



Pan African Sanctuary Alliance  
Action for Chimpanzees Conference  
30-31 January 2020  
Conakry, Guinea

Summary Report



## Executive Summary

In January 2020, 64 stakeholders gathered in Conakry, Guinea for the first Action for Chimpanzees conference, convened by the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA). PASA, the largest alliance of wildlife centers in Africa, is building a global movement to save Africa's great apes and monkeys by combining PASA's network and our members' local expertise. PASA's member centers, most of which are the only accredited facilities in their countries that care for confiscated primates, have an essential role in fighting wildlife trafficking. They work closely with government authorities and accept live animals who were confiscated from traffickers, a relationship that can enable stronger law enforcement to protect wildlife.

Now, these wildlife centers face an urgent problem, which was the main impetus for the conference. Many wildlife centers have seen a significant increase in confiscations in recent years and have almost no space to accept more chimpanzees. Without sanctuaries that have space to accept confiscated chimps, a key component of wildlife law enforcement will be missing.



Mr. Seydou Barry Sidibe, of Guinea's Ministry of Environment, opens the conference.

Joining PASA as co-hosts of the conference were the Chimpanzee Conservation Center (CCC), Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Akatia, Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection, the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change program (WA BiCC, funded

by USAID) and WARA. The conference was possible because of generous support from Fondation Brigitte Bardot, Humane Society International, Elinor Patterson Baker Trust, the Jane Goodall Institute, Zoo de Barcelona, Lush, and USAID. Participating in the conference were representatives from the governments of Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, as well as the British Embassy in Guinea. In addition, representatives of the following organizations participated to the conference:

ChimpFace, Chimbo, EU, Fauna & Flora International, Mano River Union, PALF (a member of the EAGLE network), Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Center, UNDP, UNOPS, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, various West African national parks, and the University of Kent, University of Porto and Cardiff University.

Over the course of two days, participants worked through an agenda to share data on the trade of chimpanzees in West Africa (day one), and collaborate to identify and prioritize action steps (day two). A steering committee was established as an outcome of the conference with the role of formulating a regional action plan.

### **Conference Mission Statement & Objectives**

The following mission statement and objectives guided the work of the conference participants.

Conference Mission Statement: The impetus of this conference is the urgent need to reduce trafficking of western chimpanzees, because primate sanctuaries have seen a significant increase in confiscations in recent years and are close to capacity. Without sanctuaries that have space to accept confiscated chimps, a key component of wildlife law enforcement is missing. The main intent of this conference is to create a road map for producing concrete actions in the near future.

#### *Conference Comment*

*“It was very important to establish a network – a needed first step in creating trust for cooperation.”*

#### Conference Objectives:

Objective 1: Understand the status of policy and enforcement action plans, strategies, and other approaches for combatting trafficking of chimpanzees and other wildlife, such as the draft Western Chimpanzee Action Plan (WCAP) and the draft West Africa Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Crime (WASCWC)

Objective 2: Develop a clear and common understanding of the problems facing western chimpanzees, their scale, and the gaps in available data, and agree on how to

address gaps in knowledge and management and work collaboratively to reduce chimpanzee trafficking

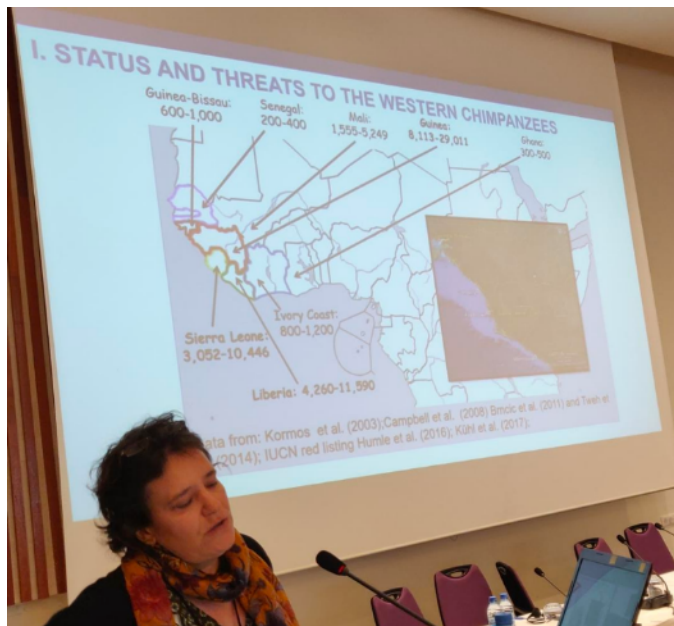
Objective 3: Identify viable models from around the world for partnerships, fundraising and effective enforcement of anti-IWT interventions that can be applied in West Africa, including through the draft WCAP and the draft WASCWC

