

SAVING THE CONGO BASIN: THE STAKES, THE PLAN

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SAVING THE CONGO BASIN: THE STAKES, THE PLAN

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward R. Royce, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. ROYCE. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa will come to order.

The tropical forests of Central Africa's Congo Basin are second in size only to those in the Amazon Basin. Now, that is nearly seven times the size of California. They are an important economic resource for an estimated 20 million people in this region. These forests also play a critical role in sustaining the environment—absorbing carbon dioxide and cleansing the water and holding soil. The Congo Basin contains the most diverse grouping of plants and animals in Africa, including rare and endangered species such as the eastern lowland gorilla, mountain gorilla, chimpanzee and the white rhino. These plants and animals are invaluable for so many reasons, including their genetic and biochemical information, which could spark advances in medical, agricultural and industrial technology.

The Congo Basin is a global treasure, but this treasure is threatened as Congo Basin forests are coming under growing pressures. Ten years ago, these forests were virtually untouched. Today, logging operations, driven by a growing Asian demand for tropical hardwood, are shrinking these forests. One estimate has logging taking out Congo Basin forest areas at a rate of twice the size of Rhode Island each and every year.

Subsistence agriculture pressures, expanding with populations, are taking a toll. Meanwhile, the construction of logging roads and other developments, including the proliferation of small arms in the region, is putting intense hunting pressure on wildlife or "bushmeat." At current kill levels, most species of apes and other primates, of large antelope and elephants, will disappear from the Congo Basin, with some becoming extinct. Poorly managed logging and hunting threatens to do to the Congo Basin what it did to West Africa, which lost much of its forest and wildlife to over exploitation. Purged of wildlife, some Congo Basin forests already are eerily quiet, "empty forests" as they are called. If current deforestation and wildlife depletion rates are not reversed, the six coun-

tries of the Congo Basin most immediately, but also the world, will pay an incalculable economic, environmental, social and cultural price.

Last September, Secretary of State Colin Powell launched the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) in Johannesburg. The partnership, involving governments, international organizations and businesses, is focused on 11 key landscapes in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo. It aims to support a network of national parks and protected areas and well-managed forestry concessions.

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership, building upon previous U.S. efforts, is working to combat illegal logging and poaching and other unsustainable practices and to give local populations an economic stake in the preservation of the forests, including through the development of ecotourism. This initiative has received widespread applause, including from leading conservationists. Now everyone needs to deliver on this initiative.

Now, there are three non-governmental organizations that I want to mention—Conservation International, the World Conservation Society, and the World Wildlife Fund. They deserve recognition for their early financial contributions to this effort.

The most dramatic move toward conserving Congo Basin forests was taken by Gabon. Last September, President Omar Bongo announced the creation of 13 national parks, representing over 10 percent of Gabon's surface area. Previously, Gabon had no national park system. These parks cover some of the least exploited tropical forests and coastal areas in Africa. The partnership will back this initiative in hopes of seeing that these are not just paper parks. As with all conservation efforts, it is critical that the conservation commitment come from the ground.

I would like to recognize Ambassador Ogouebandja from Gabon, who is with us today. Ambassador, will you stand? Thank you, sir. I believe, in fact, we have most, if not all, of the Ambassadors of the Congo Basin countries here with us, and we appreciate that.

Conservation is not easy. What Americans today take for granted, Yosemite and Yellowstone and our magnificent national park system, took great foresight and political commitment to make a reality. It will be a major challenge to establish and maintain effective regimes to regulate logging and hunting in the Congo Basin.

These are impoverished governments dependent upon revenues from natural resource exploitation. They are hindered by weak and poorly funded agencies. Corruption is a problem. Wildlife provides a relatively inexpensive source of needed protein. These countries lack local NGOs focused on conservation. Civil unrest and war has plagued several Congo Basin countries, among other hurdles facing conservation efforts.

But, there is reason for hope. With the partnership and other efforts, we have built unprecedented momentum for the conservation of these forests, and we have lessons that can be learned from conservation efforts elsewhere, including failed efforts in West Africa. The U.S. must remain engaged, working with the African governments and others to maintain this momentum.

In 1997, this Subcommittee held a hearing on managing Africa's natural resources. At that hearing I said, "As much as some would like it to be, Africa cannot be one big preserve." With that hearing, we featured the U.S. backed CAMPFIRE program, designed to give southern Africans an economic incentive to manage well their natural resources. Too many conservation efforts, cooked up far away, ignore the interests of average Africans.

That day we heard from a witness who brings this kind of pragmatism to his work and who has done more than anyone else to bring attention to the stakes we all have in conserving the Congo Basin forests, and that is Michael Fay. Among his many activities publicizing these magnificent forests and the threats they face has been his 440 day trek through the Congo Basin in 1999 and 2000, fully documented by *National Geographic*. Michael Fay recently worked with President Bongo to help bring about his landmark declaration of a new national park system. Especially for young people watching today, Michael Fay is a testament to the great difference in the world that one determined person can make.

I will now turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Payne, for any opening statement he may wish to make. Congressman Payne.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Royce follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE EDWARD R. ROYCE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The following is the opening statement of Africa Subcommittee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) at this afternoon's hearing on saving the Congo Basin:

"The tropical forests of Central Africa's Congo Basin, second in size only to those of the Amazon Basin, nearly seven times the size of California, are an important economic resource for an estimated 20 million people in the region. These forests also play a critical role in sustaining the environment—absorbing carbon dioxide, cleansing water, and holding soil. The Congo Basin contains the most diverse grouping of plants and animals in Africa, including rare and endangered species, such as the eastern lowland gorilla, mountain gorilla, chimpanzee, and the white rhino. These plants and animals are invaluable for so many reasons, including their genetic and biochemical information, which could spark advances in medical, agricultural, and industrial technology. The Congo Basin is a global treasure.

"But this treasure is threatened, as Congo Basin forests are coming under growing pressures. Ten years ago, these forests were virtually untouched. Today, logging operations, driven by a growing Asian demand for tropical hardwoods, are shrinking these forests. One estimate has logging taking out Congo Basin forest areas at a rate of twice the size of Rhode Island each and every year. Subsistence agriculture pressures, expanding with populations, are taking a toll. Meanwhile, the construction of logging roads and other developments, including the proliferation of small arms in the region, is putting intense hunting pressure on wildlife, or "bushmeat." At current kill levels, most species of apes and other primates, large antelope, and elephants will disappear from the Congo Basin, with some becoming extinct. Poorly managed logging and hunting threatens to do to the Congo Basin what it did to West Africa, which lost much of its forest and wildlife to over exploitation. Purged of wildlife, some Congo Basin forests already are eerily quiet "empty forests". If current deforestation and wildlife depletion rates are not reversed, the six countries of the Congo Basin most immediately, but also the world, will pay an incalculable economic, environmental, social and cultural price.

"Last September, Secretary of State Colin Powell launched the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) in Johannesburg. The CBFP, involving governments, international organizations, and businesses, is focused on eleven key landscapes in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo. It aims to support a network of national parks and protected areas and well-managed forestry concessions. The CBFP, building upon previous U.S. efforts, is working to combat illegal logging and poaching and other unsustainable practices, and to give local populations an economic stake

in the preservation of the forests, including through the development of ecotourism. This initiative has received widespread applause, including from leading conservationists. Now everyone needs to deliver. Three NGOS—Conservation International, the World Conservation Society, and the World Wildlife Fund—deserve recognition for their early financial contributions to this effort.

“The most dramatic move toward conserving Congo Basin forests has been taken by Gabon. Last September, President Omar Bongo announced the creation of 13 national parks, representing over 10 percent of Gabon’s surface area. Previously, Gabon had no national park system. These parks cover some of the least exploited tropical forests and coastal areas in Africa. The CBFP will back this initiative in hope of seeing that these are not just “paper parks.” As with all conservation efforts, it is critical that the conservation commitment come from the ground.

“Conservation is not easy. What Americans today take for granted, Yosemite and Yellowstone and our magnificent national park system, took great foresight and political commitment to make a reality. It will be a major challenge to establish and maintain effective regimes to regulate logging and hunting in the Congo Basin. These are impoverished governments dependent upon revenues from natural resource exploitation. They are hindered by weak and poorly funded agencies. Corruption is a problem. Wildlife provides a relatively inexpensive source of needed protein. These countries lack local NGOs focused on conservation. Civil unrest and war has plagued several Congo Basin countries, among other hurdles facing conservation efforts.

“But there is reason for hope. With the Partnership and other efforts, we have built unprecedented momentum for the conservation of these forests. And we have lessons that can be learned from conservation efforts elsewhere, including failed efforts in West Africa. The U.S. must remain engaged, working with the African governments and others to maintain this momentum.

“In 1997, this Subcommittee held a hearing on managing Africa’s natural resources. At that hearing, I said, “as much as some would like it to be, Africa cannot be one big preserve.” With that hearing, we featured the U.S.-backed CAMPFIRE program, designed to give southern Africans an economic incentive to manage well their natural resources. Too many conservation efforts, cooked up far away, ignore the interests of average Africans.

“That day we heard from a witness who brings this kind of pragmatism to his work and who has done more than anyone else to bring attention to the stakes we all have in conserving the Congo Basin forests: Michael Fay. Among his many activities publicizing these magnificent forests and the threats they face has been his 440-day trek through the Congo Basin in 1999–2000, fully documented by *National Geographic*. Michael Fay recently worked with President Bongo to help bring about his landmark declaration of a new national park system. Especially for young people watching today, Michael Fay is a testament to the great difference in the world that one determined person can make.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me commend you for calling this very important hearing, *Saving The Congo Basin: The Stakes, The Plan*. It is good to see Assistant Secretary Kansteiner and Assistant Secretary Turner and Assistant Administrator Newman and Dr. Fay, who we will hear from later.

Let me just commend our representatives from State Department for the outstanding work that they continually do to try to keep the issues of Africa before the Congress. Of course, many of the problems that we are seeing with conservation could be alleviated by having more concentration and focus on the continent to alleviate poverty in general. Once we can work toward overall alleviating poverty, then we know that many of these problems that we do see will vanish. However, we cannot wait to preserve wildlife waiting for us to overcome poverty in the continent. I think there are certainly goals that we need to work with simultaneously.

Let me thank you for calling this important hearing. I thank the esteemed witnesses who have come to give testimony. Let me also welcome the Africa Diplomatic Corps, who have become very active here on Capitol Hill with the AGOA Act and with other issues confronting Africa. We would like to commend you for your activity.

Since recorded history, the continent of Africa has been known for its great universities, back in the days of Timbuktu in Mali and for the great kingdoms like the great Zimbabwe Kingdom, centuries of art and culture. I have had the opportunity to visit the university and the libraries up in Timbuktu, and so we know there was really an era, there was a time when Africa was a leading continent in the world.

More commonly, Africa is known for its great wealth and beauty even today, even though we see abject poverty and a lot of problems because of perhaps neglect or other priorities during the past decades, but the wealth and beauty is still there. As we know, it has the largest concentration of natural resources, the abundance of diamonds, a wide variety of gems, minerals like coltan, plants with extraordinary healing properties that are often used in pharmaceuticals, although rarely attributed about where the source of these drugs come from, many right from this Congo Basin.

The continent is also famous for its wildlife, as we know, including the gorillas, as we have heard, and elephants and zebras and hippopotamus and so forth. We certainly are hoping that this initiative will help preserve the wildlife that had in the past been in great abundance, but, as we see, a trend in the wrong direction.

The Congo Basin itself is perhaps one of the most spectacular of the areas in terms of its rain forests, we have heard second only to the great rain forest in Brazil. The animals and plants just thrive there. I had the opportunity to visit on several occasions, and it is just a sight to behold.

Too often, we hear about exploitations of these precious natural resources in Africa, so the discussion about a new partnership which will work to preserve and protect precious wildlife and raw materials is certainly a welcome one and one that is certainly overdue. In that vein, I commend the Administration and Secretary Powell for the leadership shown on the issue and the commitment to give \$12 million a year to the partnership totaling \$53 million by the year 2005.

