

#### Section IV: National Perspectives and Prospects for Trinational Management Roundtable Discussion

**Audience member, from Plenary Session:** I'm not sure so many countries have had the vision that you articulated, which is to say that the protection of natural resources also requires the protection of human resources, the notion that natural diversity may exist not at the risk of cultural diversity. I believe that even in our country we haven't always recognized that, so in some ways, you may be defining the cutting edge in such things.

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** Before, management meant protection. Now we are trying to bring populations in for sustainable use, as pure protection would have meant so many game wardens, in so many areas, for so many individuals that we couldn't have kept up!

**Alec Leonhardt, Princeton University:** But there are indeed so many middlemen, and traders in natural resources between the local populations and their resource base. What about those relationships?

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** If middlemen are successful in trading exploitatively in these areas, it is because they are allowed to by local populations. Our goal is to increase awareness of the long term risks of such activities, and perhaps mentalities will change in ways that enable local populations to keep their resource bases more intact. Development doesn't exclude some protection. But the balance must be sought by people themselves.

**Urbain Ngatoua, CAR Ministry/Dzanga Sangha:** As a representative of the Dzanga Sangha project in southwestern CAR, I wonder whether you could speak as a representative of Cameroon to the transborder trades that affect both our countries. Has Cameroon signed some CITES conventions and made some changes and commitments that you think will, in the near future, limit these risks for our contiguous protected areas?

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** Your question requires several levels of response: firstly, rural populations in this region are beginning to believe that the resources of their own zones benefit them more when protected than when sold. But they still have limited market options. There are transnational issues of sovereignty, and patterns of consumption. Perhaps a more important question

than CAR vs. Cameroon is the relation between the rural zones in both countries and their respective, rapidly growing urban centers. What I mean is, it doesn't matter if a trader comes from CAR or Cameroon as much as it matters that their market is in the big cities of the wider international region. Those cities are increasing daily in their demand for resources from the provinces. The situation is complex, and clearly will necessitate working together, and I commend the initiative for one trinational reserve raised here in our meetings. At the moment in Cameroon we do have a strong program with WWF which is initiating anti-poaching patrols in the north, and will soon extend to sensitive regions such as the Sangha.

**Anna Roosevelt, University of Illinois Field Museum of Natural History:** Can or has knowledge of the long term history and prehistory of human occupation and use of the forests been relevant to the process of policy making about human use of the forests in the present?

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**Urbain Ngatoua, CAR Ministry/Dzanga Sangha:** Yes, we have amassed a great deal of knowledge about the management of this "terroir" through time, particularly with regard to the long standing practices of hunting and gathering which must be incorporated in contemporary strategies.

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** How long do you expect this "project" Dzanga-Sangha to exist? Is there a contract or limit to its existence? I wonder about the ways in which money from and for conservation is distributed in these communities. Are people who are used to 120 million cfa per year from logging regretting the absence of that revenue, and falling more heavily into dependence on the resource base? Can conservation revenues really replace extractive industry? What have been Dzanga-Sangha's experiments, or experiences of such efforts?

**Urbain Ngatoua, CAR Ministry/Dzanga-Sangha:** We have facilitated a local nongovernmental organization called Committee for Development of Bayanga which is involved in decision-making about revenue uses within reserve resident communities. That, in brief, has been our principal approach to the issues you raise. Our interior regulations are such that 90% of tourism revenues remain in the Reserve (40% to local communities channeled through the CDB, 50% to reserve administration for upkeep and infrastructural maintenance). Ten percent of revenues, a very modest sum relative to other African precedents for protected areas, leaves the region and goes to the national level.

**Steve Gartlan, WWF Cameroon:** Is that money literally distributed to the population, or is it channeled through some microenterprise or other projects? If the latter, what are the criteria?

**Urbain Ngatoua, CAR Ministry/Dzanga-Sangha:** There are many levels of community among Reserve residents, most of whom have what we call a village council or micro-committee that generates proposals to the central committee (CDB) that selects them.

**Vincente Ferrer, World Bank:** To both our African country representatives... do these investments in rural populations by conservation agencies parallel similar activities underway within extractive industry sectors such as logging or mining?

