

# RISING U.S. STAKES IN AFRICA

## Seven Proposals to Strengthen U.S.-Africa Policy

A Report of the  
Africa Policy Advisory Panel

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**Center for Strategic & International Studies  
Washington, DC**

February 2, 2004

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Powell:

We are pleased to deliver for your review the results of the Africa Policy Advisory Panel that was authorized by Congress in early 2003. We are grateful that you generously agreed to oversee and support this effort.

The Panel members and expert authors have proposed several high quality policy initiatives, tied to evolving core U.S. national interests in Africa, that should attract strong interest within this administration, Congress, and the next administration. Each product has been subjected to multiple reviews. Each is attached with an executive summary. In brief, they cover:

1. **Postwar Sudan**—the urgent security and other challenges it will present (we provided you an early copy in mid-January);
2. **Strengthening African capital markets**—Paul Applegarth's work, which has considerable promise to help jump start the Millennium Challenge Account;
3. **An elevated U.S. energy approach to Africa**—this could help inform the G-8 summit later this year, and is supplemented by a detailed projection by PFC Energy of massive future earnings by Nigeria and Angola, among other key West African oil producers;
4. **An Africa conservation initiative**—congressional interest is burgeoning in this area. The initiative calls for a focus upon transboundary ecosystems, community-based management, and strengthening Africa's parks and protected areas;
5. **Strengthening U.S. counter-terrorism efforts**—the moment may be propitious for a Muslim outreach initiative, enhanced attention to West Africa, and a push to solidify gains in Sudan and test a new approach to Somalia;
6. **Strengthening crisis diplomacy and peace operations**—the proposal argues for stepping up U.S. diplomatic readiness, while strengthening African peace intervention capacities;
7. **Sustaining U.S. leadership on HIV/AIDS**—contains a pragmatic menu of steps to build systematically on the momentous gains borne of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Across these diverse proposals, three common binding themes emerge.

- a. First, Africa has assumed a **new strategic place** in U.S. foreign policy. This shift is reflective of how 9/11 altered the overall strategic U.S. conception of global security. It is also reflective of how five factors over the past decade have forced a reap-praisal of Africa's significance: HIV/AIDS; terror; oil; armed conflicts; and global trade.
- b. Second, sustained **senior level U.S. leadership**—yours and President Bush's among the foremost—has changed opinion on Africa, reshaped the boundaries of expectations, eroded old barriers in American thinking, and raised demands for policy innovation matched by demonstrable results. That leadership has emerged in interaction with the intensified mobilization of new American constituencies, including Congress.
- c. Third, the conceptual shift to a strategic view of Africa brings in its wake **demand for new implementing policies, programs, human skills, and finances**. A strategic approach cannot be done ad hoc or on the cheap. It requires articulating a coherent new vision that makes the case for new institutional approaches to Africa, backed by serious new funding of choice initiatives. When a peace agreement is signed in 2004 in Sudan, U.S. leadership will be essential to meeting security threats and peace consolidation challenges that will follow. A strategic approach will require long-term attention in Africa to education and building health infrastructure. It will require a priority focus upon building Africa's private financial sector, engaging more systematically and effectively with Africa's 300 million Muslims, coming to terms with enduring terrorist threats in broken parts of Africa, and ensuring effective peace operations that are indeed within reach, if there is sufficient political will.

Again, in closing, we are proud and honored to have been part of this process and grateful to you for your support of it. After you have had time to review the attached documents, we wish to request the opportunity to meet briefly with you in mid-February to hear your thoughts on the results and to discuss possible next steps, including vetting the results both before an interagency audience and in a public conference with input from Congress.

With warmest personal regards,

Walter H. Kansteiner III  
Principal, Scowcroft Group  
Chair of the Africa Policy  
Advisory Panel

J. Stephen Morrison  
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Executive Secretary of the  
Africa Policy Advisory Panel

# A Natural Resource Conservation Initiative for Africa

*Nicholas P. Lapham*

## Executive Summary

U.S. foreign policy toward Africa should place greater emphasis on natural resource conservation, both as a priority in its own right and as a critical factor in achieving U.S. objectives related to preventing conflict, reducing poverty, and promoting democracy, economic growth, and public health. This would respond to a key challenge in Africa's development and would benefit the United States in numerous ways, including through building closer bilateral ties, achieving important global environmental benefits, and more effectively addressing existing policy goals.

The United States has a distinct comparative advantage—above and beyond Europe, Japan, and other industrialized countries—in helping Africa address conservation concerns. Secretary of State Colin Powell recognizes this and has taken several positive steps through his leadership on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and the President's Initiative against Illegal Logging. The challenge now is to build on these efforts.