The partnership is between NGOs, industry and governments who have put forth a sustained effort toward thwarting deforestation in the Congo Basin and in 11 priority landscapes. The money will go toward the establishment of, as we have heard already, new national parks which will serve as a haven for floral and fauna, whose survival is so key to the environmental climate and the communities which live among them and toward the strengthening of government forest authorities and providing opportunities for sustainable development.

The Congo River Basin ecosystem is being compromised by the increased logging, the bushmeat trade, as we have heard, diamond mining and the current conflict in the Great Lakes region. Secretary Powell's announcement of this new partnership at the World Summit for a Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002 marked a step in the right direction in terms of preservation of Africa's raw materials and wildlife.

I also commend the leaders of the six countries in the river basin who have expressed their pledge to the cause as well—Cameroon, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Central Africa Republic.

I am encouraged by this progressive move, and we hope that the intent of the initiative is carried out and will be implemented properly, and we hope that even with some of the new initiatives some of the African new initiatives like NEPAD and with the potential MCA here, the Millennium Challenge Account, that all of these can be used to shore up and assist the continent as it tries to work its way back.

Once again, let me commend the Chairman. I look forward to listening to the testimony of our expert witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Congressman Payne.

Before proceeding, I would like to comment on two timely issues. First, Secretary Kansteiner, I would like to recognize the Administration for acting last week against the regime of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. President Bush issued an Executive Order under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to block all property and interests in property of 73 individuals whose actions and policies have undermined Zimbabwe's democratic institutions. President Bush has taken a well-deserved and reasoned action.

Some individuals on this asset freeze list are involved in pilaging the natural resource wealth of the Democrat Republic of Congo according to the United Nations, so there is a direct connection to what we are discussing today, and I know, Assistant Secretary, that you are the one who has been most closely tracking this issue. I am glad we acted.

Second is in regard to Mr. Charles Brumskine. He is a Liberian who recently returned to his country because he believes in democracy. In Charles Taylor's Liberia, however, democracy is a crime, so this gentleman, who I have known for many years, has put his life on the line. Press accounts are reporting that Charles Brumskine is now harassed by Liberian Government authorities, being denied the right to leave Liberia based upon some bureaucratic pretense.

I trust, Assistant Secretary Kansteiner, that we are keeping a watchful eye on this case, and I should also mention that Charles Taylor is engineering the environmental destruction of one of the last significant forests in that region in West Africa, and that is the clear cutting of Liberian forests, which is unconscionable.

On our first panel we have Walter Kansteiner, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. He served in the past with the National Security Council as director of African Affairs and as an African specialist on the staff of the Secretary of State.

We have John Turner with us, who is Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. In this position he heads Department of State programs and activities concerning HIV-AIDS and other infectious diseases, the environment, climate change, oceans affairs, and science and technology.

John Turner has extensive conservation experience. Prior to his appointment as Assistant Secretary, he was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Conservation Fund, a national non-profit organization dedicated to private/public partnerships to protect land and water resources.

Constance Newman is Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development. She has extensive experience managing public and private organizations, as well as broad international experience.

Assistant Administrator Newman had served as a private consultant to the World Bank, acting as a liaison to South African political parties. In 1987 and 1988, she served as a cooperative housing foundation consultant on a World Bank project in Lesotho.

I thank you all for being with us. I am going to ask each witness to summarize your statements so we can move on to questions and answers. I should also mention we are looking to move to the second panel by 3:15 at the latest.

With that, Mr. Kansteiner, if you would like to begin.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WALTER H. KANSTEINER III,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. KANSTEINER. I know we need to get to that second panel so we will be very brief, but on Zimbabwe let me thank you for your leadership and your interest in that very sad tale that is continuing to unfold.

On Liberia, we will keep an eye on the Charles Brumskine case. I might add that civil society is under duress in that country and has been for a long time. The clear cutting of the timber that you referred to is a resource that Charles Taylor should not be allowed to have free reign on. I think the international community needs to work together to look at ways to increase pressure on making sure that resource there is being spent wisely and in a fair and just manner for the people of Liberia.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Kansteiner, in terms of Charles Taylor's actions there, to the extent that the United Nations could take action on timber harvesting and enforce that action to prevent the clear cutting of timber, that would be very helpful.

Mr. KANSTEINER. And this Administration would be supportive of that.

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership that we meet here about today is an extremely important one and one, quite frankly, that Secretary Powell and Connie Newman and John Turner and I feel very passionate about, and so we thank you for this opportunity.

We also thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Payne, for your leadership and your interest and your involvement in this. Quite frankly, if we did not have Congress with us, none of it would get done, so thank you very much.

Protecting the ecosystems of Africa is one of this Administration's top priorities in Africa. Tourism is the second largest hard currency earner for Africa today, and if you do not protect the ecosystems, there will not be any tourists. So we need to do this not only because it is the right thing to do for Africa and the world, but because we also have to have sustainable development. I leave that topic to John Turner who, quite frankly, is truly a pro when it comes to discussing viable, sustainable development.

As you made reference, Mr. Chairman, the NGO community met with Secretary Powell on the edge of the Congo Basin forest not too long ago. I would like to relay a quote from that meeting that I was

quite proud of, and that I was thrilled that Colin Powell said. It went like this:

“As long as I am Secretary of State, conserving African wilderness areas will be a priority that the United States will vigorously pursue. I am and always will be a conservationist for Africa.”

As John Turner and I were sitting there, we were extremely pleased to hear the words come out of Secretary Powell’s mouth. Now, as you say, it is our turn to take that policy and put it into action.

What we all saw in Gabon was a wonderful opportunity for a U.S. Government to partner with the Government of Gabon and the NGO community and to protect the Congo River Basin rain forest. Gabon is primed and ready for help, but there are other opportunities in the Basin, and we will look for multiple projects that will preserve and protect the landscapes throughout the six country region.

I will just have one more quick quote, and then I will turn it over to John, and that again is from Secretary Powell. It was actually before this Full Committee. He said,

“The Congo Basin Partnership will help preserve key landscapes, and there is one individual, Michael Fay, who is crucial to that preservation.”

He went on to say,

“Michael Fay is a marvelous man, a naturalist who walked the whole length of the Congo Basin, and recently Mike was gored by one of his elephants that he clearly had yet to secure a complete friendship with, but I am pleased that Michael is recovering well.”

Well, we all are pleased that Michael is recovering well, and we look forward to hearing his exciting testimony in the second panel.

I would now like to turn it over to John Turner and to Connie Newman. The three of us are enjoying kind of a new triumvirate where we are learning to pull various bureaus in the State Department, as well as AID, together in behalf of these efforts, and we are kind of forging new pathways as we go along. But the three of us are committed to this partnership, and we are going to see it through.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kansteiner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WALTER H. KANSTEINER III, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify here today. Conserving the Congo Basin Forests is a topic that Secretary Powell and I are passionate about. As Secretary Powell informed you during your exchange with him last month during the budget hearings, he had the opportunity to get a first-hand feel for the region’s conservation potential and challenges when he visited Gabon last September following President Bongo’s announcement of his decision to create a new national park network. As you heard, the visit left quite an impression on the Secretary.

The Congo Basin forest is a global treasure in a region of both great challenge and great opportunity. The forest is not only a “global lung” but a rich store of biodiversity and a source of livelihood for millions. The fate of Africa’s forests and nat-

ural resources is inextricably linked to questions of governance, national and regional peace, security and economic growth. Poor conservation practices and conflict over resource use has the potential to undermine stability and hamper prospects for growth. Conversely, sound natural resource management will help promote sustainable trade and economic growth, transparency and openness, and mitigate health threats. That is why we consider conserving Africa's irreplaceable natural resources as one of our central priorities in Africa.

The Congo Basin forest is the second largest area of contiguous tropical forest in the world; the Amazon Basin is the largest. Much of the forest remains relatively intact but pressures and threats to the forest are growing, including from rapid urbanization, uncontrolled timber exploitation and logging, and unsustainable commercial bushmeat hunting. The lack of capacity and resources for enforcement leave even protected areas vulnerable to poaching and illegal logging.

The good news is that it is not too late for the forests of the Congo Basin, nor are we starting from scratch. The U.S. government, largely through the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) and the Smithsonian Institution, the European Union, and tireless non-governmental organization (NGO) advocates and activists such as the World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation International, and the African Wildlife Foundation have been active in the region for years. They have demonstrated, with limited resources, that well-designed programs can work.

A new and exciting development in the region is the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), launched by Secretary Powell along with other leaders of the partnership, at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in September 2002. The CBFP is a partnership of countries, NGOs, and private businesses dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use and management of the forest. It reflects the Administration's high-level commitment to the Congo Basin Forests and a strengthened commitment by the countries of the region to work in partnership with the international community. The six African countries whose forests are covered by the CBFP are Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo. Our work in the CBFP reflects a shared commitment to forge a new, more productive and effective, way of working with each other in true partnership. It is imperative that we use our scarce resources wisely and not only listen to each other but hear and understand the messages being conveyed, even if they are not always what we think we want to hear.

Each of the six African countries of the Congo Basin Forest region has committed to address the challenge of conserving its natural forest heritage while providing jobs, training, and income for the people in the region who depend on its natural resources. As economic pressures mount to capitalize on these forests, the countries have made it clear they recognize their important stake in the CBFP.

Just as the CBFP is building on previous international community efforts, it is also building on previous African-led efforts. In 1999, the Yaounde Declaration, signed by the six heads of state of the Congo Basin, set forth strong commitments for regional cooperation to improve resource management, create trans-border protected areas, harmonize forest policies, combat poaching, and develop sustainable use approaches in consultation with rural populations and economic operators. The process launched at Yaounde led to the creation of a Council of Ministers for Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC), which includes members beyond the CBFP countries and is responsible for coordination of forest policy among the member governments. COMIFAC has developed a "Plan of Convergence" and an action plan for the region that will serve as reference points for CBFP activities. Other major forest initiatives in the region have been brought under the COMIFAC umbrella, most notably the African Timber Organization and the Conference on Tropical Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa, which sponsors dialogue with civil society.

We should not delude ourselves into thinking that success is assured. Many institutions in the region remain fragile and old habits and attitudes about the use and value of the environment do not change overnight. Nevertheless, we have seen a number of examples of progress.

At the WSSD, Gabon announced the creation of 13 national parks, which encompass ten percent of Gabon's land area, and the Gabonese government is cooperating closely with the U.S. government and environmental organizations to protect its natural heritage. The Republic of Congo is collaborating on an innovative public-private partnership in the Kobo forest concession to control poaching and ensure sustainable forestry. This forest is part of one of the 11 key landscapes on which the U.S. contribution to the CBFP will focus. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, while the country was still at war, conservation rangers on opposite sides of the lines remained steadfastly at their posts protecting wildlife and forests and easing

communications across lines and between the sides. To help focus its participation in CBFP, the Parks Institute and the Ministry for the Environment created a task force last month to examine activities for five key landscapes in the country. Cameroon continues to build capacity in the forestry sector and civil society is actively pressing for stronger sustainable management of the country's natural resources. In 2001 Cameroon formally protected the Lobeke Park, which is a crucial part of the tri-national Sangha complex, which includes parks in the Central African Republic and Republic of Congo. Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Republic were eager participants in the first organizational meeting of the CBFP in Paris and have declared their commitment to the CBFP.

As the example of the rangers in the Democratic Republic of Congo illustrates, conservation can be a win-win situation that advances broader policy objectives and help build trust, not simply between warring sides but between governments and communities. Conservation is not a people versus animals and trees debate. When wisely pursued, it is a means to ensure that biodiversity is protected AND poverty is reduced through the creation of sustainable economic opportunities. A well-managed protected area can be a source of jobs and a generator of revenue. The conservation of biodiversity can produce revenue as a result of research into natural products that could have health or other applications (such work is being done by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Institutes of Health in Cameroon and they would like to replicate it elsewhere in the region). Responsible mining and forest concessions can ensure both jobs and sustainable resource exploitation to fuel economic growth and trade. Controlling poaching and unsustainable commercial bushmeat trade promotes respect for the rule of law, preserves biodiversity, and mitigates health risks. On the other hand, unsustainable logging practices and continued reliance on bushmeat may have negative health effects. Evidence is mounting that recent Ebola outbreaks in Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon were triggered when hunters and villagers came into contact with infected animals. And malaria-bearing mosquitoes often flourish in the standing pools of newly-cut forests.