**Urbain Ngatoua, CAR Ministry/Dzanga-Sangha:** Forestry taxes exist in CAR, and have been recently restructured. As of 1995 stumpage fee revenues include 15% back to the local commune, or mayor's office. Rather than being locally managed they are centrally managed, but they do then flow back into forest communities. This year, at least 12 million has been received by the mayor's office of our largest reserve community from logging taxes, distributed by the centralized national forestry fund.

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**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** In Cameroon there is a spectrum of revenue flows to local communities, and many new approaches are currently being tried. One logging company is attempting the creation of village communities which propose and receive support for community projects directly from the company. In fact, that approach is proving so successful that contiguous logging concession operators are under increasing pressure from their employees to try similar schemes. But there are serious conflicts and tensions involved in such efforts, as well; communities are confronted with many choices. We have attempted in Cameroon to set up a forestry fund on a national level like the one in CAR. But with the politics of structural adjustment in our country on a national level, we are constrained in our creativity.

**Urbain Ngatoua, CAR Ministry/Dzanga Sangha:** The logging interests were already implanted in the Sangha Region before the conservation interests arrived. As a result, we had no choice but to develop a multiple use approach to conservation and monitoring in the region. That relationship has been evolving over the last few years and has been complicated due to some of the transfers in ownership and management of the logging company, and their non-compliance

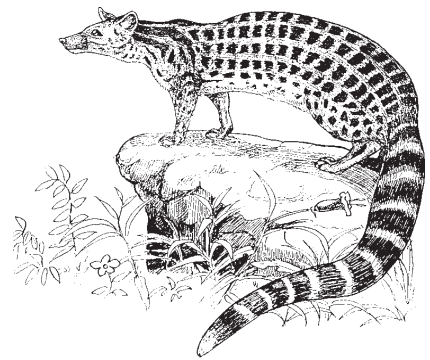
with official CAR forestry policy, which may be leading to their departure from the region in the near future. Overall, there are two logging operators in the Reserve area; they function somewhat differently, but both are active at present.

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** In Cameroon we are indeed trying to plan control of logging zones in the periphery of protected areas. But sometimes the concessions have been allocated to logging interests before the birth of the conservation projects which come in later to coexist with them. Often these conservation projects seek to restrict the logging activities in their border or buffer regions. The situation is complicated in Cameroon by the fact that the environment and forestry administrative agencies have belonged to separate ministries, and so the allocation of exploitation rights has been an unfortunately uncoordinated process. The problem now is to assess the impact of the ongoing activities resulting from these disparate decisions, sometimes retroactively. There is interest in limiting logging activity if it can be demonstrated that it has had negative consequences for the resource bases and social systems. If negative effects can't be demonstrated, then it is difficult to think about limiting what is, de facto, a situation of heavy logging activity in these buffer zones.

**Justina Ray, University of Toronto Forestry School:** May I ask why there isn't a national park in Lobéké?

**Amy Vedder, WCS New York:** Generally, there were local political problems, institutional problems, with the national government, as well as others, that left our team unable to do key research for an adaptive problem-solving approach. So we were restricted in not being able to do socioeconomic research and not being able to be honest about what was happening on the ground with meat trafficking. We didn't get support and we raised those issues in the hopes of proceeding on more productive grounds. It didn't happen and we thought it best to withdraw. We recorded information on hunting and our people were accused of falsehood. We didn't do this in an inflammatory way at all, but there were just too many problems, and our team couldn't continue. There were too many interconnected local and national relationships that were getting back to our people in the field. When you take these issues down to a ground level it's a lot more complicated.

**Alec Leonhardt, Princeton University:** Were there CNN reports on this issue?



*Genetta sp.* (Illustration: Bernardin Nabana)

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** There was a report by CNN particularly about poaching...there was an organization involved, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), that cast the reporting in an extremely negative light. I even have the videocassettes of that here—some of you saw them yesterday. But indeed these are problems with poaching, due to logging companies in the region, and it is of course valid to raise them and debate them. The new conservation agency at work in that region, WWF with support from the GEF project, is opening discussions with local populations about conservation. The (WSPA) involved in that video is in conversations with government ministries at present for the creation of a coordinated anti-poaching project in the region.

