

Brief Communication:

National Plan for Chimpanzees Announced for Guinea

The National Plan for Chimpanzees in Guinea was endorsed by the Guinean government in mid-February 2020 (MEEF 2020).

Summary

The vision and scope of the Plan

This Plan is the translation of a shared vision where "The populations of chimpanzees of Guinea and their natural habitats are restored and preserved by a strong commitment of the Guinean State, local and international communities, and by productive sectors, for sustainable development."

This Plan is national in scope, especially since the species is found in all natural regions of the country, at varying densities and with threats of different intensity within the same type of habitat. The Plan presented here was built with the aim of giving a common framework to the interventions to be carried out in this heterogeneous context.

The urgency to act effectively

In 2016, the West African chimpanzee was listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Humble *et al.* 2016). Guinea harbors the highest concentration of this subspecies. Based on current trends, Kühl *et al.* (2017) estimate that *Pan troglodytes verus* will decline by 80% over the next three generations if no action is taken to curb the threats to its survival. Conscious of the unprecedented decline in chimpanzee populations, we must redouble our efforts to protect, before it is too late, our closest relatives, who are a precious link to our evolutionary history.

The need for a plan as a framework document for Guinea

The various plans on chimpanzees - regional 2003 and national 2005 - are now more than 10 years old and the nature and intensity of the threats have evolved due to demographic pressure, changes in agro-sylvo-pastoral practices and the development of mines, dams and other infrastructure projects. In addition, data on chimpanzees also improved considerably compared to the knowledge available in 2003 and 2005.



A new assessment of the situation therefore appears essential in order to (i) redefine the priorities for action, in particular with regard to the new opportunities to halt the decline of chimpanzees and ensure their conservation in Guinea, and (ii) meet the expectations of technical and financial partners in Guinea and private investors who are seeking an intervention framework for chimpanzees. The updating of the Guinean national plan was accomplished in parallel with that of the regional plan (West Africa), in order to ensure consistency between the two plans.

The strategies

From this vision flows 10 strategies that are categorized as operational actions whose the implementation and prioritization are detailed in section the plan.

- **Strategy 0:** Identify "Priority Sites" to ensure the long-term survival of chimpanzees
- **Strategy 1:** Avoid, reduce, restore and/or compensate for the negative impacts of industrial and infrastructure projects on chimpanzees
- **Strategy 2:** Promote the transition to more productive agro-ecological models that respect the environment, sustainably manage the artisanal exploitation of the timber resource, and control bush fires
- **Strategy 3:** Stop poaching and the capture of chimpanzees
- **Strategy 4:** Reduce the risk of disease transmission between humans and chimpanzees in the Priority Sites where the two species coexist.
- **Strategy 5:** Establish a harmonious cohabitation between humans and chimpanzees



- **Strategy 6:** Create new protected areas at the Priority Site level and improve the management of existing protected areas
- **Strategy 7:** Ensure the financial sustainability of the Plan
- **Strategy 8:** Communicate effectively and continuously to audiences involved and/or interested in the conservation of chimpanzees
- **Strategy 9:** Strengthen technical and scientific capacities

The mechanism for coordinating, managing and revising the plan

In the short term, a Coordination and Sharing Unit, which can remain informal, must provide an interface allowing dialogue and the dissemination of information between the different stakeholders of the Plan. Concretely, "coordination" could consist of a few annual meetings between the structures already involved in the conservation of chimpanzees in Guinea.

In the longer term, the coordination of the Plan could go through a National Steering Committee representing all sectors of activity, chaired by the MEEF, with the support of an international Scientific and Technical Committee.

REFERENCES

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