Conservation and sound resource management, by definition, require transparency and inclusiveness. The complexities of protecting biodiversity and meeting the sometimes conflicting needs of affected communities can best be addressed through open processes. The programs that the United States supports in the Congo Basin place a premium on these qualities and seek to build a capacity and constituency for conservation among the people of the region. For example, we have supported participatory mapping exercises of the forest and provided small grants to local NGOs to carry out work such as education and monitoring.

Conservation programs will not immediately produce flourishing democracies, regional cooperation, vibrant civil societies, or accelerating economic growth but they can serve as hopeful and empowering examples that can radiate well beyond the realm of conservation. The process is long and far from linear, but through the CBFP and our assistance programs, we are going to do our utmost to make the positive vision a reality. As Secretary Powell emphasized during his visit to Gabon, we believe our money spent on conservation in the Congo Basin is money well-spent. The United States has a history of investing in the environment and we are committed to continuing the tradition. As Secretary Powell said, ". . . we don't see this as a one-time shot. We are in this for the long run."

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

Assistant Secretary John Turner.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN F. TURNER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF OCEANS AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I join Walter and Connie in thanking you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Indeed, we have been working in partnership with a lot of passion and focus on this exciting opportunity for the United States and Africa, and I want to echo Walter's expression of appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for your personal interest and support in this exciting collaborative effort.

I think, as you opened the hearing with, that we need to remind ourselves of the immensity of this region, some 700,000 square

miles of opportunity. If my calculations are right, that is a size that is equivalent to the five states of California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Indeed, it is a global treasure of biodiversity and water systems and forests upon whose natural resources millions of people depend for their livelihood.

Walter talked about the trip that we took with Secretary Powell after the World Summit in Johannesburg, and I believe this might be perhaps the first trip by a Secretary of State from the United States solely for forest conservation.

I believe the partnership promises to be the most ambitious conservation project in the history of Africa. Working together, we have the potential to positively impact over 75 million acres of one of the largest intact tropical forests left anywhere in the world, including the establishment and making reality some 27 national parks.

It is a great opportunity for the United States to build on the impressive efforts and existing cooperation that is already ongoing in the Basin between the governments there, between the non-profit community and the private sector. Of course, that great work is exemplified by Michael Fay, who is with us here today, whose mega transect of 1,200 miles captured the imaginations of Americans and people all over the world over this special place and the need to protect it.

It is an opportunity for the United States to follow up on commitments, remarkable commitments of the six African nations and their citizens who are willing to hedge their future and economic and social well being on conservation and better stewardship of their natural resources. The U.S. priorities will indeed be to help provide people sustainable means of a livelihood through one, better management of their forest concessions; two, better practices for sustainable agriculture; and, three, an enhanced ecotourism industry.

Our focus will be to build capacity and improve natural resource governance in these six countries with a special focus on combating illegal logging, reducing wildlife poaching and commercial bushmeat trade, involve communities in the decision making process, implement better forestry management practices and low impact logging, and effectively develop and manage a national park system.

I am very pleased that President Bush indeed has committed \$53 million for the partnership through 2005. These resources we hope to leverage against the resources from other public and private partners. I think the President's support for the Congo Basin reflects the leadership that he has given to protect tropical forests out around the world.

In addition to the Congo Basin Partnership, I want to mention the expansion of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, his direction that the United States take a lead in combating illegal logging around the globe, our recent action in Latin America to stem the trade of mahogany that is illegally sourced and unsustainable in our work in the Amazon Basin.

I would like to mention just briefly some of the steps that we are now taking on this initiative. Recently, in January we co-hosted with France the first international meeting of the partnership in

Paris to clarify roles and the allocation of resources. At that meeting, the U.S. offer to help facilitate the international process for the next 2 years was accepted.

Recently, we sent an interagency assessment team to the region to look at capacity building needs. We hosted an ecotourism conference and will help to sponsor law enforcement conferences in the region later in the year. We are going to work for a comprehensive survey of existing laws, regulations and programs in the region to see where the gaps are and which can be strengthened.

It was mentioned the recognition of the outstanding partnerships that we have, now 30. The Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund were mentioned. In addition, in the non-profit arena we have the World Resources Institute, Forest Trend, the Smithsonian Institute and the Jane Goodall Institute.

I am pleased to note that folks from our American forest industry are joining us. The American Forest and Paper Association, as well as the Society of American Foresters, are bringing their expertise and management experience.

We have a large team of interagency participants—the National Forest Service, the National Park Service, Soil & Conservation Society, Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of Commerce, NASA, USGS and OPEC to name a few. Of course, our main partners are the six African countries that are represented here today, and we are also joined by the U.K., South Africa, Japan, Germany, France, Canada and Belgium.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, although I believe we are humbled by the challenges I think we can be proud of the partnership that has been brought together and the progress that has been made to date, including the strategic planning. Obviously there is much to be done in an area of the world that has been ravaged for decades by war, corruption, violence, poverty, disease and practices that are unsustainable in the use of their natural resources.

I think we all realize that this magical region of Africa is indeed at a critical crossroads in its history. I believe that U.S. leadership, resources and experience, in tandem with all other partners, can contribute significantly to economic development, alleviation of poverty and suffering, and the improvement of the overall governance through workable conservation and a resource management program.

All of us working together can demonstrate a model of sustainability which hopefully can be applied to other developing regions of the world. I think, Mr. Chairman, it is an opportunity to export indeed what has been one of America's great inventions, which indeed occurred in 1872 with the creation of the world's first national park in my native state of Wyoming, Yellowstone National Park.

We have followed suit with the establishment of refuge systems, forest, wild and scenic rivers, endangered species programs, and I think our ability to share that with the world, including Africa, can reap great benefits. I believe we are on the right track. All the partners can help build a lasting legacy of wild places and wild critters in this marvelous region of west central Africa and, in doing so, improve the lives and the future of millions of our African neighbors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Turner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN F. TURNER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
BUREAU OF OCEANS AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views about the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), what it is, how we came to develop and support it, activities to date, and what we expect for its future.

The Congo Basin forest—spanning 700,000 square miles or the equivalent of the combined sizes of California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah—is the world's second largest intact tropical forest after the Amazon. It catches, cleans, and sends to the ocean the waters from millions of hectares of pristine forests upon which millions of Africa's inhabitants depend on for their livelihoods and survival. Within these forests are a countless number of incredible species of plants, insects, wildlife and trees. Many of these species have been identified just within the past few years. This forest is a global treasure whose resources must be protected and conserved for the economic and environmental good of Africa and of mankind.

Secretary of State Powell launched the CBFP at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg on September 4, 2002. Partners of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership include governments: United States, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France, Canada, South Africa, and European Commission. International organizations: World Bank, International Tropical Timber Organization, and World Conservation Union. Civil society: Jane Goodall Institute, the Center for International Forestry Research. The partnership will operate in an open and transparent manner. Participation and contributions to the CBFP are not limited to CBFP partners. Secretary Powell later traveled to Gabon for the inauguration of Gabon's national park system, an historic first ever trip for the conservation of forests by a Secretary of State.

The United States strongly promoted the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and intends to provide a significant contribution to this Partnership because these forests and their wildlife are truly of global significance, because these forests are a major factor in the social, economic and environmental health of our Congo basin country partners, and because there was already an impressive structure of cooperation between governments, NGOs and the private sector operating in the region on which this partnership could be built.

The Partnership would not be a fact today without the strong support and commitment of the people and governments of our African Partners in the region. Civil society and private sector organizations have also been many more years working with each other and with these governments in an unprecedented way. Michael Fay, who will follow in testifying to your Subcommittee is well known to all in this room, has played a key role in highlighting for Americans and for the world the importance of conserving the outstanding wildlife and forests of the Congo Basin. His 1200 mile Megatransect through two of the six countries captivated the imagination of many. Michael's activities and speeches almost always produce concrete results. Just last week Michael spoke to 300 rapt elementary students at Arlington's Science Focus School, leading to the establishment of their first Gorilla Wildlife Club.

In broad terms, United States priorities for the Partnership are to provide people sustainable means of livelihood through well-managed forestry concessions, sustainable agriculture, and integrated ecotourism programs; to improve forest and natural resource governance through community-based management, combating illegal logging, and enforcing anti-poaching laws; and to help the Congo-basin countries develop a network of effectively managed parks, protected areas, and corridors.

The United States' contribution to achieving this will focus upon eleven key landscapes across the six Congo Basin countries, which include Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo. We are committed to working with our partners in these countries, with the NGOs, with the private sector, civil society and others to help in the development of a network of effectively managed national parks, protected areas and corridors. We need this kind of new and innovative partnership to really have an impact—past efforts by NGOs alone, by donor assistance alone do not appear to make the kind of significant change we know is required.

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership is based on the understanding that if we help people obtain sustainable forest-based livelihoods such as, for example, employment through ecotourism, wildlife law enforcement, reduced impact logging, park

management in lieu of total dependence on exploitation of those same natural resource, that the overall economy will improve and the benefits of conservation will be apparent to all people in these countries moving towards real democracy.

The United States has also committed to building and consolidating the international Congo Basin Forest Partnership. On January 23–24, we co-hosted with the French Government in Paris the first international meeting of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. This was a very productive meeting attended by 120 representatives of the 30 partners—including 6 Ministers. France and our other partners supported the offer by the U.S. to facilitate a closer, collaborative working partnership between industry, NGOs, governments, and civil society. It was agreed that the U.S. will be the facilitator of the CBFP for at least the first two years of the Partnership and that in its facilitation role, the U.S. will be assisted by an African co-facilitator located in the Congo Basin.

The Administration has committed to invest up to \$53 million dollars in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership through the year 2005. Our commitment to the program is manifest in the move of CARPE headquarters just these past few months from Washington to its new regional headquarters in Kinshasa. The Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), it should be noted, harbors over 50 percent of the Congo basin forests. We have already been told that the United States Government's contributions are leveraging additional programs and contributions from other donor governments—we were informed that the EU was poised to close down its ECOFAC (Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa) program until it joined the Partnership—they are now planning a commitment of millions of dollars for Congo Basin Forests.

United States-based environmental NGOs have affirmed plans to significantly expand their conservation programs in the eleven Congo basin forest landscapes that have been identified as critical to biodiversity conservation in the Congo basin. These NGOs have also committed to matching the United States Government's contribution for work in the landscapes. I would like to recognize in particular the outstanding commitment of our Partners, including the Wildlife Conservation Society, the World Wildlife Fund, and Conservation International, as well as the World Resources Institute, Forest Trends, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Jane Goodall Institute.

We are also pleased that forest industries—including our own American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA) and professional societies such as the Society of American Foresters (SAF) will be bringing their technical expertise and their financial resources to assist the Congo basin countries in developing forest management capacity. AF&PA's Henson Moore traveled to Johannesburg and gave an eloquent speech on AF&PA's commitment to the CBFP, and in particular to their firm belief that addressing illegal logging and corruption can make a significant difference in this region. We are proud to have them as partners. Though we understand AF&PA does not have an economic stake in this region—it is committed to helping in the Congo Basin with technology transfer, education, and training on such issues as concession management, and reduced impact logging.

In future months I will be working alongside Assistant Secretary of State Walter Kansteiner and USAID's Assistant Administrator Connie Newman to provide strategic direction and oversight to the Partnership. I have personally discussed this initiative with Deputy Secretary of Agriculture James Moseley, Assistant Secretary for Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson and NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe, who have all indicated a strong willingness to assist our initiative by tapping into the tremendous wealth of experience in sustainable natural resource management that is the heritage of the United States.

Under our direction, one of the early tasks we are undertaking is a comprehensive inventory of forest and wildlife related programs and projects already underway or completed in the region. We know work is already being done—but this Partnership aims to understand these landscapes and move aggressively to reduce gaps and to avoid overlaps. We will be constructing a web page to link partners and their programs—including a comprehensive overview of the substantive programs and initiatives underway in the region. This will provide us a basis for looking at what is missing—and there is a great deal more we can do, with your help.

Several weeks ago, the U.S. Department of State held a first-ever symposium on eco-tourism in the Congo basin which identified potential funding sources and issues critical to building up this important industry. Our commitment to work more closely not only with other international partners but among ourselves in the United States Government was reflected in the travel to the region last month of a joint needs assessment team headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jeffrey Burnam and Deputy Undersecretary of Natural Resources, USDA, David Tenney. This assessment also included senior representatives and technical experts from the

Departments of State, Agriculture, and Interior including the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service.