**Vincente Ferrer, World Bank:** Some of the meat was coming from Congo, some from the logging company CIB. So long as there is no gazetted area, you are not going to have the instruments to really engage in a serious dialogue with the government or the agencies. You have to start with reaching agreements with the government, first of all, to gazette the area because that enables you to argue from a point of legal protection. There is no discussion going on among the three governments concerning the trinational park. It is imperative that we begin working at both levels—at the technical level as far as the resource base is concerned toward the more formal institutional framework that will create the status of trinational protection.

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** Lobéké is in fact provisionally classified as a protected area...but let me clarify that, because I think there is a misconception here. The GEF initiative required before its start some form of action from the Cameroonian government for protection of biodiversity, and there was indeed a Decree from the Ministry of the Environment accordingly. But process of final gazetting as a protected area can only be done by the Prime Minister. That final, formal classification will not occur until the studies and negotiations currently being carried out by conservation partners in the region are concluded with clarity...From our perspective in the Ministry, as long as there are points of contention or discussion outstanding, we cannot act on that formal level. Recent meetings indicate that the partners in the region are indeed coming to a consensus about how the protected area should be managed...in that case, the gazetting of Lac Lobéké, Nki and Boumba Bek as protected areas shouldn't take more than about six months.

**Vincente Ferrer, World Bank:** Gazetting is the first step, the next step is licensing of economic actors...It should be fairly simple to determine if people are operating legally within the area.

**Amy Vedder, WCS New York:** The situation is far better now than it was two years ago. Whether our action was a critical wake up call I don't know. I think there have been some changes, discussions like the ones we are having here are happening, and the stage is set to move ahead. I think it will happen.

**Allard Blom, WWF/CAR:** There have been quite extensive contacts over the last two years about the trinational park but not on the ministry level. There have been several meetings; we work first of all at the local level because that's where the changes are going to happen. Much discussion is happening at lower and medium levels, where the actual processes of consensus occur. Final approval, of course, is at the higher levels. I'm sure that there have been contacts in Congo that Mike Fay has had and we have had in CAR. If Congo stabilizes we will be able to get some agreements on the ministerial level. I don't know what's happening in Cameroon in this process but we have been communicating between CAR and Congo.

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**Hans Hoffmann, GTZ Congo:** Let me come back to bushmeat transport through Cameroon. I don't think most of the meat comes from protected areas. Even a trinational area can't stop that. It's a problem of transport and of limited opportunities available to rural populations, who don't have any other options. They don't hunt in protected areas. We speak of poaching but that's not right. We haven't given them any other possibilities. People depend on bushmeat. They live from it. My problem is rather with those from outside the protected areas.

**Laurent Somé, BSP/CARPE:** About Michael Fay's proposition of one Sangha River Reserve, I'd like to relate the concept to the example of the "Parks of W," between Burkina Faso, Benin, and Niger a trinational project supported by IUCN. That project could not have occurred without the involvement and will of the three governments. In our case, there are three countries involved — CAR, Congo, and Cameroon — but the trinational initiative seems to be emanating from the international conservation organizations like WCS, WWF and so on. There is thus a first step to be taken — creation of real collaborative relations between national forest administrative agencies and the interested international organizations



for effective, functional interventions on regional and local levels. Information flow between national and nongovernmental bodies must be optimal, as Mr. Mengang has noted. The second step is the development of real national conservation initiatives on the part of the three governments. They must really commit themselves to conservation, as Dr. Vedder suggested, for effective partnerships with international organizations.

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** The Cameroonian government actually has excellent relations with international actors. There was a small problem on the ground that provoked WCS to withdraw from its efforts in that region, concentrating instead on the southwestern elephant sanctuary. But there is no problem between our national government and WCS, nor between us and WWF. Lobéké and nearby regions are priorities for us; my collaborators are working hard to coordinate information collection for that initiative. Since 1987 Lobéké has been a priority, despite occasional setbacks...I don't agree that Cameroon is somehow running late or lacking will on these issues; reports have been filed to the Prime Minister, and the process is underway.