The Africa Policy Advisory Panel's Natural Resource Conservation Working Group has identified three areas for enhanced U.S. engagement and leadership: transboundary natural resource conservation; governance of natural resources; and unsustainable commercial wildlife exploitation. The following recommendations respond to these issues and taken together constitute an African Conservation Initiative that Secretary Powell could consider announcing on Earth Day 2004.

- Scale up and sustain U.S. assistance (diplomatic, technical, and financial) to regional partnerships aimed at conserving key transboundary ecosystems.

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The author wishes to acknowledge the following contributing authors: Richard Carroll and Judy Oglethorpe (World Wildlife Fund), James Deutsch and Steve Osofsky (Wildlife Conservation Society), Heather Eves (Bushmeat Crisis Task Force), Nancy Gelman (Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group), Harry Van der Linde (African Wildlife Foundation), and Peter Veit (World Resources Institute).

A vital component of regional cooperation is the conservation of shared ecosystems that extend beyond national borders. U.S. leadership can catalyze economic, security, health, and environmental benefits from efforts undertaken jointly with the countries concerned to conserve these natural systems.

- Specifically, the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) should sustain their support of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and pursue similar initiatives for the Miombo-Mopane Woodlands complex in Southern Africa and the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem off the West African coast.
- Prioritize improved natural resource management as a key component in U.S. efforts to promote good governance.

The mismanagement of natural resources such as forests, wildlife, and water drives corruption, conflict, and rural poverty in Africa. Giving these issues greater weight in U.S.-Africa policy is essential to achieving long-term strategic interests.

- Specific and immediate actions include prioritizing forest-sector reform in efforts to promote peace and stability in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, affording a higher priority to community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) as a tool for promoting democracy, good governance, and rural development, and working with key governmental and NGO partners to strengthen African judicial systems to better develop, understand, and enforce natural resource laws.
- Expand and better coordinate U.S. government activities to address the African bushmeat crisis.

The commercial exploitation of African wildlife for human consumption threatens to increase the transmission and spread of deadly diseases affecting people, livestock, and wildlife; create regional food security problems; and cause the extinction of highly valued wildlife species, most notably, great apes. An effective U.S. government response requires the coordinated and strategic deployment of assets from a variety of agencies.

- The secretary of state, through the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, should coordinate an integrated U.S. response to the bushmeat crisis that includes specific actions from the Departments of Agriculture, Homeland Security, and Interior as well as USAID, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Trade and Development Authority, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).
- Develop stronger programs and incentives to more effectively engage the U.S. diplomatic corps in Africa on natural resource conservation issues.
- The State Department should implement specific educational, training, recruiting, and performance evaluation measures to improve the capability of the Foreign Service to address conservation issues.

- Restore and expand U.S. technical assistance programs that build the capacity of Africans—from practitioners to political leaders—in natural resource conservation.

Professional training is essential for effective natural resource conservation. Africans have few opportunities to access such training, and existing conservation capacity is being eroded by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. With its unparalleled breadth of conservation expertise, the United States is uniquely positioned to address this need.

- The U.S. government should restore and expand cost-effective programs run by the State Department, USAID, the Department of Interior, and other agencies to train African students, management professionals, and political leaders in natural resource conservation.
- Increase U.S. investment in African parks and protected areas.

Parks and other protected areas are critical to conserving Africa's natural resources. The United States, with the world's largest and most diverse protected areas network, has a distinct comparative advantage in supporting their management.

- The secretary of state should encourage passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA III) legislation now pending in the House of Representatives, which includes language directing the president to invest in park protection; engage other major donors, conservation NGOs, and interested private-sector parties in catalyzing greater support for African protected areas, perhaps through a Partnership for Africa's Parks; strengthen incentives for creating and properly managing protected areas by giving special recognition to Madagascar, Gabon, and other nations that take strong conservation action; and ensure adequate funding for the President's Initiative against Illegal Logging, which targets protected areas in Africa.

## Introduction

In Africa, perhaps more so than anywhere else on earth, natural resources—from forests and fisheries to wildlife and water—are a source of wealth and power. They underpin economies, provide livelihoods for rural people, maintain vital ecological services, and constitute a unique natural heritage. At the same time, their mismanagement fuels conflict, feeds corruption, deepens poverty, and increases the incidence of disease. For these reasons, managing Africa's natural resources through sound and sustainable conservation practices stands as one of the continent's most pressing challenges.