Objective 4: Develop an awareness-raising and communication protocol to increase knowledge, understanding, collaboration and coordination among government agencies, NGOs, and local communities to fight wildlife trafficking

Objective 5: Develop a work plan to combat chimpanzee trafficking in the region through implementation of the WCAP, including priorities and indicators for monitoring and reporting (e.g. on enforcement, awareness, capacity-building, and chimpanzee welfare), and commitments from government officials and NGO representatives to conduct it.

## Conference Highlights

### Data Sharing



To ensure that participants operated with a common frame of reference, Dr. Tatyana Humle, left, of the University of Kent and a member of the executive committee of the IUCN Section on Great Apes (SGA) of the Primate Specialist Group, provided an overview of the data currently available. She related that wild chimpanzees face numerous threats, including habitat loss and fragmentation, hunting and capture,

and disease, especially zoonosis – all of which are responsible for concerning declines in populations across much of their range. Among the facts she shared:

- Only about 3500 chimpanzees remain in West Africa, after a reduction of 80% between 1990 and 2014
- 83% of chimpanzees in West Africa are found outside protected areas, thus making them vulnerable to conflicts with humans, and to hunting and capture

## **Legal Frameworks**

Following the overview, representatives from different countries outlined the legal frameworks currently in place to protect chimpanzees, and where known, shared census data on the populations in their country. While most countries have designated chimpanzees as endangered and protected, there was agreement that enforcing these laws – or international laws – has not been effective due to resource constraints, tensions caused by human population growth and the perceived conflict between human needs and those of wildlife.

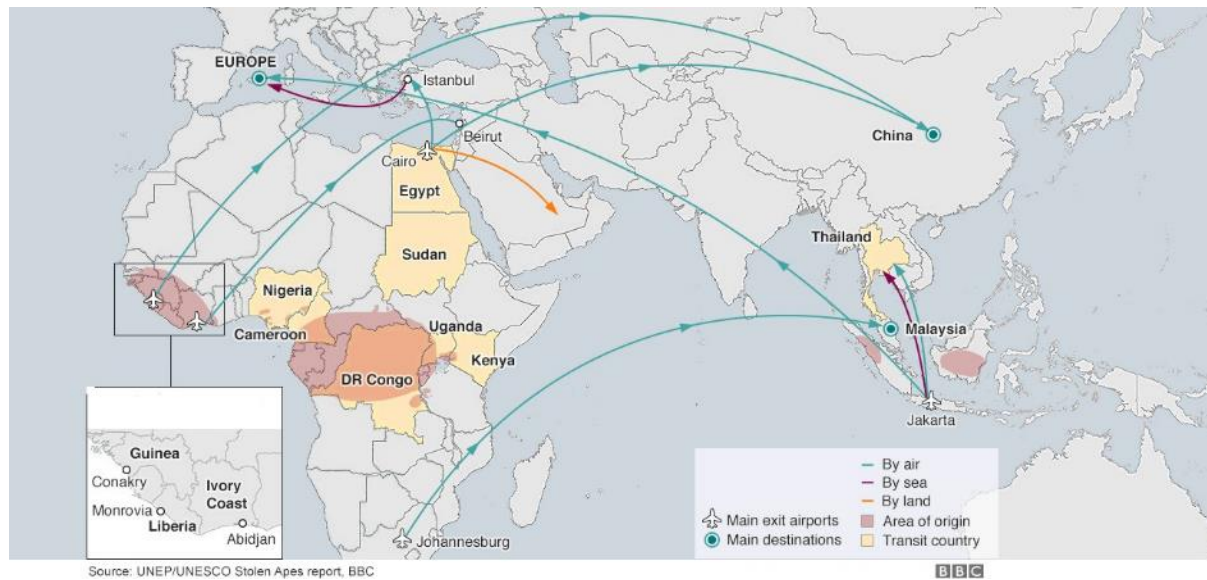
### *Conference Comments*

*“The conference is timely which stress on collaboration and cooperation among member countries to stop the Western Chimpanzee from becoming extinct.”*

## **Trafficking In Context**

Charlotte Houpline of WARA and her colleagues provided information on wildlife trafficking, including routes, scope, and operational norms. They shared information on pricing, specific networks, and the increasing sophistication of the market.





