



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

World Heritage

45 COM

# AMENDMENT

Item of the Agenda	WHC/23/45.COM/8B
Amended Draft Decision	45 COM 8B.26
Amendment submitted by the Delegation of....	Egypt
Date of submission	Ethiopia, South Africa

Draft Decision: 45 COM 8B.26

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/23/45.COM/8B and WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B2,

2. **Inscribes** the nomination of Nyungwe National Park to the World heritage list under criterion (x)

2. ~~Refers~~ the nomination of Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda, back to the State Party, taking note of the potential of the nominated property to meet criterion (x), in order to allow it to complete protection and management arrangements to fully meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines through the development and adoption of a new management plan, to follow the expired 2012-2021 Management Plan and based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, including the management system for the proposed buffer zone;

3. Adopts the following statement of outstanding universal value

**Brief synthesis**

The property is part of the Albertine Rift Ecoregion and of the Albertine Rift section of the Afro-montane Regional Centre of Endemism. With its 101,900 ha, it represents the second largest area of mountain forest in this exceptionally rich ecoregion. It covers an altitudinal gradient of 1,470 m (1,480-2,950 m) and harbours a full range of climax, pioneer and secondary forest formations known from this elevation interval. It is not only home to forest habitats, however: it also has bamboo thickets, vast peat bogs located between 1,650 and 2,550 m above sea level, as well as high altitude moors and grasslands. All of its environments are over 95% intact and are therefore highly representative for the mountain landscapes of this ecoregion.

NNP is also one of the only sites of this ecoregion which still ensures the continuation of the various dynamic processes which characterise this montane ecosystem. In particular have to be mentioned the various plant successions which take place within

the peat bogs or which characterise the colonisation process of meadows and moors, the interactions between dense forests and bamboo thickets, and the interaction between dense forests and open-canopy forests.

In addition, NNP is home to 89 species of vertebrates, endemic to the Albertine Rift and 28 threatened species of vertebrates. It is also home to very rare relict environments of the Last Glacial Maximum (Cliffortia scrub) and even from before the Last Glacial Maximum (the at least 43,000 years old Kamiranzovu swamp forests). Besides the Kamiranzovu swamp preserves in the depth of its peat accumulations the pollen archives of the last few hundred thousands of years (perhaps 300,000). On the whole, the NNP covers the best protected and second largest mountain forest of the Albertine Rift region.

Its fauna is almost complete and the four species which became locally extinct during the latter half of the 20th century (giant forest hog, buffalo, savanna elephant, and leopard) will be reintroduced.

#### **Criterion (x)**

The intact forest ecosystem of the property supports a wide variety of forest types as well as non-forest montane environments such as grasslands, moors, thickets and peat bogs. These environments are home to a total of 1,468 species of vascular plants (143 ferns, two or three gymnosperms and 1,322 angiosperms). Among these, 240 species are endemic to the Albertine Rift, at least 32 of which are endemic to Rwanda, and 76 species are threatened to varying degrees. Since parts of the forests are hyper-humid with a very abundant flora of epiphytes, the Orchidaceae are particularly well represented with 198 species, 59 of which are endemic to the Albertine Rift with 18 endemic to Rwanda. In all 18 species are threatened to varying degrees.

As for its fauna, this ecosystem preserves currently 101 species of mammals, including 20 endemic of the Albertine Rift, two species endemic to Rwanda and 14 endangered species. Among these species are 14 primate species (or taxa) and the populations of the l'Hoest's monkey and the Albertine Rift race (ruwenzorii) of the Angola colobus are probably among the most important for these two species.

The population of over 300 chimpanzees is not very large, but it is important for the preservation of the eastern race schweinfurthii of this endangered species. The avifauna has 351 species, including 31 (84%) of the 37 known endemic species of the Albertine Rift and 10 threatened species. In particular, NNP is home to the only large population of the Grauer's rush warbler, an endangered Albertine Rift endemic, living in a protected area. Reptiles number 46 species, 14 (33%) of which are endemic to the Albertine Rift but only one species is endangered.

Amphibians number 32 species, 21 (69%) of which are endemic to the Albertine Rift and two endemic to Rwanda. In addition, three species are threatened. The entomofauna has at least 290 species of butterflies, including 47 species endemic of the Albertine Rift and 3 local endemic taxa.

#### **Statement of Integrity**

The NNP covers an area of 101,967 ha. It is totally uninhabited and is over 95% intact. Its buffer zone covers an area of 10,085 ha (Figure 2). It essentially comprises a narrow and discontinuous belt of exotic woods (pine or eucalyptus plantations) whose function is to mark the boundary of the national park, to produce wood for the human populations of the periphery and to prevent any further encroachment.

As Rwandan farmers practice intensive and permanent agriculture, it was impossible to create a wider buffer zone without harming the farmers or degrading the forests.

The adjacent regions of NNP indeed support human population densities of the order of 300-420/km<sup>2</sup>. Rwandan farmers are strict food producers, however, and rely very little on the spontaneous resources of the park. Also, all water courses flow out of the park so that pollution risks are extremely low.

In the long term, its size, its very rugged and complex relief, its dense hydrographic network, its important gradients in altitude and rainfall, and its very diverse plant

formations, make this montane forest ecosystem capable of withstanding climate changes — at least those predicted by the current climate models.

### **Protection and management requirements**

As with all Central African forests, whether lowland or mountainous, poaching is an inevitable threat to wildlife. This threat is much less important than in the Guinean-Congolian lowland forests, but the fight against poaching is an unavoidable necessity. It is done both on the ground within the limits of NNP and among the populations in the form of intelligence gathering. Paradoxically, the high density of human populations around the park, which in itself constitutes a potential threat, facilitates the fight against poaching, because everyone knows what everyone is doing. Boundary encroachment remains also a potential threat in some places. Overall it is only anecdotal. Nevertheless, it requires constant monitoring of the boundaries.

Tourism will be developed as soon as possible, including domestic tourism, to generate fund. Apart from essential management activities, research and tourism, no extractive activity is authorised. Bamboo cutting and collection of medicinal plants exist but are not threatening the integrity of the park. Illegal gold or coltan mining are more a problem and require constant monitoring. Many illegal miners come from Burundi. Border surveillance is carried out in collaboration with the army, but it could be made more efficient by the rehabilitation of a track running along the border and accessible only to park staff, military patrols and possibly some tourists.

In the long term the most important challenges are of a socio-economic nature. They are based on the strong demographic growth in the peripheral regions of the park, the great poverty of the peripheral populations and their very low education level. The development of an adequate Community strategy will therefore be of paramount importance.

Along with the fight against poaching and the various surveillance activities, regular monitoring is organized, both of the actions implemented and the results obtained, the state of the main wildlife populations, and the state of the vegetation. Estimates of the populations densities of primates, duikers and other ungulates, as well as of traces of human activity are expected to be organized all over the park every two years. Reintroduction of locally extinct species will be implemented.

All these surveillance and monitoring activities are provided for legally, mainly by the law on the protection of animals and environment.

#### **3.4. Recommends the State Party to give consideration to the following:**

a) Extend the buffer zone of the nominated property in line with the recommendations in the IUCN evaluation report and to enhance the connectivity between the component parts; Implement the provisions of the Law Governing National Parks and Nature reserves with regards to the management of buffer zones, with a special focus on agreements with Tea estates owners in the buffer zone

a)

b) Ensure traffic on roads crossing the nominated property is reduced following the upgrade of an alternative road to the north of the nominated property.

c) To fully implement the updated General Management Plan (2023 – 2032)

b)