U.S. foreign policy toward Africa has not historically emphasized the importance of natural resource conservation, either as a priority in its own right or as a critical factor in achieving U.S. policy objectives related to preventing conflict, reducing poverty, and promoting democracy, economic development, and public health. Secretary of State Colin Powell has opened the door for change by exerting

U.S. leadership in supporting the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and the President's Initiative against Illegal Logging. During a visit to Gabon last year, the first ever by a U.S. secretary of state to another nation to promote environmental conservation, the Secretary Powell stated, "I am and always will be a conservationist for Africa."

No country is better positioned to help Africa address conservation issues. The United States invented the national park concept as a model for natural heritage protection that has been adopted by countries throughout the world. Its broader network of local, state, and national public lands provides a wealth of experience on how to integrate environmental protection with economic development, recreation, cultural preservation, and a host of other objectives. Its technical capacity—through the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and a host of other agencies at both the federal and state level—is unparalleled. Its international presence, through the activities of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), provides a keen sense for how to adapt conservation models to different political systems, cultures, and economies.

This chapter identifies three initial priorities for enhanced U.S. leadership: transboundary natural resource conservation; governance of natural resources; and unsustainable commercial wildlife exploitation. It calls on Secretary Powell to launch an African Conservation Initiative that includes specific policy actions for each of these priorities, as well as several crosscutting recommendations for integrating natural resource conservation firmly into U.S.-Africa policy.

## Key Priorities

- Addressing Transboundary Natural Resource Conservation as a Core Component of Integrated Regional Development

*Experience has shown us time and again that environmental issues have far-reaching implications in other spheres of diplomacy. Because environmental issues are also health issues. They relate to good governance. They hold important consequences for stability within a region or stability within a particular country. And environmental issues are absolutely integral to development throughout the world.*—Secretary of State Colin Powell, Earth Day, 2003

Africa is increasingly looking to regional institutions and collaborations to promote economic development and solve pressing problems. This trend, perhaps best embodied by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), offers important opportunities for U.S. initiatives to promote peace and stability, democracy, and better trade relations. A key component to the success of these regional efforts is the effective conservation of shared ecosystems. These natural systems—whether savanna, freshwater, forest, or marine—stretch beyond national borders and often define regions themselves.

Over the past two decades, a variety of regional agreements and mechanisms have emerged that promote a collaborative African approach to managing shared



ecosystems. These include the Nile Basin Initiative, the Yaoundé Declaration (related to conservation and sustainable use of the Congo Basin forests), the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions (addressing coastal and marine management in East and West Africa respectively), the Accra Declaration (related to conserving marine resources in the Gulf of Guinea), and the Southern African Development Community's Protocol on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement. Furthermore, the importance of transboundary natural resource management is highlighted in the New Partnership for African Development's (NEPAD) Environmental Action Plan.

**THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF PROTECTED AREAS.** Protected areas, including those that straddle national borders, are a common ingredient in effective transboundary conservation. At the World Parks Congress in September 2003, former South African president Nelson Mandela remarked, "We take particular pleasure and pride in the new international partnerships we are developing in southern Africa, partnerships between neighboring states to create trans-frontier protected areas or 'peace parks.'" In 2001, there were 35 transfrontier protected area complexes in Africa (including 148 individual protected areas) involving 34 countries. These areas have delivered important benefits. In 2002, South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe signed a treaty to establish the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, a bold initiative to conserve the environment, promote economic development through tourism, and provide a major unifying focus among countries that until recently were strongly opposed politically.

Bipartisan legislation now pending in the U.S. Congress underscores the importance of transboundary protected areas to economic development. The bill to extend the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA III) includes a significant emphasis on ecotourism, noting that

sub-Saharan Africa enjoys an international comparative advantage in ecotourism because it features extensive protected areas that host a variety of ecosystems and traditional cultures that are major attractions for nature-oriented tourism . . . National parks and reserves in sub-Saharan Africa should be considered a basis for regional development, involving communities living within and adjacent to them and, given their strong international recognition, provide an advantage in ecotourism marketing and promotion . . . Many natural zones in sub-Saharan Africa cross the political borders of several countries; therefore, transboundary cooperation is fundamental for all types of ecotourism development.

Among other things, the bill calls on the president to "encourage and facilitate transboundary cooperation in sub-Saharan African countries to establish and protect cross-border parks and natural zones."

Transfrontier conservation can also work in conflict regions. The mountain gorilla—one of the world's rarest mammals—would be extinct but for the joint efforts of Rwanda, Uganda, and Democratic Republic of Congo to conserve its tiny remaining habitat. Remarkably, despite the movements of armed groups and refugees in the vicinity, the mountain gorilla population actually increased in the last

decade from 320 to 355 individuals, and gorilla tourism is once again an important component of the regional economy.

