

The World Parks Congress, which takes place every ten years, is the nearest that the generally individualistic world of protected areas gets to a global policy-making forum. What the Congress lacks in decision-making power it makes up for in influence, both as a vehicle for directing the World Commission on Protected Areas and more generally through helping to shape national protected area priorities. Which means that the fifth World Parks Congress, meeting in Durban in September 2003 is an event of key importance for anyone interested in the future of protected areas. And this meeting is particularly significant, because it is followed almost immediately by the World Forestry Congress in Quebec and a few months later by a special Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kuala Lumpur that focuses on protected areas, so that World Parks Congress recommendations and the planned 'Durban Accord' can be fed almost immediately into two other major policy forums.

As they select from the piles of publications and attend numerous workshops, the three thousand delegates have an opportunity to contribute to a vision for how protected areas should develop over the next decade. What exactly should they be aiming for? If the latter part of the twentieth century saw a rush to protect critically threatened habitats to a T*W, band1nven



Forest management and protection in Europe

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe closes this guide

Europe is the poorest continent in terms of natural forests: data collected by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe found that in most countries over 99 per cent of forests had undergone major modification during the last 200 years and most of the forests disappeared back in Neolithic times. Nonetheless, forest protection remains at lower levels than in many developing countries. An analysis of protected area coverage carried out by the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Programme in 2000, showed that less than seven per cent of Europe's 3.26 million km² of forests are in strictly protected areas – well short of the goal of 10 per cent coverage contained in the joint IUCN/WWF *Forest for Life Strategy* and particularly disappointing in one of the world's richest regions with a high level of environmental awareness. A new WWF report, *The State of Europe's Forest Protection*, surveyed forest protection in 16 countries and concluded that there had been virtually no change in either quality or quantity of forest protection in the ensuing years. Only two countries had made significant progress (UK and Latvia), while four (Germany, Spain, Norway and Hungary) had slightly improved their performance, six (Switzerland, the Netherlands, Turkey, Romania, Estonia and Slovakia) showed no overall change, and four (France, Austria, Finland and Poland) actually appeared to be slightly worse. Only four countries (UK, Spain, Hungary and Slovakia) achieved over 50 per cent of the maximum achievable scores.

In April 2003, Ministers from 44 European states and the European Union gathered in Vienna for the 4th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and environmental organisations hoped that forest protection would be high on the agenda. In 1993, Signatory States at an earlier Ministerial Conference in Helsinki committed themselves to "establish at national or regional levels a coherent ecological network of climax, primary and other special forests aimed at maintaining or re-establishing ecosystems that are representative or threatened". Despite this, protection is not sufficiently reflected in the resolutions of the Vienna Declaration. Instead, economic viability of forests and development was the focus of the conference as was expected. WWF is lobbying hard for additional protection, and urges governments to demonstrate that they are willing to make a difference for forest protection within individual countries through credible action in the forest.

It is also promoting improved management of forest protected areas through use of its newly developed Rapid Assessment and Prioritization Methodology (see page 11), to improve the overall effectiveness of protected areas.

