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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Bureau of the World Heritage Committee

Thirteenth session

27-30 June 1989

Salle VI

ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Monitoring the state of conservation of natural World Heritage properties and related technical problems

The attached report has been prepared by IUCN and is submitted to the Bureau for appropriate consideration.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

Agenda Item 4: Monitoring of the State of Conservation of World Heritage
Properties and Related Technical Problems

IUCN MONITORING REPORT
ON NATURAL PROPERTIES TO THE WORLD HERITAGE BUREAU, JUNE 1989

A. NATURAL PROPERTIES ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

1. Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania

As reported to the 12th meeting of the Committee, conditions here have substantially improved over the past few years when the "warning light" first went on in 1983. Continued support and surveillance is required but the main threats are now under control. On 2 March, a letter from the Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism agreed that the area can now be removed from the Danger List.

B. OTHER NATURAL PROPERTIES

2. Tai National Park, Côte d'Ivoire

As reported to the Committee on five previous occasions, this park has lost much of its integrity since it was inscribed in 1982. The number of elephants for example is now down to less than 100 from 1800 in 1979. Build-up of human population pressures in the buffer zone, gold mining, illegal forest cutting, and poaching continue although a major new WWF project is attempting to improve the situation. IUCN reiterates its concern over the future of this park and again recommends that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire considers nominating Tai for the List of World Heritage in Danger.

3. Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras

Problems with illegal settlement, logging and poaching were brought to the attention of the Committee at its 12th Session. The concerns are still valid and the authorities should again be asked to consider nominating the site for the danger list and to take strong measures to avert further damage to the site (possibly using emergency assistance from the World Heritage fund).

4. Niokolo Koba National Park, Senegal

The Government of Senegal is proposing a new road which would bisect the park and connect two villages on either side. IUCN has conducted an environmental impact study of the proposal for the EEC and has suggested an alternate route that would eliminate damage to the site. The World Bank has also expressed its concern over the possible impacts on the site. The Bureau should request a statement of the position of the Senegal Government and urge them to adopt the alternative route.

5. Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Reserves, Zimbabwe

Mobil Oil is about to begin an oil exploration programme in the Zambesi valley including the above reserves. On request of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, IUCN prepared environmental impact guidelines which would be built into the contract between Mobil and the Government. There are possibilities that seismic surveys could be conducted without construction of trace lines through the park but substantial impacts would still be experienced. Ideally, no exploration activity should be permitted within the boundaries of the World Heritage site. The Bureau should express its concern over oil exploration in the site and inform both the Zimbabwean officials and Mobil Oil that any further consideration of the proposal should be approached with great caution. At the same time Zimbabwe should be commended by the Committee for its efforts to protect the remaining rhino and elephant populations that have been under intense pressure from poachers over the past four years (over 30 human lives have also been lost in anti-poaching operations since 1986).

6. Ichkeul National Park, Tunisia

Although the integrity of the wetlands of this park remains in doubt due to the increasing interruption of fresh water inflow, there have been several improvements to management in the past year. These include the opening of a visitor centre, the institution of some controls on cattle grazing and the hiring of additional staff. These are all commendable initiatives. However, the main exercise to build the Tindja sluice to control water flow has still not been completed. This is the single most important activity that is needed and will also require a major effort to train specialised staff in its operation (funds are available for this through IWRB). Work on two other drainage canals as recommended in the Ramsar Convention monitoring report has not commenced. The Bureau should provide further encouragement to the Tunisian authorities to step up efforts to implement these plans.

7. Sangay National Park, Ecuador

IUCN carried out a monitoring mission to this site in March and has submitted an advisory report to the Director of National Parks. With the assistance of an IUCN/WWF project there have been many improvements to management of the park since it was inscribed in 1983. Most of the boundary has been marked, there are more field staff and guard posts and local extension programmes are regularly conducted. There are, however, several worrying issues that need attention. First is the colonisation pressure on the western boundary of the park and a proposal to excise a large section of land for settlement. A second problem is the lack of essential operating equipment as well as a research and public use programme. The 1979 management plan is also urgently in need of updating to address these problems and to include consideration of cooperative activities in the buffer zone. The Fundación Natura, a leading Ecuadorian NGO, is working with the Ministry of Agriculture with funds through a "debt swap" arrangement and has itemised a list of priority needs. The Bureau should express concern over the proposed excision and encourage the authorities in Ecuador to submit a formal request for technical assistance in time for consideration at the next Committee meeting.

8. Manu National Park, Peru

The threat from plans by Shell Oil and Petroperu for oil and gas exploration along the northern boundary of the park has subsided. Undoubtedly this will be raised again in future, but, except for some settlers moving to the area in anticipation of future development, there are no current serious management issues that need to be followed up by the Bureau.