## Successful Approaches

Participants then heard about successful strategies for fighting trafficking and protecting chimpanzees. A common thread here was the importance of engaging the local communities as perhaps the most important stakeholder in the equation. These strategies include:

- Local community awareness about the benefits of nature and biodiversity (addressing climate change, sustainable access to water and ecosystems services), co-management with local communities as well as the benefits of nature conservation.
- Working with local communities (as eco guards/rangers) around protected areas for training and monitoring activities in direct collaboration with park authorities.
- Development of ecotourism projects to benefit local communities and develop the notion of the value of protected areas in the communities.
- Support for local communities to develop sustainable activities that improve their livelihoods.



Directors of several PASA member wildlife centers, including Tacugama, the Chimpanzee Conservation Center, and Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Center, shared information on the roles their centers play in protecting wild chimpanzees, coordinating with law enforcement and governments, and providing long-term

care to animals that cannot be released back into the wild.

Day two included a panel discussion on effective partnerships between West African countries in fighting wildlife crime as well as transboundary agreements. This was followed by working sessions on communication and collaboration, and development of an action plan to combat trafficking.

Before the end of the conference, a resolution was presented, reviewed and ultimately approved by all participants as the Conakry Resolution.

In addition to the resolution, a steering committee was established to ensure that the work begun at the Action for Chimpanzees conference continues, and that governments and NGOs continue to drive regional and international solutions, leveraging the experience and know-how of wildlife centers working directly with these amazing animals.



*Government officials from West African countries discuss regional anti-trafficking efforts. Pictured: Constantino Correia (DGFF, Guinea-Bissau) and Colonel Layaly Camara (National Director of Water and Forests, Guinea)*



## **Conakry Resolution on Combating Illegal Trade in Western Chimpanzees**

Conakry, Guinea, 31 January 2020

We, the participants in the first Action for Chimpanzees conference on combating the illegal exploitation of Western chimpanzees, Conakry, Guinea, on 30 – 31 January 2020:

AWARE of the dire warning in the Intergovernmental Science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services 2019 Global Assessment Report that about one million species are threatened with extinction, many within decades, and that direct exploitation is a leading driver of species loss and ecosystem decline;

SUPPORTIVE of the process established under the Convention on Biological Diversity to set and achieve ambitious global goals and targets for addressing the biodiversity crisis through the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;

AWARE of the need to work towards strengthening the quality of protected area management, the connectivity of protected areas and the creation of protected areas on at least 30% of the world's land and marine areas in the next decade promoted by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

RECOGNIZING that numerous species in the West African region are threatened with extinction as a result of direct exploitation and illegal trade, including Western chimpanzees;

CONSCIOUS that Great Apes, as our closest living relatives, play a highly significant cultural, social and ecological role as part of West Africa's natural heritage, and have low reproductive rates, and that the conservation of Great Apes must, therefore, be granted the highest priority;

RECALLING the decisions made by West and Central African countries in the Dakar Declaration on the Development of Subregional Wildlife Enforcement Collaboration (Dakar, Senegal, 15-17 March 2016);

RECALLING FURTHER the recommendations made by ECOWAS member States at the ECOWAS Meeting on the Development of a Coordinated Counter Wildlife Trafficking Response in West Africa (Abuja, Nigeria, 2-4 July 2018), including to: “promote effective subregional cooperation and collaboration by supporting the development and adoption of a West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime”; “establish a West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime” and “create sustainable funding mechanisms” ensuring the implementation of this Strategy in the long term;

AWARE of the development of the Western Chimpanzee Action Plan and of the chimpanzee conservation plans at the national level;

STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Resolution 2013/40, which encourages countries “to make illicit trafficking in wild fauna and flora a serious crime when organized criminal groups are involved”;