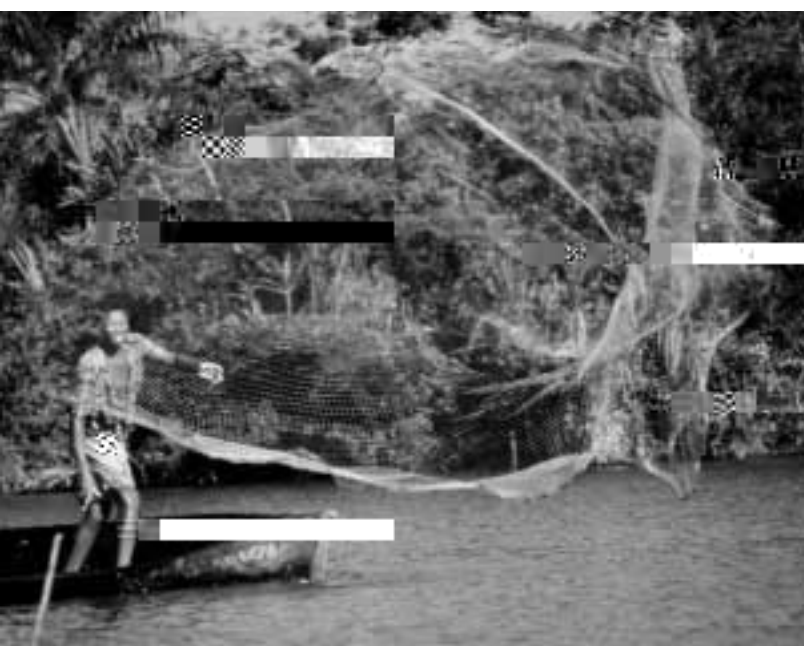
Another Helsinki resolution with a large, unfinished agenda concerns "Forestry Cooperation with Countries with Economies in Transition". Following the forest restitution and privatisation process in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), there are three million new forest owners now managing six million hectares of forest – which presents a challenge both for the owners and for forest administrations. IUCN, government and NGO members are cooperating in Central and Eastern Europe, along with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Confederation of European Forest Owners to implement an initiative called "Support to Multifunctional Forestry in Central and Eastern European Countries". Within this initiative one project, "Strengthening Biodiversity Conservation Aspects of Private and Community Forestry in the EU Accession Countries in Central and Eastern Europe", aims to assist forest owners in ten project countries with the implementation of multi-functional forest management over the next four years.

One particular issue relates to the definition of a forest protected area. For some time, MCPFE has argued that the IUCN definition of, and categories for, protected areas do not meet European needs. MCPFE has thus developed a classification system of its own, which caused considerable concern in the European section of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), because of the risks of confusion. In 2002, an MCPFE expert level meeting led to a compromise which has brought the two systems more closely together, although clear differences still remain between IUCN and MCPFE on the definition and thus on their understanding of the overall area of protected forests in Europe. WCPA is working on the development of additional guidance for applying the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories to forest protected areas (see page 13) and IUCN is urging parties to the MCPFE to take this guidance into account as it becomes available in the near future.

The World Bank has estimated that the loss of revenue to producer and consumer governments due to illegal logging is US\$5 billion annually. The announcement by U.S. State Department Secretary Colin Powell in July 2003 of a global initiative to assist developing countries reduce illegal logging and address corruption in the forest sector is thus welcome. Over 50 groups, including the U.S. Government, private sector and NGOs are taking part in the initiative.

U.S. State Department priorities for the initiative will be to support good governance and build country capacity to establish and strengthen legal regimes and law enforcement. The initiative incorporates a number of programmes developed by WWF, particularly the use of market forces to encourage responsible forest management and discourage trade in illegally harvested products; improved forestry practices in developing countries; and the promotion of forest sector reforms. In Peru, for instance, where the eradication of illegal logging has been made a national priority, WWF has been working with the government to reform forest concessions and bring logging under legal control. The Sustainable Forest Products Global Alliance, WWF's multi-sector partnership with partners including U.S. Agency for International Development and Metafore, aimed at making markets work for forests and people, is a major component of the illegal logging initiative.

WWF is also pleased that protected areas are a strong focus of the Administration's initiative. However, better enforcement for protected areas, by itself, will not be enough. Forests throughout the tropics are being undermined by corruption, lack of





Protection First

The Deh Cho First Nations and the Government of Canada have recently concluded an agreement bringing a new large parcel of land under protection in the upper Mackenzie Valley. As a result, a total of 10.1 million ha of pristine northern boreal forest and wetland habitat are now in an interconnected network of culturally and ecologically significant areas. William Carpenter of WWF-Canada reports.

The Deh Cho First Nations (DCFN), comprising 11 small communities in the upper reaches of the Mackenzie Valley in north-west Canada, have lived for thousands of years in balance with the land and its natural resources. Unlike other Aboriginal groups in the Mackenzie Valley, the DCFN have not yet settled their land claims with the federal government. This means that most natural resources are still managed or controlled mainly by the government. Nevertheless, the Government of Canada and the Deh Cho have now reached an agreement on resource development and interim protection. The most recent land withdrawal was signed in April 2003, removing lands from industrial development for an initial five-year period, during which time more detailed resource assessments will be completed. In total the DCFN now have nearly half of their traditional homelands under an interim land withdrawal.