In Central Africa, a collaborative agreement among Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of Congo created the Sangha River Trinational Park, which links key reserves from all three countries and is the first of 13 priority transborder networks endorsed by the Yaoundé Summit. These networks helped form the basis for the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), an effort catalyzed by the United States that demonstrates the potential to expand regional conservation partnerships in Africa.

#### **THE CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP AS A MODEL FOR U.S.**

**LEADERSHIP.** The Congo Basin forests are vital to economic development, food security, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, and a host of other concerns. The CBFP unites African governments, key public donors (e.g., USAID, the World Bank, the European Union, and Japan), industry, and civil society in an effort to promote their conservation and sustainable use. In so doing, the CBFP draws heavily from the 1999 Yaoundé Declaration, a regional agreement on forest conservation signed by Central African heads of state.

U.S. financial support to the CBFP targets 11 priority landscapes and emphasizes protected area conservation. This reflects a distinct niche for the United States and fills a gap in assistance provided by the European Union and other donors. U.S. support, which leverages significant private-sector funds, is also essential to addressing Central Africa's bushmeat crisis, which is threatening public health, endangering food security, and decimating wildlife populations (see below).

Tackling regional conservation problems in Africa is not new to the United States. USAID, for example, through the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), has been supporting this kind of work for years. What the CBFP does—through Secretary Powell's personal engagement, the significant increase in U.S. technical and financial support, and the strategic targeting of such support—is elevate the U.S. response to a scale that more appropriately addresses the magnitude of the problem. It is this scaling up that is needed in other key regions across the continent.

**THE MIOMBO-MOPANE WOODLANDS AND GUINEA CURRENT LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCED AND SUSTAINED U.S. ENGAGEMENT.** The Miombo-Mopane Woodlands, which extend through 10 countries in Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), comprise one of the largest remaining tropical wilderness areas in the world. They are home to some of Africa's poorest and most natural-resource-dependent people and to some of its biggest wildlife concentrations. They also harbor Africa's largest protected areas, including several transfrontier peace parks that simultaneously advance conservation and economic development and improve bilateral relations. SADC, through its Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, provides a strong vehicle for regional cooperation in conserving the Miombo-Mopane ecosystem. Key needs include improving protected area management, addressing overharvesting and illegal trade of wildlife, preventing the transmission of infec-

tious diseases among wildlife, livestock, and people, and promoting good environmental governance through community-based natural resource management. All of these needs match up well with U.S. capacity and strategic interests.

The Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem off West Africa is one of the world's most important ocean environments. It harbors vast oil reserves, a globally significant marine and coastal fishery, and a tremendous diversity of wildlife, including many species found nowhere else. How this ecosystem is managed has important implications for regional stability and bears heavily on economic development, food security, public health, and environmental sustainability for the 16 nations that are part of it (Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, and Togo). Threats include overfishing, particularly by foreign fleets; destruction of coastal mangrove forests and other habitats; pollution from sewage, agricultural activities, industrial waste, and oil spills; and urbanization of the coastal environment. The 1998 Accra Declaration provides a framework for regional cooperation in tackling these problems, and the Global Environment Facility, with technical support from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has recently significantly expanded its investment in the area. Building on the White Water to Blue Water initiative it has piloted for the Caribbean region, the United States is in a strong position to scale up its support in a strategic and catalytic way.

There are other important opportunities throughout Africa. The Albertine Rift (including Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia), the East Africa Marine Ecosystem (stretching from southern Somaliland to South Africa), the Eastern Arc Forests (Kenya and Tanzania), the Great Lakes (including the countries bordering on Lake Malawi, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Victoria), the Guinean Lowland Forests (including Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, and Togo), the Nile Basin (including Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda), the Okavango Delta (including Angola, Botswana, and Namibia), the Serengeti/Mara Savanna Ecosystem (Tanzania and Kenya), and the Zambezi River Basin (Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) are some of the many transboundary ecosystems where enhanced U.S. engagement in promoting conservation efforts could have a significant impact.

■ Improving Natural Resource Governance as a Way of Preventing Conflict and Promoting Democracy

*Conservation is the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good. Since its objective is the ownership, control, development, processing, distribution, and use of the natural resources for the benefit of the people, it is by its very nature the antithesis of monopoly. So long as people are oppressed by the lack of such ownership and control, so long will they continue to be cheated of their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, cheated out of their enjoyment of the earth and all that it contains.—Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 1947*

Although Africa is resource rich, most Africans remain mired in poverty. This incongruence is closely linked to resource mismanagement, which in turn leads to the disenfranchisement of rural populations. Given the value of land and other natural resources, nature is at the heart of considerable competition, conflict, and corruption. Too often, Africa's political and economic elite receives a disproportionate share of the benefits from resource use, while the poor absorb a disproportionate share of associated social and environmental costs. History has shown that when natural resources become valuable, such as through commercialization, the elite find ways to capture them. Indeed, access to natural resources (land, forests, etc.) is a major incentive for seeking political office and a major perk of gaining it. In turn, resources are used not only to enrich the officeholders and their families, but also to ensure that they remain in power.