**Zéphirin Mogba, University of Bangui:** I am concerned by the tone of this conversation, having listened to several comments and responses from participants. We are not addressing the most serious conservation risk—armed conflict. The central African region is becoming a war zone. When battles break out, all of the “international partners” we’re talking about leave...largely because they are obligated by their country of origin to leave. There is a basic mechanism in place now, which means that as soon as technical support disappears, the protection of particular species dissolves as well. How, then, do we measure the impact of such conflict on conservation, and its consequences for trinational management? The second concern is the lack of coordination. While studies have been conducted in the three separate countries, they don't seem to be circulating among the three separate countries. Each country has its own environmental action plan. Yet I don't even know whether, as in CAR, Congo and Cameroon have signed such plans. On economic levels there is already a legal framework (CEMAC-Communauté Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale) that presents opportunities. But in terms of the environment, basic work remains to be done to create a common framework. If we go too fast without creating basic communication across local and national communities, we'll alienate several important levels of stakeholders from our process. A collective framework for information sharing must be sought.

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**Vincente Ferrer, World Bank:** This raises the choice between trying to protect selected areas integrally, versus trying to protect everything a little.

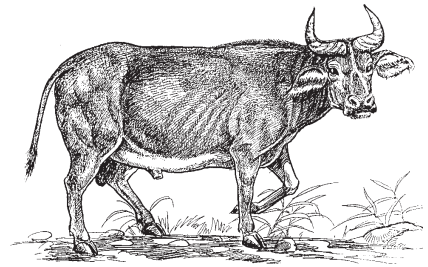
**Hans Hoffmann, GTZ Congo:** Mr. Mogba's concerns are expressed in such a way that it seems normal to have conflicts in these countries, yet somehow wrong that we expatriates should then leave. I think it is normal that we should leave under such circumstances, but not normal that there should constantly be such conflict!

**Alec Leonhardt, Princeton University:** Because of the fact that cutting logging roads increases bushmeat exponentially, the CNN report about uncontrolled logging and lack of enforcement of logging regulations, enormous increase in roads has increased this bushmeat production. It isn't a question of whether folks are taking advantage of their only opportunity, it's a policy question of what are you going to allow this to continue in the buffer zones.

**David Wilkie, Associates for Forest Research and Development:** There's no evidence anywhere that local production can satisfy a regional supply for meat. There's no wild resource that's ever been harvested for commercial sources sustainably. There's not a wildlife resource that's ever been harvested commercially AND sustainably. It's not debatable. The question is what are we going to do with that?

**Amy Vedder, WCS New York:** Those of us interested in conservation aren't just interested in those areas that we want to keep protected. We are interested in other areas where sustainable production of meat should happen and if it isn't, then we have to figure out a way to work with this sustainability question. We are concerned about these local communities and their long-term condition.

**Joseph Mengang, Cameroon Ministry:** We all agree that the structures and practices of commercial forestry encourage unsustainable hunting-poaching. But another major contributing factor is the ease with which people obtain ammunition from places like Pointe Noir and Douala...these supplies circulate, and they are sold like matchboxes! I don't know whether, among the three countries, some sort of convention could be achieved among the governments (as Mr. Mogba suggested). Since 1987 there has been an organization of African states (based in Sudan) in existence. Yet experience shows that when we close the hunting of a protected species in one country, it opens in the neighboring country, and the commodity then still becomes available on regional and international markets. That is



*Syncerus caffer nanus*  
(Illustration: Bernardin Nabana)



why, for control of this trade, the trinational idea is the necessary solution. For the moment it is these NGOs that have made possible the initializing of a framework; perhaps they can make possible a meeting among the three governments as well, as a next step for advancing this agenda.

**Hans Hoffmann, GTZ/Congo:** Yes, Pointe Noir is a big producer of 12 gauge ammunition. And yes, they supply several countries in the region. But elephants aren't getting killed with 12 gauge ammo.... NO. It is kalashnikovs that kill both elephants and people at present in Congo. I don't think ammunition is the problem. The problem is roads. Timber from perfectly sustainable forestry in Congo (CIB) may be disastrous for sustainable hunting in Cameroon, because it will have to be transported on roads through Cameroon.