The Mackenzie is one of the world's last remaining great rivers still in its natural state. Its vast watershed covers 1.8 million km², one sixth the size of Canada. However, there are plans to build a major natural gas pipeline along the Valley. In the absence of detailed biophysical information on the region's resources, interim protection of this network of key cultural and ecological areas represents a precautionary step that will help retain future conservation options. This 'Conservation First' approach, taken by northern Aboriginal groups in land use planning and negotiating land claims, is preparatory to establishing an interconnected network of culturally and ecologically significant areas in Deh Cho lands. WWF believes that this approach is fundamental to upholding the principles of sustainable development, and has recognised the initiative as a Gift to the Earth.

News in brief

S : According to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), a decision by Forest Department of the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China to make wildlife protection a priority is having encouraging results. Wild animals, including the Tibetan antelope or chiru, Tibetan gazelles, wild asses and wild yak, that were illegally hunted to the brink of extinction just 10 years ago are beginning to recover, .

S : Environmental News Service, July 28, 2003

Ra : The Deputy Premier of Tasmania, Australia, Paul Lennon, announced in June plans to lift a 20-year logging moratorium on the 'pipeline corridor' within the Tarkine wilderness area of Tasmania. The Tarkine wilderness is the largest remaining temperate rainforest in Australia. International,

develop concrete programmes for forest landscape restoration. Additional recommendations included the reinforcement of public ownership, the need for more information and communication and for national frameworks for private/civil society initiatives.

Over 50 participants from governmental, non governmental, research and intergovernmental agencies from the Mediterranean region (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, etc) were present at the workshop in Morocco to begin discussing ways of implementing forest landscape restoration in the North Africa region. The interest and responses were very positive: forest landscape restoration has been seen as the best approach to recreate the necessary conditions that will allow and secure conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the Maghreb (the area between the Atlas Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea). As a general principle participants believe on the need to develop multifunctional management plans for forest landscapes through the integration of all sectoral policies, and the adequate coordination and participation of all concerned local and national actors. Concrete recommendations included the need to establish pilot national and transboundary programmes in partnership with state entities, intergovernmental agencies such as UNDP, NGOs and local communities, and extend existing programmes and actions at the Mediterranean level for forest landscape restoration to North Africa. In one current example, WWF is currently supporting an integrated forest landscape conservation, development and restoration programme called 'Green Belts against desertification', in a number of Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot areas in Morocco, Tunisia, Portugal and Croatia, in partnership with governments, NGOs, research and intergovernmental

Contemplating an Uncertain Future: Scenarios for Protected Areas



Protected areas are designed to exist in perpetuity, but we know that future conditions are likely to be very different from those that prevail today. Climates will change, human populations will grow and people will migrate, new technologies will arise that may have broad implications for communications and resource management, and violent conflicts are likely to affect many protected areas. While we have no certainty about exactly what changes will occur, and how they will affect protected areas, we still need to develop policies for protected areas that will be robust across a wide range of possible futures.

One important means for thinking about the future is scenario planning. Scenarios are not predictions of the future, but rather are alternative stories of possible futures, helping those interested in protected areas to contemplate issues that may be profoundly important for the future. In order to begin a process of scenario planning, IUCN held a workshop at its Headquarters in April 2003. The workshop drafted three scenarios:

- **The Global Triple Bottom Line.** By 2023, the global community has finally understood that its self-interest will best be served through considering the planet to be one world. The “Global Alliance”, a tripartite international body of governments, the corporate sector, and civil society, has replaced the United Nations to become a global governance body, and the nation state has become less important as a decision maker. The transition was a bumpy one, but protected areas are now playing a critical role in supporting local communities. Protected areas are more financially sustainable, as their value for providing environmental services has become recognised and converted into policy. On the other hand, adapting to climate change remains a major challenge, as moving protected area boundaries is complicated by the large human populations that now cover most of the planet outside protected areas. And the pressures of

tourism have grown to a scale that alarms many protected area managers, as some protected areas seem to be victims of their own success.