We firmly believe that U.S. contributions to the Congo Basin Forest Partnership will promote economic development, help to alleviate poverty, and improve local governance through natural resource conservation programs, a goal broadly shared by all the CBFP partners. We are also considering how this model might be extended to help our efforts in other geographic regions, particularly in the Amazon Basin. Along with our optimism that we are on the right track and have the commitments from partners to and developing resource base to make it work, it is clear that success will not be a simple task. As Secretary Powell said in Johannesburg:

"The road to sustainable development is a long one and a hard one. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership itself is the result of five years of hard work and commitment by devoted groups of individuals, governments and private organizations. They have only started it from different perspectives, all the partners arrived with a common vision for protecting the Congo basin, and just as important, all realizing that we must work together to be successful."

Thank you very much. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Assistant Secretary Turner.

We will go now to Assistant Administrator Constance Newman.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CONSTANCE BERRY NEWMAN, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR AFRICA, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. NEWMAN. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I want to first thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am particularly pleased to join my colleagues from the Department of State because I think it is important for you to know of the close collaboration and the fact that it is real in developing this partnership.

A key component of the Congo River Basin Partnership is the important work of the partners in the past, including Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund. This has all been in the context of the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment, known as CARPE, which was begun in 1995 with an annual budget of about \$3 million.

I am saying this because I want to have you understand the foundation upon which this partnership will be built. That program, CARPE, emphasized subject themes such as improving logging policy and practice, enhancing protected areas within lived-in landscape, encouraging better environmental governance and strengthening local resource management systems.

These themes are supplemented by three cross-cutting areas, promoting monitoring processes, improving training and institutional strengthening, and ensuring donor coordination. It is essential to an effective partnership that there be a blending of the strengths of CARPE with the new emphasis of the partnership. This blending process has begun. Some of it is a little painful, but it has begun, and USAID's new direction is that of moving CARPE from learning lessons to applying these lessons to action on the ground.

The next implementation step will be a planning meeting scheduled for next week in Kinshasa. Subsequent to that meeting, the United States Government interagency group will meet in April to review the recommendations coming out of the Kinshasa meeting to set up a set of criteria for proposals, and we expect the proposals will be developed in May for ultimate review and decision making

through a collaborative interagency process, funding expected in September.

As we look to the future, we realize that there are special opportunities to address environmental issues in the 11 landscapes that will require major involvement of the people of the Congo River Basin. We intend to ensure that the focus will be on producing identifiable results within those landscapes, which will be tracked and reported directly to Congress.

With the assistance of this Committee, the partnership has been provided a dramatic increase in resources for this most important project. For that we thank you. Furthermore, we thank you for drawing attention to this important Administration initiative.

I look forward to taking your questions, or I will take your questions. I do not know if I look forward to it.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Newman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CONSTANCE BERRY NEWMAN, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR AFRICA, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify here today at this most important hearing on saving the Congo Basin. I am pleased to join my colleagues from the Department of State. It is important to note that USAID and the Department of State have been in close collaboration throughout the development of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP). We will continue to work together along with other US government agencies, African governments, and US and African conservation and business groups to ensure a strong partnership for the Congo Basin. We have great hopes for the future of the Congo Basin because in the words of Secretary of State Colin Powell:

[those] . . . in this partnership, have agreed to work together to help the countries of the Congo Basin create and manage protected forest areas, such as national parks. . . . [and] will work together to combat illegal logging and other unsustainable practices, and . . . implement programs to improve forest management and give people a stake in the preservation of the forest, by providing them with sustainable forest based livelihoods.

I would like to focus on three main areas: 1) USAID's understanding of the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) as the foundation for a strong effective partnership; 2) a review of the development steps to date; and 3) an outline of the steps to come.

CARPE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

I agree with my colleagues that the foundation for the future of the Congo River Basin is the extraordinary role played by Conservation International (CI), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in focusing both public and private sector attention on the needs and opportunities of the environment in the Congo Basin.

A key component of the CBFP is the past work of the partners in CARPE, one of USAID's most prominent natural resource management programs in Africa. CARPE was launched in 1995 with the initial purpose "to identify and begin to establish the conditions and practices required for the conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources of the Congo Basin, in a manner which addresses local, national, regional and international concerns." In so doing, CARPE helped to fill a major void by collecting important data on the Congo Basin. In recent years, CARPE has received annual USAID funding of \$3 million to address environmental needs in nine countries.

CARPE has been active at a time of intense interest in the rainforests of the Congo Basin. At the same time, the international community has become far more aware of its importance in a global context, whether by providing a potential source of forest products or absorbing carbon dioxide. Conservation efforts and scientific studies, partially supported by funds from CARPE, have opened a window into a part of the world previously very poorly understood.

African governments, meanwhile, have become much more attentive to the forest; improving laws and institutions that manage it, and at the same time granting ex-

tensive concessions to log it. This emphasis on logging has been a response both to dwindling oil revenues in central Africa and to increasing global demand for tropical timber. Those who live and derive their livelihoods from the forest are faced with increasingly difficult economic times, and have relied on the forest to deliver them more and more benefits in ways that may not be sustainable.

A recent evaluation of CARPE released in February 2002 by the noted British organization, the Environment and Development Group, stated that:

It is a thoroughly worthwhile enterprise, well worthy of sustained US Government support. It is an attractive model in many respects, important among which is the dynamism and flexibility that the NGOs and academic institutions bring to the development process. That they are not encumbered by procedures, protocols and elaborate security protection makes them much more accessible to the civil society organizations in the countries whose forests they are aspiring to help conserve.

CARPE emphasizes four subject themes: 1) improving logging policy and practice; 2) enhancing protected areas within a lived-in landscape;¹ 3) encouraging better environmental governance; and 4) strengthening local resource management systems. These themes are in turn supplemented by three cross-cutting areas (promoting monitoring processes; improving training and institutional strengthening; and ensuring donor coordination). Generally, these themes have provided a sound framework for organizing the work of the partners. The results of the program are summarized in a loose-leaf document entitled, "Results and lessons learned from CARPE Phase I," which we would be happy to provide to the Committee.

Examples of the activities CARPE partners are engaged in are as follows:

Improving logging policy

- WCS has undertaken ground-breaking work in northern Republic of Congo (ROC) working closely with CIB (Congolaise Industrielle des Bois), a European logging company, to improve its practices. Collaboration between logging companies and NGOs is new in the area and is proving to be a promising partnership.

Enhancing protected areas

- Protected areas have been the principal domain of WWF (in Central African Republic (CAR) and Gabon) and WCS (in ROC and Gabon).

Promoting environmental education and environmental causes

- The conservation community in the Basin has found a role in causes such as reducing bushmeat consumption, a practice that threatens species, disturbs ecosystems and spreads disease.
- Community management of local forests (once exclusive to the national government and well-placed expatriate logging firms) has attracted a groundswell of attention in Cameroon.
- These and other examples around the Congo Basin indicate that, despite a period of significant physical insecurity in the Basin (ROC, CAR, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)), the people and their governments are concerned about the deterioration of their environment and want to take action.

Encouraging local resource management

- Local resource management systems have been addressed by a number of partners, most notably Innovative Resources Management in its work in Cameroon. This work has encouraged Africans to feel a sense of "ownership" of the forest. A number of small-grant holders have also done interesting and useful work, though all on a modest scale.

Utilizing high-tech monitoring of the forest

- Monitoring the forest through use of remote sensing techniques has been carried out and has generated productive collaboration between partners, as well as a good interchange between the US and field-based workers. It provides quantitative data capable of informing predictions and policy decisions.

Bolstering capacity of local NGOs

- CARPE has funded some excellent regional training initiatives, as well as funding capacity-building grants to local NGOs, which have displayed poten-

¹Landscapes are existing national parks and protected areas, buffer zones surrounding the parks and corridors connecting many of the parks to one another.

tial. These activities have mainly been in those countries where CARPE has a field presence.

In sum, CARPE and its partners have worked with great cost-efficiency to deliver a complex, flexible and imaginative contribution to forest conservation in the Congo basin. That work has served to assure us that the basis for this recent significant increase in funding is based on tested methods using reliable data and experienced partners and producing identifiable results.

REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT STEPS TO DATE

My colleagues have provided excellent overviews of how the CBFP has evolved since the announcement at World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002. I will provide an answer to the question of the integration of CARPE with the CBFP.

It is essential to an effective partnership that there be a blending of the strengths of CARPE with the new emphases of CBFP. This blending has followed a number of steps: on October 16–17, consultations were held with the NGO community; on December 12, meetings were conducted with various USG agencies; and on January 17, the new CARPE Strategic Objective was approved. This strategy highlighted the shifting focus of CARPE to incorporate the objectives of CBFP.

Under the CBFP, which of course includes a number of different donors, NGOs and corporate groups, CARPE will be the primary USG vehicle in the delivery of services. At the same time, CARPE will continue to do work independently from the CBFP. In this way, the two entities will be attached to each other but not interchangeable.

USAID's new departure in this area emphasizes moving CARPE from "learning lessons" to applying these lessons to action on the ground. In order to facilitate this change in strategy, in January 2003, USAID relocated CARPE management from USAID headquarters in Washington to the Congo Basin (USAID/Kinshasa, DRC). We believe that this change will greatly strengthen our presence in the Basin, affording many more opportunities to interact with all partners in assessing and addressing problems and opportunities on the ground.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps for implementation are already underway, with a planning meeting scheduled for next week in Kinshasa, DRC. Subsequent to that meeting the interagency group will meet in April to review recommendations emanating from the Kinshasa meeting and to develop a set of criteria for proposal submission. Proposals will then be developed in May by NGOs in collaboration, as appropriate, with USG agencies for ultimate review and decision-making through a collaborative interagency process. Funding for action on the ground in the Congo Basin will be made available to those organizations with successful proposals before the end of the current fiscal year.

It is important to note that, consistent with USG practice, USAID will install a tracking system that will verify that the resources intended to be spent in the eleven landscapes selected under the CBFP really are so spent and that such results are equally identifiable, auditable and reportable.

CONCLUSION

As we look to the future, we realize that there are special opportunities to address environmental issues in the eleven landscapes which will be the particular emphasis of USG resources within the CBFP. We intend to ensure that the focus will be on producing identifiable results within those landscapes which will be reported back to Congress.

The priorities of the CBFP will be to:

- Encourage communities in the Congo Forest region to achieve a sustainable means of livelihood through well-managed forestry concessions, sustainable agriculture and integrated ecotourism programs;
- Help African countries develop a network of effectively managed national parks, protected areas and corridors; and
- Improve forest and natural resource governance by encouraging community-based management, combating illegal logging and enforcing anti-poaching laws.

In addition, USAID will stress the importance of working with three African regional institutions. The USG, together with the partners in the CBFP, is now in a better position to support the aspirations of the African people in the region. Work-

ing together we can all make a big difference on the wide range of problems threatening the environment in the Congo Basin.

The USG proposed to invest up to \$53 million over four years (2002–2005) including a \$36 million increase for CARPE. Coordination of these resource flows from many sources is extremely important if efforts are to be most cost-effective; this includes filling critical gaps and leveraging local effort. The combination of the CBFP facilitation process and the field-based USAID CARPE management will afford us the best mechanism to ensure that the USG resources are serving the most critical needs and are efficiently and effectively being spent on achieving results.

Thank you for supporting the Administration's request and for your continued support of the Administration's efforts to promote conservation and sustainable resource management in the Congo Basin. In order to ensure that the USG's resources make a difference we must respect the fact that this effort depends upon the people living in the Congo Basin to achieve a lasting, positive impact on the second largest tropical rainforest in the world. We have every intention of making that a high priority.

I thank the Committee for drawing attention to this important Administration initiative and I look forward to taking your questions.

Mr. ROYCE. That is very forthright of you, Constance. Thank you very much.

Let me ask a few questions. I will start with Assistant Secretary Turner. Several Members of Congress have written Republic of Congo President Sassou-Nguesso asking for his cooperation on various environmental initiatives, including on the issue of trying to do something to combat the poaching of elephants.