AWARE of the Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes (September 2005), which committed to enhance efforts to ensure the long-term future of all Great Ape species;

COMMITTED to supporting mechanisms adopted by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to address the illegal trade and trafficking of Great Apes;

AWARE of the essential role of rescue centers and sanctuaries in combating chimpanzee trafficking and protecting the species;

FURTHER AWARE of the health risks that are potentially associated with chimpanzee trafficking;

SUPPORTIVE of the African Union’s African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa adopted in May 2015;

ALARMED that the Critically Endangered Western Chimpanzee lost up to 80% of its population between 1990 and 2014 due to high levels of poaching for the pet trade and for bushmeat, as well as habitat destruction and fragmentation;

CONCERNED that criminal syndicates are taking advantage of the growing legal trade between Africa and Asia, Europe, the United States and the Middle East, utilizing these trade routes to traffic illegal wildlife specimens and products, including chimpanzees;

FURTHER CONCERNED that front-line officers committed to the protection of chimpanzees and other wildlife are losing their lives against well-armed organized criminals with sophisticated weaponry;

CONVINCED that the most effective way of combating illegal exploitation and illegal trade in Great Apes in West Africa is through a collaborative regional approach;

RECOMMEND that high-level decision-makers:

- i) Accelerate the process of adopting and implementing the West Africa Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Crime, the Wildlife Crime Network in West Africa and ensure that Mechanisms to finance West African chimpanzees are prioritized and fully supported as regional actions to curb the illegal trade in West African chimpanzees;
- ii) Promote the integrity and safeguard into the future all protected areas and forests essential for the conservation of the Western chimpanzee;

- iii) Decide that halting the illegal trade in Great Apes must be granted the highest level of priority under the law, and review and amend existing national legislation and associated enforcement policies, as necessary and appropriate, so that offences connected to Great Ape trafficking are treated as “serious crimes” as defined within the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), and so that penalties are harmonized across the subregion;
- iv) Promote enhanced cooperation between ECOWAS range States and transit and consumer countries for Western chimpanzees, to support the development of effective bilateral and regional initiatives that will eliminate demand and illegal trade;
- v) Ensure that the conservation of Great Apes is a priority agenda item in any relevant ECOWAS conference or international summits between Africa and China, Japan, India, the European Union, the United States or the Middle East;
- vi) Encourage and facilitate the conservation of forest of all sizes for conservation and the protection of wildlife;

URGE Western Chimpanzee range States to:

- i) Adopt National Wildlife Crime Strategies and commit to full implementation of the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime and the establishment of the West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime;
- ii) Take action to ensure cooperation among national forest, customs, and other enforcement and security agencies in intelligence sharing related to illegal trade in Western chimpanzees;
- iii) Prioritize the protection of chimpanzees in the wild and particularly the prevention of illegal hunting;
- iv) Strengthen the capacity of agencies dedicated to Western chimpanzee protection to enhance wildlife law enforcement capability across all relevant enforcement agencies;
- v) Undertake all necessary measures to promote and enhance local community support for Western chimpanzee conservation, including, where appropriate, the provision of alternative livelihoods;
- vi) Take measures to reduce the impact of corruption on illicit trade in Great Apes through implementation of CITES Resolution Conf 17.6 on ‘prohibiting, preventing, detecting and countering corruption, which facilitates activities conducted in violation of the Convention’.

URGE all donors and technical partners to:

- i) Prioritize support for the implementation of the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime, the establishment of the West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime, and their associated funding mechanisms;
- ii) Provide support to rescue centers and sanctuaries dedicated to the long-term rehabilitation and care of western chimpanzees rescued from illegal exploitation and trade, and where appropriate, their release back into the wild;
- iii) Make the protection of wild chimpanzees and especially the fight against poaching a priority and provide support for initiatives to achieve these results.

ENCOURAGE all participants as well as CITES focal points from countries and institutions represented at the Action for Chimpanzees workshop to undertake advocacy with their states for consideration of the workshop's resolutions.

ENCOURAGE all relevant States, the African Union, the CITES community, United Nations agencies development partners, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, and media, to prioritize support for the implementation of the recommendations of this Resolution whenever appropriate and by all means available.