- **The Rainbow.** In the year 2023, the world has gone through tumultuous changes that essentially reversed the move toward globalization that seemed inevitable back in 2003. One result was that protected areas were no longer seen as global, or even national, concerns, but were managed for the benefit of local communities. Inevitably, some protected areas that had been imposed by national interests were converted to agriculture, and communities sprang up in desirable locations within former national parks. But in many cases, the local communities saw it as in their enlightened self-interest to maintain the protected areas, with some areas even attaining a sacred status. In the Rainbow world, local interest dominates, with profound implications for protected areas, both positive and negative.
- **Buy Your Eden.** In 2023, economics is the dominant theme, and the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Many protected areas have been privatized, and new ecotourism multinationals are running the worldwide system of “World’s Greatest Nature”, appealing to the prosperous international tourism market. These fortunate few outstanding protected areas (which were called World Heritage Sites until they were purchased by a consortium of private tourism-multinationals) are very well managed for tourism objectives, which often includes maintaining biodiversity, especially of the charismatic type. But the numerous other protected areas that are not deemed to be of sufficient profit potential are suffering from inadequate investment and many fall prey to the growing numbers of desperate rural poor.

It is critical to keep in mind that the scenarios presented here are simply stories, not action plans that are being promoted by any particular interest group. And of course, the stories presented here are vignettes, rather than novels or even short stories. This enables the reader to focus on the broad policy outlines rather than the details that often seem to bog down discussions of many of the most critical issues. Rather than focusing on disagreeable details, we instead were able to focus on the bigger picture that seemed to be less controversial than some of the details of implementation might have been.

We present these scenarios as a way of helping to stimulate new thinking about the possibilities that the future presents, even though we must all realise that the future is unpredictable, both in general and especially in detail. But we hope that this set of scenarios will lead to robust policies that will enable protected areas to prosper no matter what the future may hold.



Protected areas are the cornerstone of the conservation movement. Almost all conservation organisations have targets for the amount of the Earth's surface that should be set aside as protected – both in terms of area and representation of biotic communities. This traditional approach to conservation, however, has often had a negative impact on the livelihoods of people – through forced displacement and/or denying access to natural resources that are vital to human needs. As a result, protected areas have often increased poverty amongst the poorest of the poor. While there has been a great deal of work undertaken to address these issues, the impact of protected areas on poverty remains a complex and often contentious issue. This paper explores the linkages between protected areas and poverty, and discusses some of the ways in which these linkages can be addressed.

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Protected areas and WWF

Leonardo Lacerda, of the Protected Areas Initiative at WWF International, summarises some of WWF's key messages and expectations for the World Parks Congress.

Protected areas play a key role in national and international conservation strategies. The vast majority of these protected areas were identified and gazetted during the 20th century, in what is probably the largest conscious land use change in history. But this growth gives a false impression of the strength of the world's protected area network. Many were created in places that are not the best to protect biodiversity or provide environmental services. There are also notable gaps: for example less than one per cent of the planet's marine and coastal systems enjoy protection, only two per cent of lake systems, and just 0.1 per cent of original forest is protected in the Southern Pacific Islands.

Growth in the extent of protected areas has also not always been matched by implementation: many protected areas have not been legally established and have no management capacity. Even many legally gazetted protected areas remain at risk. Threats range from immediate problems, like poaching, illegal logging and mining, settlement and uncontrolled fires, illegal commercial fisheries, to longer-term problems such as air pollution and climate change; these pressures are driven by underlying causes including poor governance, greed and lack of alternative livelihoods. Even where protected areas remain intact, effectiveness can be reduced by isolation and fragmentation if surrounding use changes dramatically.

Protected areas have been central to the work of WWF for over 40 years, starting with a focus on endangered species and developing into a broader ecoregional approach. Preparations for the World Parks Congress have provided us with an opportunity to reassess this work and confirm the issues which we believe are important for the continued growth and success of the global protected areas network.

Fundamentally, WWF believes that the IUCN definition of a protected area should be supported. We regard biodiversity conservation as the primary aim of protected areas but recognise their many additional benefits.

Completion of ecologically representative protected area networks is the most urgent priority in global protected area programmes, and we believe that ecoregional conservation represents a major opportunity to use science-based approaches to strengthen protected area networks and to place these in a wider context.

