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## Launching Protected Area Network Management and Building Capacity in Post-conflict South Sudan

### Project Coordination Meeting

#### MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

**Date and time:** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013; 10.10 – 13.40

**Location:** WCS Meeting Room, Juba, South Sudan

**Participants:**

- ▶ Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang, Minister (Chair), MWCT
- ▶ Lt Gen. Alfred Akwoch, Advisor, MWCT
- ▶ Lt Gen. Fraser Tong, Advisor, MWCT
- ▶ Lt Gen. (Rtd) Charles Acire, Undersecretary, MWCT
- ▶ Maj Gen. Philip C. Majak, Director General Wildlife, MWCT
- ▶ Giel Thier Waan, Legal Advisor, MWCT
- ▶ Col. Minasona Lero Peter, Director of Wildlife Management, MWCT
- ▶ Rachel Karioki, Deputy Office Chief, OTCM, USAID
- ▶ Andrew Shuruma, Programme Analyst, UNDP
- ▶ Martin Dramani, Programme Analyst, UNDP
- ▶ Proscovia Dira, Project Associate, UNDP
- ▶ Dr Paul Elkan, Country Director, WCS
- ▶ Rob Craig, Deputy Director, WCS
- ▶ Dave Henson, Protected Area Project Coordinator, WCS (rapporteur)
- ▶ Michael Lopidia, Boma N.P. Coordinator, WCS
- ▶ Paul Peter Awol, Badingilo N.P. Coordinator, WCS
- ▶ Brendan Buzzard, Southern NP Assistant Field Coordinator, WCS

#### Introductions and welcoming remarks

- Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang, opened the meeting by welcoming the project partners and clarifying that this was the first quarterly coordination meeting supporting the implementation of the GEF Project.
- Dr Paul Elkan, WCS Country Director, highlighted that this meeting was the result of a resolution at the Project Steering Committee Meeting, held in November 2012 at the UNDP offices, and is intended as an opportunity to review progress and challenges over the last quarter, and plans for the next quarter.
- Rachael Karioki (USAID) and Andrew Shuruma (UNDP) both also expressed their keen interest in supporting the project's implementation, and were pleased to have the opportunity to support the coordination of the project
- Rob Craig, WCS Deputy Director, then briefly provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, and continued with the review of the first technical aspect to be covered, as detailed in the following section.

## Summary of Presentations

- Rob Craig first provided an overview of progress made supporting the MWCT at the central level under Objectives 1 and 3 of the project. This was followed by a brief review of each focal protected area with: Dave Henson, WCS Protected Area Project Coordinator, reviewing Southern National Park; and Michael Lopidia, Boma N.P. Coordinator and Paul Peter Awol, Badingilo N.P. Coordinator, providing an overview of Boma and Badingilo sites respectively. An overview of these presentations is provided in the Annex.

## Closing and Next Steps

- Discussions were held following the presentations, and a number of decisions and action items were discussed and/or agreed. These were summarized by Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang as the meeting drew to a close and are set out below in the following section.
- Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang then closed the meeting by appreciating WCS for their efforts in implementing the project and by thanking those present for their time and effort participating in the meeting.

## MEETING RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

### Technical Priorities

- Development of Protected Area Network Strategic Plan. This will identify any new protected areas that should be established, any existing areas that should be degazetted, and outline potential revisions to the borders of existing areas to optimize their effectiveness.
- Convene consultative workshops for the draft bills for Tourism and Wildlife & Protected Areas. Once the Wildlife Bill is approved this will provide the legal framework for the implementation of the PAN Strategic Plan and subsequent demarcation of protected area borders.
- Promote transboundary collaboration, especially transboundary wildlife law enforcement to address the poaching and trafficking of wildlife products. Previous work on developing formal collaboration between South Sudan should be re-invigorated with Uganda, DRC (especially between Lantoto and Garamba Park), and Ethiopia (especially between Boma and Gambella Parks).
- Improve rapid response capabilities. Greater use can be made of WCS fixed wing aircraft to provide surveillance and feedback to anti-poaching operations. In addition, the potential for the augmentation of these operations with helicopters can be considered, possibly through collaboration with the SPLA.
- Support targeted capacity building. Particularly regarding the training of wildlife force personnel to reorientate them from their traditional role as soldiers, towards their new role as wildlife rangers. In addition, training will be provided to MWCT media department, to enable them to develop publicity materials.
- Develop publicity materials to promote South Sudan as a tourism destination. Linked to the training mentioned in the previous point, and the provision of media equipment under the GEF project, brochures and posters will be produced to raise awareness of the country's tourism attractions.
- Document community engagement. As community engagement and awareness raising continues around the focal protected areas methods and lessons learnt should be documented to enable the development of generic guidelines to support such activities around other parks in South Sudan.

