

SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas at the *IUCN World Parks Congress*

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South African Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa (far right) leads a plenary discussion on rhino conservation makes a point at the IUCN World Parks Congress 2014.
Credit: Marshall Patsanza/IPS

Southern Africa Calls for More Collaboration to Stop Wildlife Crime

By Uusumuzi Sifile

Southern Africa participants at the sixth World Parks Congress (WPC) in Sydney have called for more international collaboration in fighting wildlife crime, which threatens the region's rhino and elephant.

South Africa's Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa led the calls during a panel discussion titled Rhino Conservation – Success and Challenges, the South African Perspective.

"Our intervention at international level collaboration will further strengthen efforts to address not only rhino poaching, but illegal wildlife trade in general

"Our interaction will be strengthened by our new initiative that is led by the SG of CITES, Mr. John Scanlon through involvement of all range, transit and consumer States as well as through the stronger involvement of ICCWC..." said Ms. Molewa.

Southern African is home to more rhinos and elephants than any other region in the world. The region, according to TRAFFIC, has around 95% of all white rhino and 40% of all black rhino.

But sadly TRAFFIC says, 25,000 African elephants were killed in 2011, while 22,000 were killed in

2012 and just over 20,000 in 2013. This is out of a population estimated between 420,000 and 650,000.

"In 2008, we elevated rhino poaching and other wildlife crimes to the status of a priority crime that is fully attended to by the National Joins Security Committee (NATJOINTS)," she said.

She said South Africa also introduced a national moratorium on the trade of individual rhinoceros horns and any derivatives or products thereof within South Africa.

Greg Carr, the main funder of Mozambique's Gorongosa National park, echoed the Minister's calls saying governments and the private sector need to collaborate more to stop wildlife crime.

"We need to arrest the big fish who are involved and not just the people who are working on the ground... We need to share information and make sure that the people who are involved are accountable and go to jail," Mr Carr said.

"I have been seeing some hope as governments of Southern Africa and East Africa are working together to stop the rhino trading, to stop the products before they leave Africa and go to Asia, said Mr Carr, adding that strict punishment must be meted on all those involved in rhino trade.

Several experts among the 3,000 delegates attending the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney said increased transboundary and multi-stakeholder partnerships are among the solutions to address wildlife crime.

The head of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in South African Dr Bandile Mkhize told IPS that "everything possible" must be done to conserve Southern Africa's rhinos.

"What we can say is that rhinos cannot be extinct on our watch, it would really be a blot on the legacy of people like Nelson Mandela and Ian Player if we allow rhinos to be extinct," said Dr. Mkhize.

"We definitely have to make sure that these transfrontier conservation parks really work, that is why we are in constant engagement with our counterparts in the region to ensure that the scourge of rhino poaching does not interfere with the good cause of transfrontier conservation," said Mkhize.

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), through its Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) Programme is currently working with stakeholders across the region to strengthen collaboration in the protection of natural resources.

The SADC TFCAs Exhibition Stand is located at stand no.s 71-73 in the Exhibition Hall.

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Protected Areas are Solutions to the Biodiversity Crisis

“Protected areas, when well financed, and well resourced, work. Have a look at protected areas that save tigers, that save elephants, that sustain coral reef fisheries.”

Dr James Watson, one of the world leading conservationists, speaks to TerraViva about the importance of Protected Areas in conservation.



Dr James Watson
Credit: WCS

Dr James Watson is one of the world's foremost conservationists. In this interview he talks to TerraViva advocating for Protected Areas (PAs) to solve the escalating biodiversity crisis that the world is facing. As a Director for Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Climate Change Programme, Dr Watson has been championing the cause that Protected Areas work when they are well managed and well financed. He says that Protected Areas are the best tools for conservation and the cornerstone action to stop the biodiversity crisis. He served in the army for 5 years before venturing into his current career as a conservationist.

Why did you go into this field?

I was always very interested in the environment and have been a keen birdwatcher since I was young boy. But it took me a while to get the job I am in now. I was an army officer for the first 5 years of my working life, but got a lucky break in getting a Rhodes scholar and when I went to Oxford, I did my PhD in Madagascar on the effects of deforestation on birds. This changed my life as I realized I wanted to do applied conservation science and get involved with the conservation 'fight'. It was something I could not ignore anymore.

Tell us about your recent paper in Nature, The performance and potential of protected areas: What are

the top three to five points you want people to take away from it?