Just as important as filling the gaps in the network is the need to ensure that protected areas are managed effectively. To this end, WWF has developed a number of assessment tools (such as Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area

Management, and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) and is implementing regular assessment of management effectiveness in all its protected area projects, leading where necessary to adaptive management.

We believe that protected areas are only viable if they are supported by indigenous and local communities living within or depending on them, and by most other stakeholders at all levels (local, national, regional, and global). In the implementation of our programme, we at WWF are strongly committed to identifying how protected areas can provide mutual benefits for biodiversity and indigenous and local communities. As most protected areas are located in developing countries, we believe that international transfers of resources are essential to support effective management and mitigate any associated negative effects on local people. We also feel that protected area management must be flexible and responsive to local realities and thus support giving more influence to local communities in protected area decision-making and management, for example through co-management and other types of collaborative management agreements.

WWF also believes that protected area networks need to be placed within a wider land/sea mosaic that supports conservation and sustainable development, and that this requires negotiation with other stakeholders to balance ecological, social and economic needs. These partnerships are essential if protected areas are to be integrated into mainstream sustainable development.

Finally, WWF has singled out five key areas where we hope to see positive results at the World Parks Congress:

- **Governments:** government follow-through on existing major protected areas commitments (e.g. Yaoundé Summit, Amazon Region Protected Area Programme (ARPA), etc)
- **Private sector:** major commitments by the private sector relating to policy, recognition of protected areas, land for protection, and pledges of financial support
- **World Summit on Sustainable Development:** implementation of commitments made at the WSSD, particularly the target to substantially reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 and linking this to national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
- **Convention on Biological Diversity:** an agreed programme for the CBD including clear targets, reporting progress on management effectiveness, recognising the threats of climate change to protected areas, strengthening of the ecosystem approach, improved partnerships, changing governance and cooperation with other conventions
- **World Commission on Protected Areas:** clear recommendations and work programmes for each of the WCPA "themes"



throughout China to 1800, covering 16.4 per cent of the total area, with the biodiversity-rich forests of the Upper Yangtze ecoregion expected to gain considerable extra protection over this period.

The Minshan landscape covers 33,000 km² within the ecoregion, in Sichuan and Gansu provinces, located in the transitional zone from subtropical plain to Tibetan plateau, and characterised by steep mountains reaching over 5,000 metres and narrow gorges with torrential waters. It is the most important remaining stronghold for the giant panda. In July 2002, WWF launched the Minshan Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative as a pioneering project to implement the ecoregion vision. The three-year objective is to develop a systematic landscape approach to biodiversity

conservation and community development in the landscape, including planning, negotiating with stakeholders and implementing the resulting decisions.

At workshops in March and July 2003, stakeholders came together to develop a vision and a set of targets for Minshan, based around stabilising populations of critical species, improving ecosystem services and bringing community livelihoods up to the average for China. The project will have multiple components, including elements of protection, management and restoration. There are currently 18 protected areas in the Minshan, including famous panda reserves such as Wanglang. The vision and targets identify the need for five additional areas to complete Minshan's protected area network, including creating new protected areas, extending existing areas and establishing linking corridors. The giant panda is WWF's symbol, but still remains at risk after 40 years of conservation effort. We hope that the ecoregion programme in the Forests of the Upper Yangtze will swing the balance in the favour of this fascinating and elusive animal.

© : Zhu Chunqun, chqzhu@wwfchina.org

The densely forested mountains around the upper Yangtze in China are globally important areas for many species, including the giant panda. Zhu Chunqun, Dong Ke, Ling Lin and Zhang Weidong report on efforts to conserve critical landscapes in the ecoregion.

The Forests of the Upper Yangtze ecoregion extend over 795,000 km², covering all of Sichuan province, Chongqing, much of Shaanxi, parts of several other provinces and stretching into the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. The ecoregion is a hotspot for the giant panda and endangered species like the golden monkey, crested ibis and green-tailed pheasant, and for plants such as the cathaya silver fir, dawn redwood and dove tree.

A biodiversity conservation priority setting exercise was carried out with The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International, drawing on the ecoregion conservation workshop approach and the Systematic Conservation Planning methodology pioneered in New South Wales, Australia. It identified 16 priority landscapes and five large scale corridors and was backed up by an irreplaceability index and a gap analysis based on the priority areas and linkages with existing protected areas.