### MWCT Administrative Issues

- Appointment/deployment of senior protected area staff:
  - Badingilo N.P. requires a senior officer to be appointed to the area as park warden to oversee all operations and serve as a focal point for project activities
  - Southern N.P. clarification is needed on who is serving as park warden for Lakes State sector and project focal point in the field
  - Boma N.P. Park Headquarters at Nyat needs to be utilized. At the moment the Park

Warden and many rangers are basing themselves at Itti and other senior Boma officers are in Juba. Need the redeployment of Park Warden and senior officers to Park HQ and clarification is needed on the division of ranger forces between the HQ location and Itti, with sufficient rangers being stationed at the HQ to support operations.

- Deployment of ranger forces:
  - Badingilo N.P. requires more than the current actual deployment of around 60 rangers to the park to enable effective management of the area (ideally around 180 for present ranger posts)
  - Southern N.P. requires more than the current deployment of around 65 rangers in the Lakes State section to enable effective management of the area (ideally around 250)
- Retention of trained MWCT personal in focal areas. Rangers trained in focal areas should be retained at the site, wherever possible. Ideally men trained at Badingilo and Southern Parks should be redeployed to these areas. Details of the MWCT staff trained in these areas can be provided by WCS.

## **Project Management**

- Project coordination meetings will take place quarterly, ideally in the week following the submission of the quarterly project reports (which takes place one month after quarter end).
- WCS as the project implementer will provide the secretariat for the meetings. The first point on the agenda will be a review of the resolutions and action items from the previous meeting. Meetings will last for a maximum of two hours.
- The next project coordination meeting will take place in the first week of May. The meeting will be held at the UNDP offices in Juba. As the secretariat, WCS will send of the necessary documents, including the agenda in advance of the meeting.

## **ANNEX: SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS**

### **Central MWCT Support and Capacity Building**

#### *Progress Past Quarter*

This has included the completion of the draft of both the Tourism and the Wildlife Conservation & Protected Area Bills, building on the associated policies that were developed and approved by the Council of Ministers last year. Concerning support to MWCT communications, high level awareness about South Sudan's wildlife resources and the urgency for conservation action has been generated through the press conference for the first Wildlife Conservation Day in December and the recently initiated montly WCS newsletter.

The contract was signed in January for the Akobo - Pochalla Road Conservation Project designed to mitigate negative environmental impact of the road, which will support the construction of three new ranger posts, the procurement of equipment (including vehicles and HF radios) and the undertaking of outreach and ranger training.

#### *Plans for Next Quarter*

The consultative and approval processes will be supported for the various policies and bills. The development of subsidiary regulations required by the Tourism Bill, and a tourism master plan to guide the development of South Sudan's tourism product. Relating to the wildlife bill, the assessment and development of the strategy with MWCT to guide rationalisation of the country's protected area network, with the aim of identifying areas to be degazetted, new areas to be gazetted and any revisions of borders needed, will be a priority, with a planned workshop on this subject later in the year. The option for supporting an institutional review process for MWCT will be further explored. Law enforcement monitoring training will be undertaken in April for all project supported areas. The MWCT website will be completed and work will start on developing brochures and other targeted conservation messages (especially relating

to key species at risk of extinction in the coming years). The equipments procured by the project to support the wildlife management, research, training and media departments will be handed over at an agreed date and follow-up training provided as required. Finally, contracting for construction and the procurement of equipment under the Akobo – Pochalla Road conservation mitigation intervention will begin.

### *Key Challenges*

1. Government austerity measures have restricted the operations and ability of MWCT and other government counterparts in undertake their role in project activities. The situation has also put pressure to generate alternative sources of revenue for the country, for example through large-scale commercial concession allocations that risk negatively impacting conservation areas, especially wildlife corridors.
2. Insecurity in Jonglei State has restricted activities around Boma National Park.
3. Clarity of jurisdictional roles and responsibilities between the central ministry and the state governments, as well as effectively integrating non-military technical staff into Wildlife Service leadership hierarchy remains a challenge.