As far as I know, we have not received an answer. I was going to ask, Assistant Secretary Turner, is the Republic of Congo fully on board with this initiative, or are there areas of concern?

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, I had the opportunity to meet with President Sassou and express the interest of the United States to help build capacity and governance to help bring training opportunities and capacity building to the Republic of the Congo.

I think we have to note that that country committed itself to parks many years ago, so it is a challenge for the United States to work with that country to show that better practices are in the best interest of their economy, developing tourism and sustaining the wonderful wildlife and tourism opportunities.

The minister for their parks and forestry is coming to Washington soon, Minister Djombo, and I hope to meet with him. We have had meetings in the past. We did have our interagency needs assessment team recently in Brazzaville to look at specific training and monitoring and accountability, so I think it is an opportunity for us to work positively with President Sassou and his administration.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, we will look forward to conversing with you on that after that meeting takes place here.

Another question I was going to ask you about was the debt for nature swaps that have declined. The Tropical Forest Conservation Act was supposed to be utilized for debt for nature swaps.

We have not seen any of those in Africa, and I wonder if the Congo Basin Forest Partnership contains a debt for nature program, and is this act really a worthwhile tool for conservation or not? Should we be doing more in this area? I remember when it was first passed and first utilized we had high hopes there would be a tool to achieve a lot.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, the application of that act has been a priority of the President, and that is why we have asked for in-

creased authorization. It is my understanding that we have about \$13 million that we have recently enacted, and it is our hope the discussions we are having now with at least four nations that we can authorize another \$20 million soon.

It is my understanding that that act will not apply very well in the Congo Basin because of the type of debt those countries have.

Mr. ROYCE. I see. I think the \$13 million you are speaking of is not actually on the African continent. I think it is, if I am not mistaken—

Mr. KANSTEINER. I believe that is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes.

Mr. KANSTEINER. One reason we have a problem with it is the HIPC program basically takes care of the debt. That is, it does the debt reduction, so there is no real incentive for low-income African countries to do a debt for nature swap because they are going to get their debt forgiven anyway.

The target countries that it would be particularly helpful for is the middle income African countries, those that are not eligible for HIPC. They want to do debt for equity or debt environmental swaps. We would love for the Legislative Branch to consider perhaps including middle income African countries as eligible for debt for nature swaps.

Mr. ROYCE. Assistant Secretary Kansteiner, maybe the Committee and you and Mr. Turner can follow up on this afterwards with some discussions about the language that might be useful in that regard.

Mr. KANSTEINER. Excellent.

Mr. ROYCE. Also, Assistant Secretary Kansteiner, I was going to ask you about the situation in Equatorial Guinea. They have enjoyed a revenue bonanza, and I would like to ask about the challenge of conserving those forests and wildlife there.

Is that country using its newfound oil wealth to increase conservation at all?

Mr. KANSTEINER. I have not seen any signs of it, but I think that is one of the challenges that we in fact have in front of us. As we look to open up a new mission there, it will definitely be one of our priorities.

Mr. ROYCE. If I were to ask you of the six countries in the Congo Basin, which has been the most committed to these conservation efforts so far?

Mr. KANSTEINER. Well, I would love for John to chime in here too, but the one that is clearly most poised to be a full and complete and immediate partner is Gabon.

The other five I think are all very eligible, and we are interested to engage all of them. Some are more ready to receive that partnership and do more with it than others, but it is really an open field, and we need to engage them all.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. I was going to ask Constance a technical question, and that was what could be done to see that the bidding process for this Congo Basin Forest Partnership does not undermine the effective and cohesive efforts already underway by awarding fragmented grants? I was going to ask if this was a concern as this process unwinds.

Ms. NEWMAN. Mr. Chairman, I think that the way that we have set this out, which is the workshop that I mentioned where many of the issues will be discussed by all of the potential partners and all of the players, and they will come back to this interagency group where we will set up the criteria.

I think that there is a recognition that we are not to bog this down with bureaucratic processes on the one hand. On the other hand, we want to be certain that we get the best set of players, and we have a process which will allow us—it is called a Leader With Associates process—to bring some of the partners in in a quick process.

I do not think that you should be concerned about the process, but we do want to have it designed in such a way that we build on those partners who are there now, but we leave it open to new groups that might have more to add to what is already there.

Mr. ROYCE. I thank you, Assistant Administrator Newman.

We are going to go to our Ranking Member, Congressman Don Payne of New Jersey, at this time.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Is it the goal, and anyone can try to answer this, of the fund to try to distribute the funds kind of equitably in each of the countries?

It appears, and the reason I ask the question, that some sort of predesignation of a substantial portion of the fund would go to Gabon, and I am just wondering if that is true or why would that be the case.

Ms. NEWMAN. I guess I do not feel comfortable yet that we know that. There will be these discussions going on in Kinshasa, which will set out what criteria should we be using, giving recommendations to the interagency group, and then proposals will come in around these landscapes.

From my point of view, there is no predetermined identification of what resources will go to which landscapes. Therefore, it is not predetermined which countries will get more or less of these resources.

Mr. PAYNE. Great.

Mr. TURNER. Congressman, I think we are impressed with the leadership of President Bongo and his commitment, but, following up on what Connie said, all six nations in 1999 through the COMIFAC process committed themselves to foreign conservation, reducing illegal logging, protecting their reserves, protecting their wildlife.

I hope this truly is going to work as a successful partnership where we will have a transparent process. The non-profit community has a very impressive record of success of conservation throughout the region, and I think we want to build on that success.

A good example will be in the Virunga area, a trans boundary area rich in mountain gorillas, for 20 years was in the midst of war on the border of Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. In that area, through local citizens and NGOs, the gorilla population was protected and even increased. So I think conservation is a way to go into areas that have been subject to violence and war, poverty and even corruption and build better bridges to

the future. We are going to look for those opportunities throughout the region.

Mr. PAYNE. Great. Ms. Newman, what about the Peace Corps? As this program is being developed, will there be moves to try to identify young people who may have expertise in conservation?

I know you do have the World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International and the Wildlife Conservation Society all engaged and involved in the process, which is great, but do you see the Peace Corps having an increased involvement in this region?

Ms. NEWMAN. Yes, Congressman Payne. They are already players with CARPE, and we do expect them to be very much involved. How it will play out we do not know yet, but we respect the treasure of the volunteers, and they certainly will have an opportunity to play a role.

Mr. PAYNE. Secretary Turner, just finally, you have mentioned that the CBFP will operate in an open and transparent manner. More specifically, what are you relating to in that process?

Mr. TURNER. What we have tried to do, as Administrator Newman pointed out, is create a process that has been open to all the partners. We had a meeting just over a week ago. The three of us chaired and met with all our non-profit partners to get their views on how we were doing on the process and what their priorities will be.

We are in a dialogue with the countries involved, the needs assessment team that went over there from the United States. We are in contact with the other countries out of the region that are also going to be resources to this, so that communication on what roles different people are going to play and how we are going to allocate our resources, and then, thanks to the non-profit community first hosted by World Wildlife, 200 scientists identified the 10 priority landscapes that have the highest natural biodiversity and corridors for wildlife.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Congressman Payne.

Without objection, we will submit for the record testimony from the World Wildlife Fund.

At this time we will go to our second panel. I thank each of you for testifying here today. [Pause.]

This Committee will come to order, and we will now go to our second panel.

Dr. Michael Fay is an ecologist at the Wildlife Conservation Society of New York, and he is a conservation fellow at the National Geographic Society. He has spent his life as a naturalist in the Sierra Nevada mountains and the Maine woods as a boy, in Alaska and Central America in college, and for the past 23 years in the central African forests.

Fay received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1978 from the University of Arizona and then spent 6 years in the Peace Corps as a botanist in national parks in Tunisia and in the savannas of the Central African Republic. In 1984, he went to work at the Missouri Botanical Garden. His first assignment was a study of a mountain range on Sudan's western border, eventually leading to his doctorate on the western lowland gorillas.

Dr. Fay's doctoral work was curtailed several times while he surveyed large forest blocks and worked to create parks in the Central African Republic and Congo, parks that he later managed. In 1996, Fay flew a small airplane low over the forests of Congo and Gabon and observed a vast, intact forest corridor that spanned the two countries.

From 1999 to 2000, he walked the entire corridor, more than 1,800 miles, systematically surveying trees, wildlife and human impacts on uninhabited forest areas. Fay is now analyzing data from this expedition, which was funded by the National Geographic Society's Expeditions Council and the Wildlife Conservation Society. This trek was a catalyst for Gabon's landmark national park effort.

Michael testified to this Subcommittee in March 1997 on a hearing, "Economic Development of Africa's Natural Resources." We are pleased to again have him with us. Michael is accompanied by a photographer, Michael "Nick" Nichols. Nichols is a staff photographer at *National Geographic*. He is the author of five books, the most recent being *Brutal Kinship* with Jane Goodall, a look at chimpanzees. Nichols spent 2 years documenting Mike Fay's expedition across the Congo Basin. Nick will be showing some of his photographs of the Congo Basin on the monitors.

Finally, I should mention that late last year when Michael had the misfortune of having a very dangerous run-in with an elephant in Gabon, I was traveling in Africa when I heard of his injury. Traveling with the delegation I was on was Lieutenant Colonel Burgess, a Navy physician and specialist in infectious diseases. We called Michael, and the doctor spent a good half an hour on the phone with him as he lay recovering in Gabon, making sure he was receiving the proper treatment.

I would like to recognize Dr. Burgess, who is with us today, and thank him for all of his efforts on behalf of our country. Dr. Burgess, if you would stand. Thank you. Thank you. [Applause.]

All right. We will go now to Dr. Michael Fay.

STATEMENT OF J. MICHAEL FAY, Ph.D., ECOLOGIST WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Mr. FAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Chairman Ed Royce and Congressman Donald Payne for having us here today to talk about sustainable development in Africa and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

I would also like to thank in particular Assistant Secretaries of State Kansteiner and Turner for their leadership in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. Certainly I do not think if we had not been meeting, you know, kind of around town here over the last several months talking about the forests of Central Africa and the problems, the solutions, none of this would have ever happened, so I am really happy that we have folks like Mr. Kansteiner and Turner in office.

I grew up in California. I was just out there a couple of days ago in the Sespe wilderness just behind Los Angeles there. When you are a little kid growing up, 6 years old, and you are right on the border of a national forest, you kind of recognize what smog is. Smog for a little kid is hard. Then you climb up about 6,000 feet

right behind your house, and all of a sudden the air is clear. You are in this amazing wilderness for a small kid certainly.

At the same time, I grew up in Mr. Payne's neck of the woods in Summit, New Jersey. You know, if you kind of went east, that was the big city. If you went west, that was trout streams and nature, forests. You kind of wonder why this guy goes out and walks in the woods for a year and a half in Africa. I think it started when I was 6 years old. I just had been looking for wilderness ever since really. That is my explanation anyway, or my excuse.

Certainly that childhood dream came true on that walk, and these images of Nick's hopefully will kind of transport you to the kinds of things that still exist in Central Africa today. These are not pictures from places like the Serengeti or Kruger National Park that have been protected over the last 50 or 75 years. These are mainly places that are still wild, absolutely wild. Unfortunately, we cannot get the lights down because the images I think are very powerful.

I am not going to repeat what the other panel members have said. They kind of used up my entire speech, I am afraid. I think some of them even plagiarized it, but that is all right. That is good.

I think that, you know, over the last 23 years of living in the Congo Basin I have seen many large forest blocks be integrated into a process of development that I think can be vastly improved. It boils down to people looking to exploit resources. That is what it is about. It is often foreigners, and the resources are wood, minerals, oil and arable land.

As we see in most frontier areas around the world, there is little regard for the environment, sustainability for local people, when that process occurs. It has happened worldwide, and it is happening kind of in the last pockets now in Africa and South America and a few other places, but there are not that many pockets left.

In Central Africa, and I am not going to talk about the problems. We all know about the problems. We have heard about the problems. I do believe, though, that we cannot deal with those threats universally. You know, taking a shotgun approach to the problem of biodiversity, conservation and land use management cannot be universal. It has to be targeted, and I think we need to have a strategic approach.