In essence, there is little accountability by many African states to their citizens over the private-sector use of public natural resources. Many citizens and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) believe that agreements are often negotiated behind closed doors and involve kickbacks, rent seeking, patronage, and other forms of corruption. They also believe that the state does not get its fair share of revenue and that the revenue generated is mismanaged and not used appropriately. A further problem is that benefits often fail to accrue to those needing them most—government departments with conservation responsibilities and local communities who must live with the impacts of resource mismanagement.

A critical need is to encourage African governments to ensure good use, including fair distribution, of state revenues from timber, wildlife, and other natural resources by promoting transparency in the allocation of large-scale concessions to the private sector and in the appropriation of the associated state revenues. Liberia, much in the international spotlight of late, poignantly demonstrates why these issues matter to the United States.

**FOREST SECTOR REFORM IN LIBERIA AS A KEY TO PEACE AND STABILITY.** Liberia has the largest remaining forested areas in West Africa. These forests are a vital national asset. They have historically provided for economic growth and job creation. They sustain key watersheds, and they support one of the most biologically diverse environments on earth. Yet they are also at the heart of the country's recent turmoil. It is widely known that former Liberian president Charles Taylor misappropriated timber revenue to fund the ruthless military campaigns that have tormented Liberia, the region, and the world for the last several years. This led the UN Security Council in early 2003 to take the extraordinary step of imposing sanctions on Liberian timber exports.

Whether Liberia can get back on its feet depends heavily on effective reform of the nation's forest sector. Such reform could lead to a sustainable and transparent timber industry that provides economic development and jobs for rural people. It could also seize on the opportunity to create a vibrant network of national parks that conserve Liberia's natural heritage, offer significant tourism potential, and promote improved relations with neighbors in the region. On the other hand, without forest sector reform, Liberia is far more likely to join the ranks of post-conflict nations that slip back into chaos, as timber revenue once again becomes the cur-

rency that fuels unrest, sows instability, and erodes the natural resource base for future generations.

The United States has a significant strategic interest in seeing Liberia emerge as a stable and peaceful force in the region and has committed its own troops and considerable resources toward this end. Without paying close attention to governance issues associated with the management of Liberia's forests, this effort is unlikely to succeed. Similarly, good forest sector governance is an essential component to promoting democracy, peace, and sustainable development in other forest-rich African nations, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example.

**COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AS A GOOD GOVERNANCE TOOL.** Ensuring a greater degree of local ownership over natural resources is vital to improving governance in Africa. In the past decade, community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) has helped provide rural people a stronger voice in decisionmaking and ensure that they receive greater benefit from resource use. Examples of CBNRM projects include those involving ecotourism, game ranching, sustainable trophy hunting, handicraft production, bee keeping, and wild fruit juice production. Experience indicates that community-based organizations (CBOs) established to administer CBNRM are improving local governance and supporting democracy. Indeed, CBNRM's very success is proving to be its biggest problem. In many countries, the political elite has come to view the increasing power and influence of CBOs as a threat to authority while the economic elite looks for ways to capture CBNRM profits.

Strengthening CBNRM is a critical need in many African countries. Key activities include forming CBO federations and improving the law and practice of environmental procedural rights, including the rights of access to information, decisionmaking, and recourse in environmental matters. Other initiatives include independent monitoring of the practice of these rights, contributing to constitutional reforms that will guarantee procedural rights, and supporting the enactment of framework environmental management statutes and sectoral natural resource laws/regulations that articulate guidelines/minimum standards for the practice of procedural rights.

In recognition of CBNRM's importance in promoting democracy, good governance, and sustainable resource conservation, USAID has taken a lead role in supporting CBNRM projects across Africa over the past decade. Two well-known and successful examples are the Administrative Design for Management (ADMADe) project in Zambia and the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) program in Namibia. The challenge now is to build on this legacy by expanding and learning from USAID's CBNRM programs and by affording CBNRM a more prominent place in U.S.-Africa policy.