1. Protected areas, when well financed, and well resourced, work. Have a look at protected areas that save tigers, that save elephants, that sustain coral reef fisheries. They work because they stop destructive activities – plain and simple.
2. However, not all of them work. Only 20% of PAs are well managed which means 80% of PAs are not getting the funding they need. There is also clear evidence showing many nations around the world are backtracking their commitments towards PAs, leading to their delisting and downsizing. These are not just in a few corrupt developing countries but also countries in the first world nations are leading the way in this poor behaviour.
3. We need to recognise this backtrack. To meet the CBD commitments that nations have committed to, we need a step-change in terms of government commitment and funding. Money is important – and at about 70 billion dollars – doing the right thing is quite cheap (especially when one considers what we spend on the military). But is not simply about money... its about planning effectively. As the world's population expands, as every nation on earth put in place their economic development pathways, we need to actively and urgently identify those great landscapes and seascapes that are still functional, that still contain all of

their species, and by their own nature make them resilient to climate change. We then need to actively seek their protection. We need to recognise that what we protect in the next twenty years counts the most because in 2030 there will be limited options for future gazettal for PAs. The time to act is now.

Are protected areas the best, last hope for saving the world's biodiversity?

Yes, especially when well financed. They stop destructive human behaviour – simple as that. It means they are a controversial mechanism for some but it also means it is effective. They are the core tool in the conservation toolbox

Are you hopeful that your paper will influence governments around the globe to invest more in protected areas?

Yes, I hope the paper is not just a whinge but rather it identified the core parts of a new strategy. The strategy argues it is time to:

1. Stop the backtracking of current commitments,
2. To spend the money to make sure current PA work,
3. To plan cleverly in the future so that the future PA estate has the best chance halting the biodiversity crisis.

TERRAVIVA

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Malgré Tout, Frayer un Chemin pour les Jeunes Gardes Forestiers

Par Uusumuzi Sifile

Pour Boitumelo Rampeng, travailler dans la conservation est plus un appel qu'un emploi. Au moment où elle avait 13 ans, Boitumelo a défié un certain nombre d'obstacle pour devenir une garde forestière. Etre une jeune femme noire, cela aurait paru un non-partant.

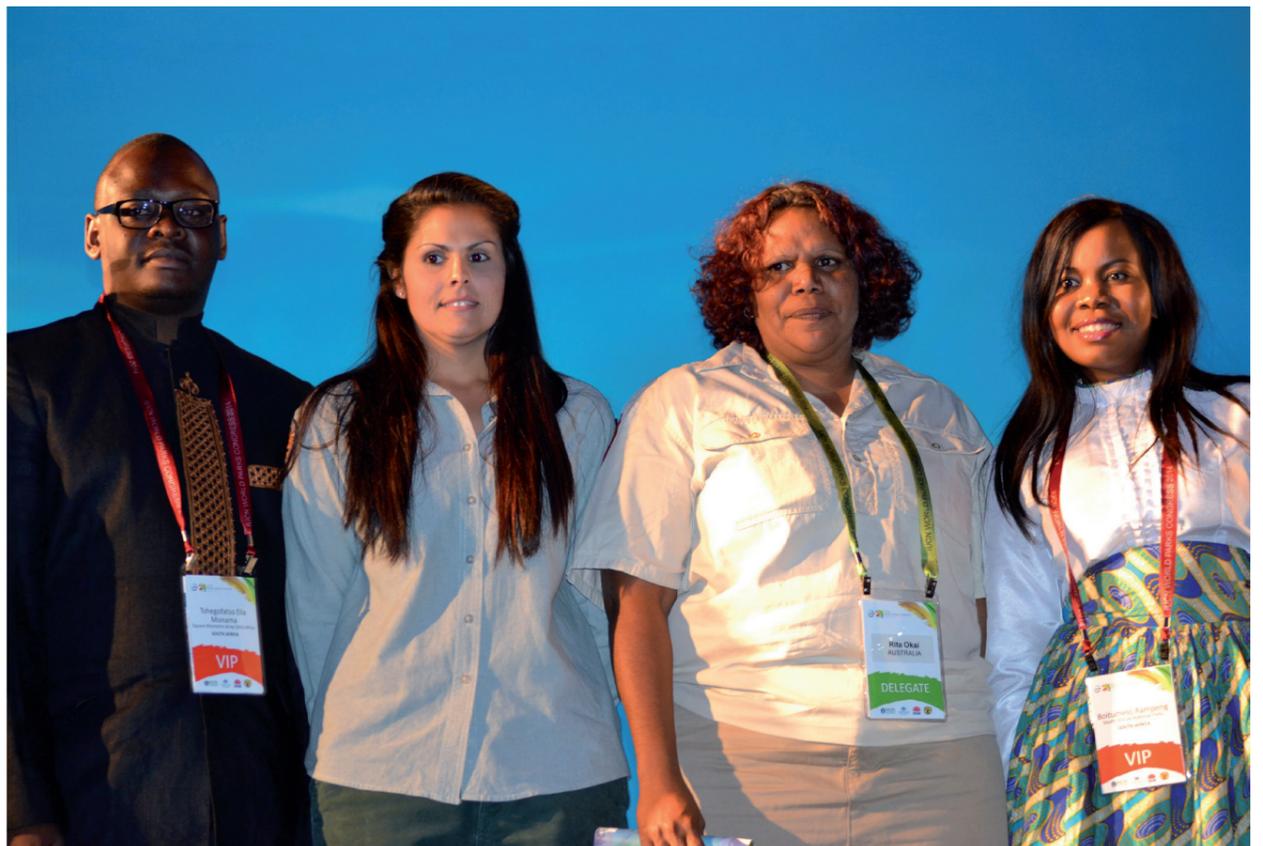
Mais elle est allée à contre-courant et s'est aventuré dans un domaine qui est normalement considéré comme une chasse gardée pour les hommes adultes.