We have an historic opportunity in the Congo Basin today to create what will be one of the world's most important national park systems of over 25 million acres in one of the richest areas for biodiversity on the planet, but we have an opportunity to do much more really. We have an opportunity to shift how entire landscapes are developed and to assure that future generations can sustain and enhance their lives.

I often hear that protected areas work in the United States because we have wealth and health and peace and democracy and all of those things. In Africa, the logic goes where poverty, disease and war are more the norm, national parks really have no place in development. We hear that very often.

I believe that Teddy Roosevelt had it right. In 1907, when the United States was at the stage in its development not dissimilar to the Congo Basin today, he said,

“In utilizing and conserving natural resources of the nation, the one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight. The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life.”

President Roosevelt, with Congress, made the creation of 230 million acres of protected areas the cornerstone of that foresight. I was just up there last weekend. One hundred years the Sespe has been there. It is still there, and it is still an intact ecosystem.

Obviously there has been a lot of debate over the years, but that is what is good about conservation. It creates a debate. It creates a national ethos on land use and its management, resource management. I think that when you look at what Roosevelt did, that is what he did. He brought that debate to the United States, and it has been very important in every land use decision made in this country for over a century.

My work in the Congo Basin has been basically to try to bring this U.S. model to Africa. People think well, you know, that is this, that is that, but I do not see that there is any great difference in the United States’ development over the last 150 years and what is currently happening in Africa almost throughout—resource exploitation, people occupying the landscape. That is what is happening everywhere.

The model starts with the identification of large landscapes where land use management systems can be put in place before the arrival of industrial resource use and human expansion. This model does not call for the curtailment of resource use, only for well-reasoned land use and resource management.

It requires, I think, a ground up plan that includes the creation and management of core national parks to protect the biodiversity mother lode, integrated with land use management in exploitation zones in the surrounding landscapes that maximizes benefits for local people.

We find that parks quickly become national treasures, but they also become the cornerstones in a process where logging companies and other resource users change wasteful practices, local people change land use practices, and governments change policies. Other development objectives that help people like poverty alleviation, health, education and private investment are also facilitated in these landscapes. It goes right up to the national level. That debate begins when this model is applied.

There are currently many organizations, American and European, working with national governments on projects in various stages of this landscape model, implementing this landscape model, places like Odzala, Nouabale-Ndoki, Minkebe, Lope, Loango and many others. These initiatives have strong national support, and many U.S. and international organizations are working very hard with national governments to make these happen.

The CBFP. Again, due to the leadership of Mr. Kansteiner, Mr. Turner, Ms. Newman, we have seen this thing evolve over the last 8 months or so, and now we have something we can call the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. For me, essentially what it is is 11 landscapes that are kind of the best of the best where we have the best opportunity to bring this model to bear and where we have the best

opportunity to for the money we spend shift or create this national debate that will go right up to the national level.

As for results, we have talked about it. It has been talked about here several times this morning. The decision of the Government of Gabon and President Omar Bongo to implement a plan to create 13 national parks was not something that we can take lightly. It was a very important, dramatic and risky move. I think that the Gabonese have demonstrated great leadership, and I think that the government and the President are to be commended for creating 13 national parks covering 7.5 million acres.

These are not any 7.5 million acres. These are 13 areas in Gabon that have been determined to be the richest and the most intact ecosystems in that country. They are also distributed throughout the country where you can see 13 kind of poles starting to develop over time with this conservation debate in mind. It will transform the way Gabon develops over time. There is no doubt about that.

Obviously the work has just begun, and we cannot fail in our commitment to help Gabon to build infrastructure and capacity for management, help change land use practices and increase benefits for local people. Obviously we need to work with all countries in the Congo Basin. There is no doubt about that. What this partnership can do is launch that debate in each of these countries in a very effective way, and I think that we can expect results in one and every country in the Basin.

What should we expect as deliverables from the Congo Basin Forest Partnership over the next 10 years? I think we should expect 25 million of permanent national parks in six Congo Basin countries, some 27 functional national parks with infrastructure, management personnel and a permanent place in the landscape, some 50 million acres of managed logging concessions and other land surrounding these parks, over 1,000 people working in natural resource conservation, 300 villages in and around the landscapes participating actively and benefitting from resource management, increased sustainability for parks from tourism and other revenue streams and some \$60 million in private funds as a match to U.S. Government investment.

What I would like to ask you today, because in any process the fine-tuning is very important. There is no doubt about that. We can have something on track for a very long time, and we can see it all of a sudden slip away. If I can help it, I will certainly try to influence it from my perspective, keeping it on the straight and narrow.

I think that the appropriation of \$12 million a year for the CBFP and \$3 million for CARPE should be funded for a period of 10 years. I think that these funds should be allocated to U.S. NGO partners, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, coupled with substantial diplomatic and technical assistance provided by the Departments of State, Agriculture and Interior.

I think we should require matching funds of NGOs who receive grants from USAID. I think we should restrict U.S. Government funding to on-the-ground conservation that directly supports protected area and land use management projects in the 11 designated landscapes to avoid expensive and ineffectual top down programs.

Congo Basin countries benefitting from the CBFP should agree to address a number of objective deliverables. Funding should be dependent on progress such that countries that take risks to enact such a process also reap the maximum benefits. I do not think that USAID should use a competitive bidding process between partners to fund disparate actions, but rather a collaborative process that will result in a comprehensive program for the 11 landscapes.

I do not think that Teddy Roosevelt could have ever imagined that over 300 million people would enter the national parks of the United States back in 1907. I think that that is a real tribute to his vision. I believe that if we get it right, the CBFP will be one of the most successful programs ever undertaken by USAID in our search for a model for sustainable development. Land use and resource conservation must be at the core. I urge you to support this program.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fay follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. MICHAEL FAY, PH.D., ECOLOGIST WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION SOCIETY

THE CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP: "CONSERVATION AS A DEVELOPMENT FUNDAMENTAL FOR COUNTRIES THAT DEPEND ON THE EXPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCES"

"Thank you Mr. Chairman. I wish to commend Chairman Ed Royce, Congressman Donald Payne and the Members of this distinguished Subcommittee for focusing today on the critical issue of sustainable development in Africa and how the Congo Basin Forest Partnership can address the goals of this important principle.

The Congo Basin holds the second largest expanse of old growth tropical forest on the planet, nearly seven times the size of California. These forest ecosystems are under threat from a front of industrialized natural resource exploitation and human population expansion from the west and the east. The resources that are being sought are wood, minerals, oil, and arable land. As witnessed in most frontier areas opened for resource use, there is little regard for the environment, sustainability, or for local people. Logging is a major threat to landscapes in the Congo Basin where logging concessions cover over 60% of the forests. In the past two decades we have seen unprecedented exploitation of these forests by foreign industrial logging companies. Vast areas of wilderness are opened for logging. Over ½ of the wood that is cut down for lumber is abandoned or burned, wildlife populations are so reduced that they collapse, and local human populations are impoverished. Yet my long walk that took me from the Oubangui to the Atlantic, 3000 km, showed that there remain vast areas in the Congo Basin that are still intact.

We have a historic opportunity in the Congo Basin today to create what will be one of the world's most important national park systems of over 25 million acres in one of the richest areas in terms of biodiversity. These parks will preserve, just as Yosemite and Yellowstone have for well over a century in this country, the wealth of major ecosystems in these forests. But, we have the opportunity to do much more. We have an opportunity to shift how entire landscapes are developed to assure that future generations can sustain and enhance their lives.

I often hear that protected areas work in the United States because we have wealth, health, peace and democracy. In Africa, the logic goes, where poverty, disease, and war are the norm, national parks have no place in development.

I believe that Teddy Roosevelt had it right. His thought was if young nations that depend on natural resources for their livelihoods do not put natural resource conservation and management at the forefront of development policy then all other aspirations of these nations will falter.

In 1907, when the United States was at a stage in its development not dissimilar to the Congo Basin today, President Roosevelt said:

"In utilizing and conserving the natural resources of the Nation, the one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight. . . . The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life."

President Roosevelt, with the US Congress, made the creation of 230,000,000 acres of protected areas in 18 national monuments, 5 national parks, 51 wildlife refuges and 150 national forests the cornerstone of this foresight. More importantly, what this leadership did, was to fully integrate natural resource stewardship into a basic principle of our national policies and ethos. It is always a debate, but it is a debate that has been part of every land-use decision made in this country for a century.

I have been working on the ground in the forests of the Congo Basin for the past 23 years using this simple model that comes from the United States. It is a transformative model that seeks to integrate natural resource management into the foundation of development. The model starts with the identification of large landscapes where land-use management systems can be put in place before the arrival of industrial resource use and human expansion. This model does not call for the curtailment of resource use, only for *well-reasoned* land-use and resource management. It requires a ground-up plan that includes the creation and management of core national parks to protect the “biodiversity mother load,” and land-use management in exploitation zones in the surrounding landscapes that maximize benefits for local people. Over the past two decades, in many landscapes, it has been shown that this model sets the stage for a transformative process for land-use and the resulting human condition. It also helps start a national debate at all levels of society from hunters and gatherers right up to senior decision makers in government on resource use.

Investments in sustainable systems pay high dividends. We find that parks do become national treasures. They also become the cornerstones in a process where logging companies and other natural resource extractors change their wasteful practices, local people change land-use practices, and governments change policies. Other development objectives for local populations like poverty alleviation; health, education, private investment, human rights and the democratic process are also facilitated in these landscapes. How can these programs affect other priorities of the US Government in Africa such as AIDS/HIV, good governance, conflict resolution and private investment?

Two examples. As part of our model we put in place management programs in the logging concessions surrounding parks. These programs work closely with logging company employees to reduce bushmeat exploitation, limit human settlement in the permanent forest domain, eliminate illegal and wasteful practices, and improve livelihoods for local people. In these programs we hold extensive meetings and negotiations with workers, and we have education and health programs. AIDS/HIV is well known to travel in worker populations and along commercial transport routes and certainly we have seen the rates in these frontier areas increase dramatically in the past 10 years. If in logging management programs we added elements that target the spread of AIDS in clear and objective terms, this would certainly slow the rate of infection in logging camps. Integrating reduction of AIDS/HIV in the majority of logging concessions in the Congo Basin in short order is possible. This would not only be a cost effective way to spend AIDS/HIV funds but these programs would logically fit into a coherent whole.

We speak of good governance, conflict resolution and private investment. At the beginning of the violent civil war in the Republic of Congo in 1997–1998, we decided to stay put in the Nouabale-Ndoki National Park, as did the loggers we worked within surrounding concessions. We weathered the fronts, and maintained infrastructure, security, and personnel over more than 3 million acres. Negotiations were held with the then rebels and no pillaging or killing occurred. When the war was over, there was nothing to rebuild, no bitter animosity and no degradation to the natural resource base. This was in large part due to the presence of conservation personnel and logging operators, and local people who collaborated on the ground. If we linked the conservation community consistently with peace-keeping and relief communities, we would have a better chance of mitigating catastrophes like we have seen in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Over the past 20 years, a number of US NGOs in association with the US Government have gained considerable experience in projects that change the course of natural resource management and development in large landscapes in Congo Basin countries.

An example:

In 1985, an idea to create a large, tri-national forest management area in the Central African Republic (CAR), Congo, and Cameroon was born by Richard Carroll and myself. The objective was to create three national parks and management systems in the landscapes around the parks, in particular in logging concessions where there was no history of land-use management. This initiative grew, and by the year 2000, with funding from USAID, GEF, ITTO, GTZ, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and other private investment, we had the following outputs:

- 350,000 acre Dzanga-Sangha National Park in CAR
- 1,000,000 acre Nouabale-Ndoki National Park in Congo,
- 600,000 acre Lac Lobeke National Park in Cameroon,
- Significant, permanent management infrastructure in seven main camps,
- A large force (>350) of trained local and government management personnel,
- Wildlife management implemented with villages surrounding the parks,
- Forestry management projects with logging companies covering ca. 4,000,000 acres.
- Declaration of the first trans-border reserve to be created by three national governments.

The benefits go far beyond the local impacts, they are:

- Vastly improved forest management capacity at a national level in three countries,
- Significantly increased national contribution to operations,
- Shift in the logging industry from pure exploitation to the notion of management in logged forests,
- Shift in land-use practices of local people,
- Shift in government policies and laws governing forest management.