- Tackling the African Bushmeat Trade to Promote Public Health, Food Security, and Environmental Protection

*The survival of our wildlife is a matter of grave concern to all of us in Africa. These wild creatures amid the wild places they inhabit are not only important as a source of wonder and inspiration but are an integral part of our natural resources and of*

*our future livelihood and well-being.*—Julius Nyerere, *Arusha Declaration*, September 1961

The overexploitation of African wildlife for human consumption has mushroomed into a crisis of global proportion. The problem is perhaps most immediate in the forests of Central Africa where increased penetration into previously inaccessible areas by logging and mining interests has helped fuel a dramatic explosion in the hunting of wild animals, including many threatened and endangered species. Unsustainable quantities of wild meat are now reaching large population centers, in turn driving further demand. Bushmeat networks extend beyond the borders of African nations and reach markets as far away as London, Paris, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C., where eating wild animals is a status symbol in certain communities. All this occurs even though the majority of the trade is illegal both within nations and by international law/treaty.

The United States has a variety of mechanisms through which it can respond, including international agreements that address wildlife use, such as the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). An important recent development is the signing of the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) Ministerial Declaration (October 16, 2003) by 40 bushmeat producer and consumer nations worldwide. The declaration establishes a mandate for international cooperation toward supporting sustainable forest practices, including the management and monitoring of the bushmeat trade. Numerous agencies of the U.S. government also possess relevant technical expertise and resources that, if effectively combined, could provide significant support toward African efforts to address this crisis. There are several strong arguments for increased U.S. leadership.

**BUSHMEAT AS A VECTOR FOR THE SPREAD OF HIGHLY INFECTIOUS DISEASE.** In a globalizing world, emerging health threats—to people, livestock, and wildlife—can spread as never before, and the United States as a matter of public health and national security must treat such threats extremely seriously. HIV, Ebola, monkey pox, and foot and mouth disease all demonstrate the worldwide risks that the wildlife/human/livestock interface in Africa poses. Butchering and eating wildlife, particularly apes and other primates, is a particular concern.

It is now understood that the HIV virus crossed the species barrier from chimpanzees to humans several times in Central Africa, probably as a result of the hunting and consumption of chimpanzees for food. Similarly, recent outbreaks of Ebola virus in the Congo appear to have resulted from human consumption of apes. Although the quantity of bushmeat exported from Central Africa to Europe and the United States is small compared to the quantity consumed in the region, anecdotal reports suggest that such exports may be widespread and may pose a risk of transmitting emerging diseases to the wider world. For example, the recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration ban (November 3, 2003) on imports of all African rodents—dead or alive—is a direct response to the monkey pox outbreak in the Midwest caused by infected rodents imported from Africa.

**BUSHMEAT AS A THREAT TO FOOD SECURITY.** Numerous rural communities throughout Africa are historically dependent on wildlife as a primary protein

source and have hunted sustainably for generations. Today's bushmeat "industry" is depriving these communities of their basic nutritional needs, contributing to disease risks (especially when immune systems are depressed), and raising longer-term food security concerns. The Pygmy populations of Central Africa are a good example of an entire culture that is at risk.

Food security is also an issue for the urban poor for whom bushmeat has relatively recently become an important source of nutrition. Identifying alternative sources of protein for these populations, sources that do not directly or indirectly threaten Africa's remaining biodiversity, poses a real challenge. There is an interesting link here to the marine environment, where overfishing off the West African coast (often to supply markets in Europe) has led to a corresponding increase in localized hunting for terrestrial bushmeat.

**BUSHMEAT AS A MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS.** Top experts have called the unsustainable commercial harvesting of Africa's wildlife the single greatest threat to Africa's biodiversity. It has very rapidly eradicated almost all large mammals from unprotected areas in West Africa and threatens to do the same over the next 20 years in Central Africa. As this occurs, species for which the U.S. public has expressed particular concern, including elephants and great apes, will be at grave risk. East and Southern Africa are also currently experiencing dramatic increases in commercial hunting, and the data are just beginning to emerge regarding environmental impacts in these regions. The problem is not solely terrestrial in scope: overfishing is a significant problem in Africa's major freshwater systems and in virtually all of its marine environments.

Extinction of key species caused by hunting pressure in turn threatens irreversible ecological change. For example, loss of fruit eaters within tropical African forests alters the seed dispersal patterns of up to 80 percent of tree species. This could change forest composition and potentially alter rates of carbon sequestration. Loss of grazers could have an equivalent impact on savanna ecosystem structure and function.

## Policy Recommendations

Following are six policy recommendations that constitute a proposed African Conservation Initiative for the U.S. government. The first three respond to the specific priorities described above. The second three are crosscutting in nature. Taken together, they would significantly elevate the profile of natural resource conservation in U.S.-Africa policy and enhance the overall effectiveness of U.S. efforts to promote peace, democracy, economic development, and improved relations with the continent. As a way of highlighting their importance, our working group urges the secretary of state to consider announcing these initiatives as a package in a major address on Earth Day 2004 and pledges its support toward their further development.

