management Plan**

As the recommendation of the 2017 IUCN reactive monitoring mission recommendation the revision of the existing GMP will be the primary activities in 2018/19. Though the life span of the existing GMP of the property finalized in 2019 its revision and developing new GMP would be necessary in order to include the required purpose, strategies and activities for the newly expanded land of the property. The activity is already considered in the action plan of the coming projects.

### **2.6.3. Strengthen the Participation of Local Communities**

Full Consultation, participation and then willingness of local communities was a key for the success of conservation and development efforts in SMNP. As all the corrective measures addressed in SMNP affects the livelihood of the local communities it was achieved with their full involvement and decisions. Consultation with community leaders and community members in all activities of the national park will be continued as it is also constitutional and supported by the country legal frameworks of development.

With regards to decision making role: although the park is managed directly by EWCA (at the federal level), local government's at all level have their own decision making role over the park. To balance the authority and decision making role of local communities and local administration task forces need to be established at local level (park office and its surrounding districts), region and federal level for all protected areas in the country though not yet implemented uniformly in all. For example in SMNP there is task force at local level responsible to evaluate the planning and follow up implementation of conservation activities in the park. As the park is located

between four weredas administrations (lower levels of government structure), the task force composed of the four weredas administrators and relevant weredas level organization heads and the park wardens. The leader of the task force is one of the weredas administrators who will be changed every year. Similarly, there are task forces assumed at the region and federal levels though it is not as such functional and work in organized manner. Therefore, effort is underway and will be continued to strengthen these important task forces to ensure community participation, engagement in the conservation and benefit sharing because of the property

## **2.7. *Boundary Modification Dossier and General Management Plan***

**Decision 41 COM 7A.13 Paragraph 11** :- Reiterates its repeated request to the State Party to submit a proposal for a Significant Boundary Modification through the preparation of a new nomination as per Decisions **35 COM 7A.9** and **40 COM 7A.43**, in order to harmonize the boundaries of the property with the new boundaries of the national park; and also on

Paragraph11: Requests in addition the State Party to initiate the development of a new GMP to encompass the expanded Simien Mountains National Park boundaries and to further refine the policy and management framework with the objectives to reduce overgrazing, better manage tourism and infrastructures and promote alternative livelihoods;

As noted in the last report, a draft nomination dossier has already been produced by the State Party with the financial support of UNESCO. Similarly, the newly gazetted boundaries map of the property including the required buffer zone have been completed and it will be part of the aforementioned document. The final map has been submitted to UNESCO this year.

As noted in section 2.6.2 above as per the per the recommendation of the 2017 IUCN reactive mission attention has been given to develop the new General Management Plan (GMP) of the property considering the management of the newly included land and buffer zones of the national park on the recent gazetment. This activity is considered in the action plan of the upcoming projects as a priority activity and at the end of 2019 the park will have a new GMP which will take into account the newly added land and buffer zones around the park. The elaboration of the new GMP is directly related to the new nomination.

Both finalization of the already developed nomination dossier and development of new GMP have been considered in the plan of the upcoming projects in SMNP. Once the new GMP and the boundary modification dossier are finalized, the State Party will submit nomination dossier to the World Heritage Committee for recognition of the Re-gazettal of the Extended Park Boundaries in the World Heritage list.

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