How do we propose to replicate this model elsewhere and how much is it going to cost?

There are currently many organizations, American and European, working with national governments on projects that seek to implement the landscape model in places like Odzala, Nouabale-Ndoki, Minkebe, Lope, Loango and many others. These initiatives have strong national government support and the three major US conservation NGOs working on the ground in the Congo Basin (WWF, WCS and Conservation International) are united in the belief that these ground-up projects should be the basis for sustainable development.

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Some months ago a number of NGOs, the US State Dept. and USAID developed a plan that is now called the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. This plan calls to extend an existing USAID project, called the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), which has been learning about resource management in the Congo Basin for seven years. The new plan shifts the focus to the ground, starting with a network of national parks in six Congo Basin countries that would span out to logging concessions, other resource extraction zones and local communities in geographical landscapes. This plan would attempt to get all regional governments on board, expand the number of NGO partners, and increase assistance from several Departments of the US Government.

In more formal meetings with USAID the logic of the landscape concept was understood but the questions were: how much is it going to cost and how were we going to pull it off? In particular how could we be assured there was the political will to create parks and manage forests in Congo Basin countries? I estimated, if we included 11 endangered landscapes in six countries, that we would need 15 million dollars a year from USAID. Other international partners, American NGOs and national governments would match this.

As to results, I am happy to report today that before we have spent a dime of CBFP money we have had considerable success. Over the past several months NGOs, the State Department, and Members of the US Congress have been working with the Government of the Republic of Gabon and His Excellency, El Hadj Omar Bongo. We worked on implementing a plan to create 13 national parks.

These parks would be the foundation for a new approach to development for Gabon, based on conserving nature, rational resource use and maximizing benefits for local human populations. These ideas have been embraced by the Gabonese Government and in short order we have seen historic action on their part with the signature of 13 national park "decrets" protecting 10.8% of the country, over 7.5 million acres.

Secretary of State Powell applauded this action when I was privileged to take him on a walk in the coastal forests of Gabon last September. Secretary Powell strongly endorsed this plan in meeting with President Bongo and has committed significant resources for that purpose. These acts are having dramatic impacts. Logging compa-

nies were upset at first but they are already calling for joint management projects on the periphery of these parks. Private investment in ecotourism has begun, and other partners are consolidating and augmenting their conservation efforts. More importantly the national debate in Gabon is now centered around the use and conservation of natural resources and how local people benefit. There are those who oppose conservation but the majority supports this plan.

In order for this action to become permanent we cannot fail in our commitment to help Gabon put in infrastructure and management systems in parks, work to build capacity for management, work closely with logging companies in management programs, help change land-use practices, and improve the benefits for local people.

The strategic objective for the CBFP has been approved by USAID. The planned results for the project are solid and follow the logic. The some thirty partners, which include all concerned Congo Basin Countries, several European Countries including France and Germany, the EU, Canada and South Africa, many international NGOs and international organizations, are talking and making plans for collaboration and coordination.

What do we expect as deliverables from the Congo Basin Forest Partnership over the next ten years?

- over 25 million acres of permanent national parks in six Congo Basin countries,
- over 20 functional national parks with infrastructure, management personnel and a permanent place in the national landscape.
- over 50 million acres of managed logging concessions and other lands surrounding protected areas,
- over 1000 personnel working in natural resource management in the Basin,
- over 300 villages in and around the landscapes participating actively in and benefiting from resource management,
- a significant and vibrant eco-tourism industry established,
- increased sustainability from tourism and other revenue streams, and national government participation,
- \$60 million dollars in private funds as a match to US Govt. investment.

The fundamental benefits of this project will be:

- reductions of illegal and abusive logging practices,
- reductions in illegal trade and corruption,
- reduced rates of deforestation and biodiversity loss,
- increased civil society participation in decision making,
- creation of viable and operational national reserve systems,
- increased U.S. influence in the Congo Basin.
- better governance and transparency.
- increased security over large areas.
- reduction of increase in levels of communicable diseases.
- sustainable development based on renewable outputs.

What I ask of Congress today is to assure the following:

- 1) Appropriation of \$15 million a year for the CBFP program to be funded for a period of ten years.
- 2) Funds allocated exclusively to US NGO partners of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership with substantial diplomatic and technical assistance provided by the Departments of State, Agriculture and Interior.
- 3) Matching funds be required of NGOs who receive a grant from USAID for these activities.
- 4) US Government funding should be restricted to on-the-ground conservation that directly supports protected area and land-use management projects in the 11 designated landscapes such that we avoid top down, expensive and ineffective programs.
- 5) Nations benefiting from the CBFP should agree to address a number of objective deliverables that are judged to be essential to the program.
- 6) Funding should be dependant on progress such that nations who take the risks to enact such a process also reap the maximum benefits.
- 7) USAID should not use a competitive bidding process between partners to fund disparate actions, but rather a collaborative process that will result in

a comprehensive program for the 11 landscapes that demonstrates buy-in from partners and a clear ground-up approach.

I don't think that Teddy Roosevelt could have ever imagined that over 300 million people would enter the national parks in the United States in 2003. This is a tribute to his vision. I believe that, if we get it right, the CBFP will be one of the most successful programs ever undertaken by USAID in our search for a model of sustainable development. Land-use and resource management must be at the core. Please support this program.

Thank you."

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Dr. Fay.

You have given us our objectives for the program we are going to support. Why do you not share with us what the consequences will be if we are not successful, if we are not successful in a partnership which stems the clear cutting of these forests? What is the worst case scenario?

Mr. FAY. Well, I think if you look at situations where resource use is not managed, where people can take what they need or what they think they need in an uncontrolled situation, eventually the masses suffer. Eventually ecosystems collapse. Streams stop flowing, forests stop producing, and ultimately the result has been short-term gain and long-term loss.

If we look at what has been happening in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo over the past several years now, I think that if we could have looked back 30 years, 40 years into the history and said, you know, if we had taken a different track on resource conservation and instilling that ethos of resource conservation in the populations that live in those landscapes, I think you may have had a very different result there. It is hard to predict, but certainly the result that we have now is not that great.

I think that if you look at eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo now when you get about 150 kilometers from the Rift Valley all you see is a sea of agriculture and cultivation and humanity. There is no nature left. Certainly those populations are now suffering.

I think that again it is hard to predict what the result would be, but if you look at the United States back in—take California back in 1870 when people started to think about creating national parks and national forests and protecting watersheds. You know, that has obviously had a very dramatic and important impact on the present day state of California's ability to sustain human life.

I think that that is true anywhere on the planet, so I really believe that that is something we need to think about.

Mr. ROYCE. Six years ago, you testified before our Subcommittee. At that point, we were just beginning to see the South Asian logging companies coming in to Sub-Saharan Africa, and we were talking about how the practices being used by some companies were particularly environmentally unfriendly.

In that ensuing 6 years, do you have any observations about which companies have been the worst, or have any followed, tried to follow environmentally friendly policies? To that extent, have they replanted? What are some of the experiences on the ground there?

Mr. FAY. Certainly in the concessions where conservationists have been working hand-in-hand with logging companies over the past 5 or 6 years, we have seen dramatic changes not only in

bushmeat hunting and logging practices, but we have also seen a whole shift again in the mentality of people living in these concessions.

People start to think about resource management. They start to think about allowing a certain group of people to hunt all of the wildlife for their own benefit. We see discussions about, you know, the future of these forests, the management of these forests.

You know, we are looking at forest inventories in many of the concessions now that are bringing us to a new kind of era I would say in forest management in Central Africa. These are concessions that are consolidated, and they have a long-term management plan associated with them.

We are too young in the process now to really know if those management plans have anything to do with reality because a lot of them are based on 25 year kind of rotations. You know, you cannot even put a Loblolly pine plantation on a 25 year rotation, so there are obviously still some very large problems with those ideas, but at least now we are talking about it, and the debate has begun.

I think that there are two main problems that I see right now, which is the new fiscal regimes that are being put in place in collaboration with the World Bank in Central Africa from my point of view, and I have talked to many loggers about this, seem to favor the small, rapid-fire concessionaires rather than large, management oriented concessionaires because the new surface area taxes that have started to come into being tax people equally for tracts of land that they hold, so they do not really take into account the rotation of that forest, so I think that people who hold onto forests longer, who are more interested in management, are suffering under that regime; at least that is my understanding from the logging companies' executives that I have talked to.

The second thing that is happening is community forestry has become law in many countries. For instance, in Gabon with the new forestry law a village or a population of people can claim a certain area of forests to be managed by themselves and to be exploited by themselves.

I think, you know, again within the context of this CBFP if we can shift as much as we possibly can, and there are obviously realities that you have to deal with in this process, but if you can shift resource exploitation as close to the source as possible the benefits for local people increase pretty dramatically.

If you are the guy with the chainsaw in a village and you cut down a big mahogany tree, you are probably going to get a couple thousand bucks out of that tree. If you are sitting in a village watching someone else cut it, you are probably not going to get anything.

I think that that holds for many other resources—gold, coltan, many of those things that are currently being exploited. If we can bring community management forward, but in a modern way, I think that that will be a very powerful way to shift the balance.

Mr. ROYCE. And you want to work on changing the criteria at the World Bank in terms of how that assessment is done?

Mr. FAY. I think that fiscality should be looked at, and people should take a realistic view of what is happening on the ground and the result of fiscal changes that are made.

I also think that people should start looking at the true sustainability of what they are talking about when they put in rotations of 25 years. I think that people need to start thinking about the biological reality of the forest rather than the kind of short-term economic reality that they are dealing with.

Mr. ROYCE. Lastly, on the phenomenon of the empty forest and what has happened with respect to the bushmeat trade, would you like to share with us some of your observations? I know that you have trekked in areas and reported about what has happened as a consequence of civil war in the Congo, whole areas completely depopulated of wildlife.

Mr. FAY. Yes. Again, it gets us right back to United States of America, 1900. We went from some 17 million by some estimates, and it could have been a lot more than that, white tailed deer to an estimated 300,000 white tailed deer in this country in 1900. It was conservation efforts. It was that kind of Roosevelt era consciousness raising that brought wildlife management to a higher level in this country.

I think that if you are dealing with a logging concession that has absolutely no education about wildlife population, if workers are paid in shotgun shells and Caraby shells, obviously you can improve that situation dramatically. We have seen that within a year or two in large logging concessions we can completely flip-flop that situation.

So I think that, you know, you can call it bushmeat. You can call it unsustainable hunting. You can call it whatever you want, but basically what we are dealing with is people are killing too much wildlife in frontier areas and in logging concessions, and again it demands this comprehensive management approach.

Mr. ROYCE. We are going to go to our Ranking Member, Don Payne from New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

I have been listening to you and do recall 6 years ago when we had you here. Of course, being from New Jersey, Summit was still a nice area. As a matter of fact, we were running into a number of problems in New Jersey in relation to conservation. We were being overrun by the black bears. They are almost coming down into real urban areas now, and it is become a debate in the legislature.

People are getting ready to run on the bear issue, you know. Not the bear market, but the bear bear. They are getting a little bit smarter. They know almost where refrigerators are, you know. They get into kitchens. They are pretty smart. Unfortunately, there is talk of having a hunting season to try to pare down the numbers. They have really overrun.

Our eagles too. The eagles have really soared in New Jersey. Years ago I worked when I was in college as a camp counselor at an eagles nest farm on the Delaware water gap. As you know, the DDT took away a lot of the eagles, but now the eagle population has just grown phenomenally. As a matter of fact, people are worrying about their little kittens and poodles, you know. The eagles are running out of real prey, so people are keeping their small pets in the house because the eagle will come down and sometimes swoop away a little dog or something.

Deer? We do not even want to talk about deer. They are just everywhere, but I am glad that you did have an opportunity to go to do what you have done. It is really commendable.

Also, you know, we in New Jersey had the first park commission in the country. In 1897, Essex County started a park commission, so we were pretty forward thinking. I was a member when I was in county government, a member of the park commission. We always talked about the first park commission in the country.

Getting back to Africa, you know, you need to stay away from elephants. Get close to the donkeys, they do not hurt you.

Is there much reforestation going on? You talked about kind of the way the logging was done, but is there any, in your estimation, real kind of plan, or is that what the future might hold of just trying to reforest?