9. Iguazú National Park, Argentina/Iguaçu National Park, Brazil

These two parks which share the famous waterfalls on the border of Argentina and Brazil were separately listed in 1984 and 1987. Since then, the park agencies of the two countries have held a seminar to coordinate their management efforts in protecting the site. This includes harmonisation of the two management plans, joint planning of tourism developments, and cooperation in law enforcement, research and monitoring. This action is to be commended as the falls and the surrounding forest area are truly one integrated unit and such transfrontier cooperation between State Parties is to be encouraged. The Administración de Parques Nacionales de la Argentina has also recently opened a new Centre for Subtropical Research in Iguazú.

The Bureau may wish to act on the anomaly of having this site listed twice on the World Heritage list and to suggest to the State Parties that, in future, it could be given the name "Iguazú/Iguaçu National Parks, Argentina/Brazil."

10. Sagarmatha National Park, Nepal

One of the main cultural landmarks of this site, the Tengboche monastery, caught fire and burned to the ground on 19 January. The structure was a classic example of Sherpa monistic architecture and was the best known such structure in the park. As the fire was a direct result of the use of a new hydro electricity generator, there have been suggestions of the appropriateness of such technology in the park.

11. Mount Nimba Reserve, Guinea/Côte d'Ivoire

There is still some uncertainty regarding the commencement of a World Bank-financed iron ore mine project in the Guinean section of the site. IUCN has had no replies to its letters of concern to the relevant authorities. A Unesco mission in October/November 1988 has reviewed the management of the site and impacts of the adjacent mine in Liberia. The Committee should register their concerns with the World Bank over further damage to this site.

12. Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada

Over 50% of the hybrid bison herd in the park have been found to be infected with either tuberculosis and/or brucellosis. These diseased animals pose a threat to humans, domestic livestock, and disease-free wood bison herds. An environmental assessment panel is currently exploring at least four options of how to control this problem including the elimination of all diseased animals. As the bison herd is one of the major values of this site, the Committee should request to be kept informed of the results of the Panel review.

13. Yellowstone National Park, United States of America

Following up on the 1988 wildfires in this park and discussions at the 12th Committee meeting, the United States has made available further information on the results of the fire management policy review and the fire recovery plan for the park. Other State Parties with interest in this subject should be aware of the existence of these materials which may be obtained from the Director of the US National Park Service.

14. Garamba National Park, Zaire

(verbal report)

C. GENERAL

IUCN agrees with the growing interest by States Parties to the question of monitoring of natural properties inscribed on the list. The above short reports are brief summaries of lengthy reports and files on each site where significant activity is occurring. An up-dating of data sheets on all sites is currently in progress and a "Directory of National World Heritage Sites" will be published with limited copies available later this year. To step up and improve the approach to monitoring, IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas is to form a working group to seek ways to strengthen this essential part of the Convention. - Nakwe!

It should also be noted that the Ramsar Convention Bureau is now operational at IUCN Headquarters and a close working relationship exists regarding the nine sites that are on both Ramsar and World Heritage lists. The Ramsar monitoring procedure (attached) has used the World Heritage as a model and the sharing of results in this area is mutually reinforcing.

RAMSAR

MONITORING PROCEDURE

1. It comes to the attention of the Bureau that the ecological character of a listed wetland is changing or is likely to change as a result of technological development, pollution or other human interference.
2. Where appropriate, the Bureau shall ask the Contracting Party or Parties concerned to provide further information concerning the situation.
3. Where, as a result of this procedure and other information available to the Bureau, the Bureau is of the opinion that there is evidence of a significant change or likely change in the ecological character of a listed wetland, the Bureau shall collaborate with the Contracting Party or Parties concerned to arrive at an acceptable solution and the Bureau may offer advice and assistance to that Party or those Parties, if required. The Bureau shall inform the Standing Committee of any action it has taken in this connection.
4. If it does not appear that an acceptable solution can be readily achieved, the Bureau shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee, acting through the Chairman and Secretary, provided by the Bureau, may pursue the matter, in direct contact with the Contracting Party or Parties concerned and, where appropriate, with other responsible agencies or bodies, with a view to helping to find a solution.
5. In the event of alterations to the List or changes in ecological character in wetlands included therein, the Standing Committee shall arrange for the information to be circulated for discussion at the next Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in accordance with Article 8 paragraph 2 (d) of the Convention.
6. The Bureau shall periodically review and report progress on the conservation status of sites to which its attention has been drawn under this procedure. To facilitate follow-up, the Bureau shall maintain a register of activities undertaken in this connection.