**Jim Graham, CARPE:** I anticipate a real need to push to get the trinational park going, hearing from Cameroon that in as little as six months a park could be gazetted. This meeting has been great for getting folks together, but on a regional scale in June 1998 a meeting in Equatorial Guinea (CEFDHAC) will bring representatives of the nine Congo River basin ministry sectors together. This would be a great opportunity for this group to present the tripartite national park system in order for these ministers to consider it and propose what they see as appropriate. It is a challenge we should all consider. It's a time frame the donor community and NGO community can operate within.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Drafts of this volume in French and English, were, indeed, distributed at the meetings in Equatorial Guinea.

**Fred Swartzendruber, CARPE:** What kinds of arrangements would be required to have an effective and enduring trinational system work, not to have unexpected consequences of producing infrastructure etc.? Donors would be interested to see an initiative such as this—particularly if it came not from NGOs but from the governments themselves—given that so few regional bodies exist. What would actually have to happen for this to work?

**Laurent Somé, BSP/CARPE:** This comment is directed particularly at my colleagues here from Cameroon and CAR, as the conference mentioned in June will have focal planning in the respective countries. One of the focal planning themes is critical sites for biodiversity sites. We need to be working to make Ministry officials aware of the issues before the Malabo meetings.

**Richard Carroll, WWF/US:** We are more than willing and ready to accept the challenge. Persistence and timing are of course important...one of the events Mike Fay didn't mention was that in 1990

Weber, Carroll, Fay, Gartlan, and partners developed a proposal that we plopped down on AID at World Bank because they were giving a lot of lip service to this and now we are in 1997 and we are welcoming the challenge...

**Vincente Ferrer, World Bank:** Institutionalizing...there were a lot of meetings and discussions—it doesn't mean that is where the solution lies. Let me remind us of an obvious example; a central African minister was known to have signed off on illegal concessions of eight to ten state enterprises. We have to be realistic. He is a technical man but he has political constraints. One has to work at all levels. At this moment there is nowhere in any of the three countries that requires any logging company to do sustainable forestry. Right now there are enlightened laws in CAR and a decent law being reviewed in Congo but only in Cameroon is there a law that demands sustainability. BUT, the law has to be implemented. It is only Cameroon that requires the concessionaires, the logging companies, to prepare forestry management plans. It is not surprising that they are taking as many trees as they can get. In the Congo basin there is generally a very low average yield per hectare (i.e. 5-7 cubic meters per hectare). It leads to the problem, of course, of poaching. It gets to the question of what we want to conserve. If we allow logging concessions, the meat is going to go.

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**Richard Carroll, WWF/US:** On the timing of trination, Steve Gartlan pointed out that back in those days when we did put the document out, there were five logging concessions and now there are twelve. In the time period when we would have been able to move ahead, when we were prepared to do so, we might have been able to do something. It has been a rocky road. We actually wrote this document in the paillote with Slovenia Bois, but with the boom and bust cycle, different companies came in and different relationships exist and different companies have different attitudes toward conservation.

**David Wilkie, Associates for Forest Research and Development:** The supply of bushmeat we can't do much about, but what if we affect the demand for bushmeat? A fairly large program in Libreville is looking at elevage. A lot of the issues and policies we have to address may have nothing to do with the things we are looking at. Maybe the agriculture macroeconomy has more to do with the demand side....

**Richard Carroll, WWF/US:** As far as Peace Corps Volunteers and fisheries go, both Mike Fay and I were Peace Corps Volunteers in central Africa and we've seen agriculture there for 20 years and very few still exist.... We've had good cooperation with Peace Corps throughout the lifespan of the project. They were the mainstay when we were underfunded. As far as alternatives, we did present some cases of alternatives: ecotourism and revenue-sharing as an alternative to overexploitation, but there are also risks to developing alternatives on site. Sometimes the best alternatives are not on site because you may just be attracting people to your area and going against your conservation goals.