## **Southern National Park**

### *Progress Past Quarter*

Progress was made with the establishment of a permanent WCS camp at the SNP HQ location, with work on the construction of the building itself continuing. In addition, four stores/radio rooms have been built at outposts in the Lakes State Section of SNP. Ranger equipment has been deployed to each location, along with trained store keepers, HF radios and trained radio operators. Rangers have also been trained and systematic patrols began at one outpost.

### *Plans for Next Quarter*

Will include, the expansion of activities into Warrap and/or Western Equatoria/Western Bhar el Ghazal States through additional construction of ranger posts, along with the continued support to law enforcement activities in Lakes State (if rangers can be re-deployed to the area – see below). Improvement of SNP HQ location, including establishment of stores and temporary office and construction of airstrip will also continue, along with pursuit of opportunities for boreholes and access road(s) to HQ and ranger posts.

### *Key Challenges*

1. Confusion over park warden and counterpart for WCS to work with in Lakes State, whether previous Ag. Warden or new appointment.
2. Insufficient men deployed to SNP to enable management of the area. Around 250 requested, and have been ordered to the Park by Maj Gen. Philip C. Majak, DG Wildlife, MWCT, but are not yet deployed.
3. Many of the 45 rangers trained by MWCT/WCS in SNP have been redeployed. Ideally these men should be included in any men redeployed to the park, where possible.

## **Boma National Park**

### *Progress Past Quarter*

On-the-job training given to seven rangers on how to use LEM tools (GPS, digital cameras, compass, law enforcement monitoring forms, and binoculars). Furniture and office stationery for BNP HQ and Churi Outpost were delivered in Nyat in February 2013. The furniture (tables and chairs) are being assembled after which they will be handed over to the BNP authorities. Terrain construction personnel are in Nyat working on the completion of the garage, ablution block at the HQ.

Law enforcement operations have had a number of successes, including eight poachers were arrested at Locheret hill (south of BNP), and two AK47s and seven rounds have been confiscated. In addition, 1,180 Kg

of bushmeat has also been confiscated. Four of the arrested poachers were prosecuted (2 in Nov and 2 in Dec) in Boma Court.

#### *Plans for Next Quarter*

Will include, the construction of additional ranger outposts in key locations, as the security situation allows, and the completion of the garage at the BNP HQ, as well as an extension of the airstrip and the construction of a permanent guard house at the airstrip. In addition, the roll-out of HF radio installation at strategic locations will continue, as the security situation allows.

#### *Key Challenges*

1. Many rangers (more than 40) including the Park Warden and senior officers spend most of their time in Itti. They have two parades, one in Nyat and another one in Itti. The rangers in Nyat are the only ones rotating in duties at the HQ. This is resulting in underutilization of BNP HQ.
2. Many senior officers have been staying in Juba for long periods of time. As with the point above, this is undermining the ability of the forces to operate in the field.
3. The current insecurity in Pibor County that has spilled over to some areas in Boma Payam and has had a negative effect on all activities.

### **Badingilo National Park**

#### *Progress Past Quarter*

Construction of the garage at the Bala Pools HQ location is nearing completion with plastering, painting and wiring underway. Construction of the Ranger Administration Post at Lafon is also well underway and should be completed by April. Socio-economic research and community awareness raising has also continued in key areas around the park.

Law enforcement has had some notable successes during the quarter, with four poachers arrested south of Lafon in February who are currently awaiting trial, and two SPLA soldiers were also recently arrested carrying around 80kg of bushmeat.

#### *Plans for Next Quarter*

Completion of construction/fencing at Bala Pools and delivery of equipment to operationalise the HQ, and repair of Gerkidi Post to facilitate its operationalisation. The community leadership training that was postponed due to security issues will be rescheduled and proceed now that security has improved in the area. Socio-economic research and community awareness raising will also continue.

#### *Key Challenges*

1. There has been no Warden allocated to Badingilo National Park for an extensive period of time. The officers appointed to oversee operations are doing a good job, but a senior officer is needed to manage the park and ranger force, and to act as a counterpart to WCS.
2. The forces at Mangalla have been gradually reducing over time. Currently there are about 60 rangers in Badingilo National Park, with only four officers on the HQ side of the park. This is insufficient to effectively control/manage the area.
3. There is the continued problem of wildlife poaching by SPLA forces, as well as community members. In addition, there are increasing threats from charcoal production and agriculture both from the wildlife forces and communities living around the park.