In 2000, the ecoregion already had 189 protected areas covering just over seven million ha and accounting for 8.9 per cent of the land. These are managed variously by the state (30 protected areas covering 2.1 million ha), provinces (67 covering 1.9 million ha), prefectures, (21 covering 1.3 million ha) and counties (71 covering 1.5 million ha). By 2010, it is aimed to increase the number of protected areas

WWF news in brief

European survey : A WWF-commissioned independent opinion survey across 12 European countries reported that 93 per cent of the population believe it is important that forests are well protected, and 80 per cent believe that there should be more protected forest areas in their country.

Source : WWF Press Release April 24, 2003, www.panda.org/forests/

Recognising community-based conservation

Alexander Belokurov introduces three initiatives recently recognised by WWF as Gifts to the Earth, as globally significant examples of how community-based conservation efforts can protect and manage biodiversity.

Local and indigenous knowledge are playing an increasingly important role in conservation and resource management. Worldwide conservation efforts are progressively being opened to more social approaches that integrate local control over natural resources and benefits to local communities. The three examples of community-based conservation projects given below are far from unique, but they do illustrate the range of options that are available to both local communities and conservationists who are trying to achieve the same goal of sustainable development.

Ecuador

The local governments and rural communities of Baños, Mera and Palora in central Ecuador have committed to protect and sustainably manage 42,052 ha of biologically significant land between Llanganates and Sangay National Parks. These protected areas are part of the Northern

Andean Montane Forest Ecoregion, recognised by WWF as a top priority area for conservation in the tropical Andes. Over half of the identified corridor is made up of natural mountain forest, typical of the northern and central branches of the eastern Andes. The project was initiated by WWF associate, Fundación Natura, the local municipalities, Río Negro parish board and the Ministry of Environment. The ecological corridor links the two parks, and therefore helps to maintain genetic links between plant and animal populations. The corridor is also home to rural communities, who depend on the land and the forest for their survival. Enthusiastic about the initiative, local communities are changing management practices in the corridor by adopting organic agricultural practices and developing ecotourism as an alternative source of income.



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Mexico

Mexico boasts over 55.3 million ha of diverse forest types (around 28 per cent of its land). These forests are important from a biological perspective, and because they provide a wide range of economic benefits and resources for many rural communities. Eighty per cent of Mexico's forest is managed and owned by about 8,000 rural communities and ejidos (a form of land tenure). Despite this dependency, the forests of Mexico are often poorly protected and managed. The Oaxacan Community Protected Areas initiative is an innovative conservation scheme prompted by the local



Fundación Natura/Juan Diego Prez

communities. The scheme integrates their socio-economic and cultural needs and helps them strengthen community organisation and increase technical capacity. This enhances communal social cohesiveness and well-being, and results in improved sustainable management of forest resources and provides a platform for other benefits such as eco-tourism.

Madagascar

The Mahafaly and Tandroy communities of Southern Madagascar, local authorities and the Malagasy government have committed to conserve the sacred forests of Sakoantovo (6,163 ha) and Vohimasio (30,170 ha). The forests contain habitat typical of the spiny forest of southwestern Madagascar, with a transitional zone to riparian forest dominated by Tamarindus trees. It is extremely rich in wildlife including healthy populations of five species of lemurs. These sacred forests, where the remains of royal ancestors lie, have always held a central position within social and cultural life and are associated with a great number of taboos and norms. They are also the source of many medicinal plants and have been zealously protected for centuries. However, they are threatened by overexploitation to meet growing human needs. In this project, the responsibility for managing the forests has been transferred to the local population through an agreement between the Ministry of the Environment, Water and Forests and the local communities' traditional leaders. Through Local Management Committees, the communities have committed to sustainably manage the forests, and management plans for each forest will be finalised in 2004. Efforts are also underway to gain further legal recognition for the areas as agreed protected areas or provincial parks in 2005.

By recognising these initiatives as a Gift to the Earth, WWF celebrates an innovative approach to conservation in which modern forest management mechanisms and traditional norms reinforce one another. The idea behind a 'Gift to the Earth' is to give those who live next to the forest a sense of empowerment and pride over their habitat. So far it seems to be going down well.



WWF