- Scale up and sustain U.S. assistance (diplomatic, technical, and financial) to regional partnerships aimed at conserving key transboundary ecosystems.

Regional cooperation is fundamental to Africa's development. A vital component of such cooperation is the conservation of shared ecosystems that extend beyond the borders of individual nations. U.S. leadership can play a pivotal role in catalyzing economic, security, health, and environmental benefits from efforts undertaken jointly with the countries concerned to conserve these natural systems.

Specifically, the State Department and USAID, with Secretary Powell's personal leadership, as well as that of the assistant secretaries for African affairs and oceans and international environmental and scientific affairs and the USAID assistant administrator for Africa, should

- Ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership by maintaining it as a significant diplomatic priority, supporting its full funding, and extending its duration beyond the initial three years;
  - Pursue regional initiatives for the Miombo-Mopane Woodlands and the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem. As an initial step, invite governments, regional institutions, leading conservation organizations, local community representatives, and interested private-sector parties to offer and discuss specific recommendations for enhanced U.S. engagement; and
  - Seek opportunities to promote and raise the profile of conservation initiatives in other priority regions, including but not limited to the Albertine Rift, the East Africa Marine Ecosystem, the Eastern Arc Forests, the Great Lakes, the Guinean Lowland Forests, the Nile Basin, the Okavango Delta, the Serengeti/Mara Savanna Ecosystem, and the Zambezi River Basin.
- Prioritize improved natural resource management as a key component in U.S. efforts to promote good governance.

The mismanagement of natural resources such as forests, wildlife, and water is a driving force behind corruption and conflict in Africa and is a leading cause of poverty, particularly in rural regions. Giving these issues greater weight in U.S.-Africa policy is essential to achieving long-term strategic interests. The secretary of state should take the following initial actions:

- Prioritize forest sector reform as a use of the \$200 million recently appropriated for Liberia's reconstruction. In this respect, the United States should assist with developing a transparent, sustainable timber industry and a vibrant national parks network—making sure that the result benefits the Liberian people. It should also work with partners to ensure that significant reform of the forest sector occurs before UN sanctions on Liberian timber exports are lifted;
- Promote the incorporation of forest conservation as an important aspect of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo, emphasizing the need for a sustainable, transparent timber industry and a robust, well-managed network of national parks and forest reserves;
- Increase the use of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) as a tool to promote democracy, good governance, and rural development across Africa; and



- Work with other U.S. agencies, the UN Environment Program, and NGO partners to strengthen African judicial systems to better develop, understand, and enforce natural resource and environmental laws.
- Expand and better coordinate U.S. government activities to address the African bushmeat crisis.

The commercial exploitation of African wildlife for human consumption, commonly referred to as the bushmeat trade, is a global crisis. It threatens to increase the transmission and spread of deadly diseases, create food security problems in key African regions, and cause the extinction of highly valued wildlife species, including great apes.

An effective U.S. response requires the coordinated and strategic deployment of assets from a variety of U.S. agencies. The secretary of state, through the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, should coordinate such a response to include:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with leading NGOs, conducting urgent research into the links between human health and the bushmeat trade;
- USAID (e.g., through the Global Development Alliance) working with the private sector to assist Africans in developing viable protein alternatives within a context of appropriate environmental safeguards;
- The Trade and Development Authority and Overseas Private Investment Corporation discouraging U.S. commercial interests, particularly the mining industry, from practices that exacerbate the bushmeat problem, such as opening new areas to increased hunting pressure;
- The State Department pressuring European and Asian governments to crack down on logging companies within their respective countries that are engaged in unsustainable practices in Central and West Africa;
- The State and Interior Departments working with African nations to encourage compliance with international wildlife protection agreements;
- The Interior and Homeland Security Departments better training customs agents in detecting shipments of bushmeat entering the United States;
- The Agriculture and Interior Departments, in collaboration with leading conservation NGOs, assisting African counterpart agencies in mitigating disease threats to wildlife and livestock within Africa and in overseas markets; and
- The State and Interior Departments supporting African efforts to conserve additional undisturbed areas as national parks and protected areas.
- Develop stronger programs and incentives to more effectively engage the U.S. diplomatic corps in Africa on natural resource conservation issues.

A combination of factors discourage effective leadership within the U.S. diplomatic corps on conservation and environmental issues and, as a result, minimizes the

emphasis on such concerns in U.S. bilateral relationships with African nations. U.S. diplomats headed to Africa receive, at best, ad hoc exposure to conservation issues prior to assuming their posts. State Department personnel dedicated primarily to environmental concerns—that is regional environmental officers (of which there are three in Africa) and environment, science, and technology (EST) attaches—rarely possess the natural resource backgrounds necessary to effectively address key issues. Achieving success in the area of conservation and the environment is not generally seen as an important element to furthering a career within the Foreign Service.