"En grandissant, nous n'étions pas aussi privilégiés que les gens de couleur à visiter les parcs nationaux parce qu'ils sont loin de là où nous restons et l'entrée était également coûteuse", a-t-elle déclaré à IPS.

Cependant, animée par la passion, Boitumelo a décidé de participer à une séance d'éducation sur la conservation. Cela l'a inspirée à se concentrer davantage sur la conservation, et elle était l'un des plus jeunes délégués au 5ème Congrès mondial des parcs tenu à Durban, en Afrique du Sud.

Plus elle était impliquée dans la conservation, plus Boitumelo était encouragée. L'exposition qu'elle a obtenue lors de la formation et au congrès de Durban l'a encouragée encore plus, et elle a décidé de poursuivre des études en conservation.

Aujourd'hui, elle est employée par la 'South Africa Nation-



al Parks', une organisation nationale chargée des parcs d'Afrique du Sud, et a reçu un certain nombre de distinctions pour son rôle en tant que jeune écologiste.

"Elle (la conservation) est maintenant non seulement ma profession, mais aussi ma passion. Cela ressemble plus à un appel qu'à un emploi. J'ai décidé d'étudier la conservation quand je suivais une formation", a indiqué Rampeng

Elle croit que les jeunes d'aujourd'hui peuvent faire une grande différence dans la conservation des ressources naturelles et créer un avenir meilleur.

"L'avenir est entre nos mains. Seulement, nous pouvons faire une différence et concevoir de meilleures choses pour les générations à venir. Etre dans ce congrès montre que les gens peuvent s'élever au-delà de leurs situations et être les meilleurs qu'ils peuvent être. Cela montre qu'en tant que personne, vous pouvez vous vaincre n'importe quelle situation, dépasser n'importe quelle attente", a-t-elle ajouté.

Dans chaque situation où je me trouve, je fais passer le message concernant la conservation. Toutes mes conversations touchent toujours la conservation.

Son collègue, Tshogofatso Monama, qui est devenu garde forestier à l'âge de 12 ans croit qu'avec un soutien, les jeunes pourraient faire beaucoup dans la conservation.

"Notre rôle était double, le premier était de recruter autant de gardes forestiers que possible, l'autre partie était d'apprendre des choses sur la conservation et la nature, d'apprendre les compétences d'être un garde forestier.

"La première fois que j'ai décidé de ce que j'étudierais après l'école secondaire, c'était lors d'une séance d'éducation. J'ai rencontré quelqu'un qui était un spécialiste de l'environnement, et j'ai aussi décidé de faire des études de science de l'environnement", a déclaré Monama à IPS.

Cependant, les choses n'ont pas été si faciles pour les jeunes gardes forestiers.

"Le plus grand défi a été la finance, la plupart du temps nous étions obligés de nous financer", a souligné Monama.

Rapeng et Monama sont quelques-uns des jeunes gardes forestiers qui participent au 6ème Congrès mondial des parcs à Sydney, en Australie, du 12 au 19 novembre 2014.