The State Department should take the following actions to alter this dynamic:

- Support a program at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service to better train prospective Foreign Service officers in natural resource conservation;
  - Establish a mandatory training program for Foreign Service officers posted to Africa on natural resource conservation and its links to conflict prevention, good governance, poverty reduction, etc.;
  - Create a prestigious fellowship to allow promising Foreign Service professionals to spend a year with a leading scientific institution or conservation NGO;
  - Strengthen the role of State Department regional environmental officers by recruiting individuals with strong natural resource backgrounds; and
  - Build conservation/environment criteria into the system for rating the performance of Foreign Service officers leaving African posts.
- Restore and expand key U.S. technical assistance programs that build the capacity of Africans—from practitioners to political leaders—in natural resource conservation.

Professional training is a prerequisite for effective natural resource conservation. Africans have few opportunities to gain access to such training, and existing African conservation capacity is being eroded by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. With its unparalleled breadth of conservation experience and expertise, the United States is uniquely positioned to address this need. The U.S. government has historically run small, cost-effective programs to train African students and management professionals in natural resource conservation. These programs, many of which have fallen victim to budget cuts, should be restored and expanded.

Opportunities should also be explored to engage African parliamentarians and other government political leaders. The State Department recently collaborated with the Department of Interior to host a delegation of top officials from Gabon. As Gabon works to create its own national park system, the purpose of the trip was to expose key Gabonese officials to the potential of parks to achieve environmental protection while stimulating economic growth and job creation.

Specific actions the U.S. government should take to build increased African capacity in natural resource conservation include:

- Develop through the State Department, in partnership with other U.S. technical agencies and leading conservation NGOs, a formalized program of study tours and exchanges for African parliamentarians and other government leaders;
  - Restart the International Short Course run by the International Affairs Office of the National Park Service. This program provided essential training to emerging leaders from protected area agencies around the world. Some of Africa's most respected protected area officials are graduates;
  - Restore the USAID Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills (ATLAS) scholarship program for future African leaders to study conservation-related topics at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels at U.S. universities;
  - Provide increased technical assistance through the Department of Interior's International Technical Assistance Program to African wildlife and protected area authorities on key issues including law enforcement, wildlife monitoring, disease management, ecotourism development, geographic information systems (GIS) technology, etc.;
  - Increase USAID support for Africa's three regional wildlife colleges (including providing scholarships to African national park staff) and encourage linkages between these institutions and leading U.S. universities. The colleges are the College of Wildlife Management in Mweka, Tanzania; the Ecole de Faune in Garoua, Cameroon; and the Southern Africa Wildlife College in South Africa; and
  - Expand efforts to engage the Peace Corps in supporting programs in Africa that build natural resource management capacity.
- Increase U.S. investment in African parks and protected areas.

Parks and other protected areas are a cornerstone of natural resource conservation efforts throughout Africa and contribute significantly to each of the core themes identified in this chapter. For example, peace parks that straddle national borders often anchor initiatives to promote effective transboundary conservation; protected forest areas provide critical refuges for wildlife that are essential to addressing the bushmeat crisis, while marine protected areas provide breeding grounds for commercial fisheries; and well-managed national parks can help support good governance both nationally and locally.

African governments continue to take bold actions to establish new parks and protected areas. In 2002, Gabon created a national parks network covering more than 10 percent of the country's land area. In 2003, Madagascar announced that it would triple the number of its protected areas. The World Parks Congress that took place in Durban, South Africa, in September 2003 underscored the need for international assistance in helping Africa develop and maintain a comprehensive protected area network.

Supporting the creation and management of parks and protected areas is a discipline in which the United States has a distinct comparative advantage. The United

States has the world's largest and most diverse network of protected areas and a wide range of expertise in managing such areas for multiple objectives, from strict protection to sustainable use.

Specifically, the secretary of state should

- Encourage passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA III) legislation now pending in the House of Representatives that includes language directing the president to invest in park protection;
- Engage other major donors, leading conservation NGOs, and interested private-sector parties in an effort to catalyze greater support for African protected areas, perhaps through a Partnership for Africa's Parks;
- Strengthen incentives for creating and properly managing protected areas by giving special recognition to Madagascar, Gabon, and other nations that take strong conservation action; and
- Ensure that the President's Initiative against Illegal Logging, which has protected areas as a focus, receives adequate funding and targets Africa as a priority.