SADC Delegates speak about their congress expectations

By Uusumuzi Sifile



Lana Sari, Zambia

My interest is on protected areas and how they relate to livelihoods in Southern Africa. The way protected areas are structured should be relevant to the livelihoods of the people living in the region.



Steve Collins, South Africa

I was at the Durban congress in 2003 and I have come to this year's one to see what progress has been made with regard rural communities being afforded the opportunities to benefit from Conservation Areas.



Absalom Kotsokoane, South Africa

My intentions for coming here are to learn more and share on community based natural resources. It is important that we share the lessons we have learnt in SADC, and also to learn from our partners how to best implement projects and keep them sustainable

Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

Brief Profile

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PARK

The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park is considered to be the largest animal kingdom in the world. Spanning three countries (Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe), and consisting of community, state and private land, it is a feat of collaboration towards the protection of sustainable conservation areas. The Transfrontier Park joins together some of the most established wildlife areas in southern Africa into a core park of approximately 37 572 km². The second-phase transfrontier conservation area sweeps around this core to form a mammoth park of almost 100 000km².

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Officially mandated in 2000, the Skukuza Agreement signalled the three nations' intent to establish and develop the park and surrounding conservation area. But this was only the most recent historical event associated with this timeless piece of land.

Stone and iron-age implements have been discovered across the area, evidencing the near continuous presence of people in the park. San hunter-gatherers contributed numerous rock-paintings scattered across the region, and evidence of Bantu dwellers dating back 800 years is also present.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Plans to integrate various private and state-owned conservation areas in South Africa and Zimbabwe are currently underway, as are efforts to include the Banhine and Zinave National Parks, as well as the Massingir and Corumana areas and interlinking regions in Mozambique.

The park is in the process of developing an Integrated Development and Business Plan to guide its implementation over the next 10-year period, including development of key policy documents, (e.g. policy on benefit sharing, alternative livelihoods and wildlife crime management).

To support tourism development, a Bush to Paradise Islands Route (Great Limpopo TFCA and Vanilla Islands), including the Greater Limpopo TFCA as a core attraction, is under development. Similarly, the World Heritage Sites Route (Lubombo, Great Mapungubwe, Great Limpopo and KAZA TFCAs) will offer visitors an experience of world heritage sites in these TFCAs.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Countries	Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe
Area	37,572 km ²
Status	Category A: Treaty signed (9 December 2002)

Advocating for Preservation and Conservation

About 3,000 delegates have converged at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia with exhibitions showcasing colourful pieces of art depicting the world's diverse Protected Areas from Kruger to Kakadu. These protected areas being exhibited protect threatened species of the world - a demonstration that increasing numbers of visitors to protected areas can be an effective way for conservation and community development as long as well functioning management systems are in place.



NEWS IN BRIEF AT IUCN CONGRESS

Sustainable Tourism for Protected Crucial for Survival

Increasing the number of visitors to protected areas can be an effective way for conservation and community development as long as well functioning management systems are in place, says a new report released at the IUCN World Parks Congress on Friday in Sydney.

“Unlike other industries and human driven activities, tourism in protected areas can be a strong and positive force - increasing a sense of stewardship and revenues that are vital for the long term protection of these important conservation areas,” said Dr Yu - Fai Leung, Chief Editor for the Report and member of the IUCN WCPA Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group.

World's first motorised TrailRider improves access to nature for all

An innovative all-terrain wheelchair – the TrailRider – is improving access to Australia's national parks and special places for people of limited mobility. And in a world first, a motorised version of the chair is being launched at the IUCN World Parks Congress by Parks Victoria.

Until now, it has been very difficult for people in a wheelchair to see some of the most spectacular places in the great outdoors and to enjoy most of the walking trails in Australia's parks. But custom-made TrailRiders, featuring one wheel and handles at the front and back for guidance along tracks by sherpas, now means that people in wheelchairs can enjoy these special places.

With the assistance of Dr David Stratton, who is in a wheelchair, Parks Victoria was the first to introduce these chairs into Australia, which are now available in parks and scenic locations across Victoria. The world first motorised TrailRider wheelchair gives access to even steeper and rougher tracks with relative ease.

World Tourism Organisation forecast consistent Growth in Tourism

The World Tourism Organisation says that the tourism industry will continue to grow by 3.3 percent annually through to 2030, generating one in 12 jobs globally. According to World Tourism Organisation, International tourism is a trillion dollar business — accounting for 9 % of global GDP. Protected Areas, National Parks and World Heritage Sites remain the primary attraction for tourists interested in exploring natural areas and its wildlife across the world.