I know that takes a long time. You are talking about the short term versus the long term, but are any of the logging companies getting involved in that?

Mr. FAY. Yes. Several companies have what we would call enrichment programs that they have initiated, but these are very experimental.

What we have to realize is that if a logging company in Central Africa is going to cut 100,000 cubic meters of wood in a year, they are going to eat up about 25,000 acres of forest, so for them to economically be able to enrich that forest after they have gone through, and believe you me they do a heck of a lot of damage when they go through.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes.

Mr. FAY. It is unbelievable what they do. To be able to enrich that forest, even if it worked, and we do not even know if it works, would be prohibitively expensive.

I think that again what we need to think about is kind of a doughnut with various rings. We have solidly protected areas as wilderness. Then we have a permanent forest around those parks that is managed for sustainable production of wood, and then beyond that you have more the agricultural land where people cultivate. Those lands are usually more appropriate, valley bottoms, et cetera.

I think that, you know, when you look at forest management in Central Africa for the next 25 or 50 years possibly—at least 25 years—it is going to be more of an extensive kind of management. It is going to be to go in, you take the mother lode out—that is what they always do, the mahogany, the oak, all the big, one meter diameter trees. They are all gone on the first cut. Anything worth money is gone on the first cut.

The second cut becomes much more problematic because you are dealing with much smaller diameters, wood that is hard to sell, so you end up with a process that as time goes on those species get into the market as the primary forests diminish, and you just see smaller and smaller trees being exploited. The grading of the forest is getting more and more radical.

I think that again we have to get back to rotations. You know, how long do they need to be to be able to come up with good populations of trees that can be exploited in an economic way? We have to look at the fiscal issues such that we might say, you know,

do we have to put all of the mahogany on the market at the same time?

If you look at the way companies operate now, they are right there between red and black, but that is where the market puts them every single time. The last 23 years I have been in Africa, every time you talk to loggers they are right there between the red and the black.

I think that it makes rare resources look abundant because they just cut them down as fast as they can because they need to produce more to make any money. It is this vicious cycle. I think fiscality needs to be looked at and also biological rotations.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Just a final question. Has the European Union discussed the matter? A number of years ago I know, for example, it was alleged that Taylor was selling much of his timber to one of the European countries. I mean, most of it goes there, but have they had any discussion in EU about this whole question of logging and so forth?

Mr. FAY. Yes. Certainly the French had been very active, and they have been supporting many of these forest replanting activities. They are providing loans and also gifts to logging companies to undertake these planting exercises.

The Belgians, the EU itself, they have all started to kind of recognize that forests need to be managed. We are going to eventually get to the end point of primary resource, of the frontier, and we need to start thinking about that, so yes.

When you look at markets and how markets have changed over the last 20 some years in Europe, in the United States, in Asia, certification really has not happened for tropical forests yet, and until there is some way to influence those markets I think that the current trends that we are seeing are just going to continue.

Management planning is a great thing, but management is a different thing, and that is where we have to go now. We have to go from management planning to management. It gets us right back to CBFP again. You do not say okay, guys, we need to save everything. You say we need to have a land use management plan. That is what we need.

We need to have protected areas, we need to have permanent forest, and we need to have places where people live. That is a modern structure that we see everywhere on the planet, and it is due to humans occupying that landscape.

I really believe that, you know, I go around every issue that I can think of in forest conservation, and it brings us back to this model. It brings us back to the CBFP. Again, I really think that if we give this model a chance we will see that it will transform the way resource exploitation unfolds in Central Africa.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Congressman Payne.

Thank you very much, Dr. Michael Fay, for being with us. Thank you to *National Geographic* for their contribution in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

We will be continuing to work with you as we go forward. Thanks so much for your testimony today.

Mr. FAY. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

Mr. ROYCE. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:10 p.m. the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. RICHARD W. CARROLL, DIRECTOR OF AFRICA AND
MADAGASCAR, ENDANGERED SPACES PROGRAM, WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

SAVING THE CONGO BASIN: THE STAKES, THE PLAN

It is in the United States government interest to ensure an equitable, although perhaps not an even, allocation of CBFP funds between the Congo Basin countries, signatories of the Yaoundé Declaration, as a way to provide concrete incentive for their continuous commitment to the Declaration. The initial intention of the NGO consortium comprising the Conservation International (CI), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in submitting their proposal to the US Government within the framework of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, was to mobilize funding to support conservation efforts within 11 landscapes throughout the Basin.

The US government funds should be invested where they would have a real impact on conservation delivery, and therefore CI, WCS and WWF-US suggested the following guiding principles for fund allocation:

- conservation needs within the landscapes. The CARPE planning workshop of March 17–19 in Kinshasa should enable CARPE partners to identify these needs. These needs will vary across the 11 landscapes;
- comparative advantage of USG's investment in leveraging on-going or future investments from other actors in the region;
- ability of national conservation actors to partner with. A special emphasis should be put on the capacity of national conservation institutional structures to contribute to the definition and implementation of the conservation priority actions within the landscapes.

THE YAOUNDE DECLARATION: A SOLID CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE CONGO BASIN

The Congo Basin is a challenging environment for forest conservation. Political instability, high levels of government debt, a decline in export commodity prices and a long history of poor resource management had hindered the other countries conservation efforts. However, one of the most encouraging signs is the growing support among governments and communities in Central Africa for region-wide, collaborative forest conservation:

The *Yaounde Forest Summit* held on March 17, 1999, was the first public expression of the high level political will to conserve the forests of Central Africa. The Summit created a unique opportunity for the governments of the Congo Basin countries to make commitments to forest conservation. Bringing together six African Heads of State and representatives from the international community including the World Bank, the United Nations and European Commission, the summit's aim was: To conclude new trans-national protected areas in the Congo Basin and agree upon a shared, long-term vision for these forests.

The Yaounde Summit marked a watershed in forest conservation in Central Africa. The summit opened a new era of 'conservation convergence' in Central Africa and was the first time that regional Heads of State came together to develop a coherent plan for the conservation of the second largest contiguous forest in the world. World Wildlife Fund helped organize the summit and the resulting Yaounde Declaration contained plans to protect vast tracts of forest in the Congo Basin. The summit marked a turning point in the political commitment to the region's environ-

ment. A key element is that Central African Governments have set aside areas of great economic value to themselves that are of global biodiversity significance.

The first meeting of CBFP recognized the Plan de Convergence, the operational Plan emanating from the Yaounde Declaration, as the reference of partners' actions in the region.

Protected areas

Far from being “a series of empty promises,” the Yaounde Declaration has resulted in solid conservation achievements in Central Africa. The total amount of additional forest protected areas created, confirmed or in the final stages of being set aside since March 1999 totals *13,866 square miles!*

In Cameroon the government has approved in January this year, establishment of a new network of Protected areas that will bring the country up to 15% under total protection by 2005. Current network of Protected areas covers 3,409,400 ha which represents 7.3% of the country size. The Cameroon government is currently completing setting aside 1,052,100 ha (2.3%), which will bring the total protected areas coverage to 4,461,500 ha, representing 9.6% of the country surface area. Furthermore, these areas represent economic forests that have been set aside for conservation in an area where public auction of logging concessions yields offers of the equivalent of \$21 per hectare, representing foregone income to the Cameroon Government of over \$30 million. In a further indication of political will, the government has recently withdrawn eight logging concessions in an ecologically sensitive area and is negotiating with conservation agencies to find ecologically acceptable alternatives to logging.

In Central African Republic, the government has committed itself to protect 10% of the country's total area. The President has commissioned a team to work with existing logging companies developing sustainable forest management plans.

In Gabon, At the Johannesburg summit, President Bongo announced the creation of 13 new protected areas in Gabon covering over 3 million hectares. This park system, covering 11 % of the country, is the result of two years of fieldwork carried out in collaboration with WWF, WCS, Gabon and the Wildlife Directorate. The parks range from regions along Gabon's coastline, where hippopotamuses frolic on untouched beaches, to unique forest clearings—home to “naïve” populations of gorillas that show no fear of humans. Along with the creation of these 13 National Parks, a Permanent Secretariat was created at the Presidency level to oversee the legal and institutional aspects of national park management in Gabon.

In the Republic of Congo, in December 2000, the government announced that it would quadruple the size of the Odzala National Park to over one million hectares, thereby creating one of the largest national parks in Central Africa.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, which contains 55% of the Congo Basin's rainforest including the Congo River, has the longest tradition of nature conservation in Africa:

- first national park in Africa—1925, Virunga NP;
- three national parks at independence in 1960;
- currently seven national parks with more than twelve other protected areas.

There are five natural World Heritage Sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo conferring international recognition to the uniqueness and importance of these protected areas. Three of these, Okapi, Kahuzi-Biega and Salonga are among the CBFP landscapes.

International conservation NGOs have worked closely with the ICCN over the last 20 years to train guards, researchers and administrators. These trained individuals remained in the parks, engaged on the ground throughout the recent years of civil upheaval.

Following the Paris CBFP meeting:

- The ICCN established a commission (in which WWF and WCS were invited as technical advisor) to study needs in the CBFP landscapes based on the IRs and subIRs laid out in the CARPE Strategic Plan.
- A representative from the ministry took part in the commission to assure that the final vision was inclusive, including non-protected areas.
- A summary report produced by the ICCN will now circulate to CBFP partners to coordinate their contribution and identify areas that remain to be filled.

Regional officials took another major step forward in December 2000:

A collaborative management agreement between the governments of Cameroon, Central African Republic and Congo has been signed, creating the Sangha River

Trinational, which links three contiguous national parks (Lobeke in Cameroon, Dzanga-Ndoki in Central African Republic and Nouabale-Ndoki in the Congo Republic) protecting 2.8 million hectares extending into all three countries.

A similar transborder conservation program covering 15,000 square miles in the boundary region of Cameroon, Gabon and Congo is currently being negotiated.

The Congo Basin countries have shown considerable political will in creating this protected area network. However due to the demographic trends and the need for agricultural land, no more than 10 percent of the African territory will be set-aside for protected areas in the long term.

Central Africa is one of the last remaining areas in the world where vast, fairly intact forest still exist. We have the unique opportunity and political momentum to support the positive efforts fostered within the region to create a world class network of protected areas spanning much of the central African forests, linked by corridors of sustainably managed forests. The potential represented by the Yaounde Summit may be the last window of opportunity for conservation in central Africa and writing it off as 'empty promises' will certainly result in an empty forest.

The results demonstrated from the Yaounde Summit represent a great glimmer of hope for the forest, wildlife and people of the region and the US money should be used to assist these countries involved in the Congo Basin. Failure to substantively support these countries will be a failure for the international community and an irretrievable loss for humanity.

Sustainable Forest Management

The forests of Central Africa are currently under threat from logging as a result of demand for timber from transnational logging companies in Asia and Europe. In 1990, the volume of timber exported from the Congo Basin to Asia was less than 200,000 cubic meters. In 1997, this has risen to over two million cubic meters. Today, in Gabon, 800,000 hectares of forests are allocated to logging concessions and this is likely to increase to more than two million hectares under current pressures. In neighboring Equatorial Guinea, exports have tripled since 1994. A growing demand for timber in China and other emerging economies has led to exploitation of forests in West Africa's coastal states—where traditionally there have been weak controls and legislation—mobilizing major capital resources with unprecedented speed and flexibility, and exploiting greater proportions of timber resources than ever before. Conservationists predict that most forests which are not currently designated as protected areas will be subject to some logging activity within the next five years.

WWF is promoting sustainable forest management in Cameroon, CAR and Gabon through a collaborative program between WWF Belgium, and the WWF-Central Africa Regional Program Office funded by the European Union. In each country, national working groups have been established to develop regional certification standards under the auspices of the Forest Stewardship Council. In addition, WWF is providing support to one private logging company in Gabon to design a sustainable forest management plan which takes into account the impact of the logging activity on biodiversity and the local population.

In CAR, WWF, in partnership with the government, is working to promote sustainable management of the Societe de Bois de Bayanga logging concession within the Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve. The Dzanga-Sangha Project is charged with assisting in the control of logging operations to ensure that the practices are consistent with the Forestry Code, and assisting in the development of a sustainable forest management plan for this concession.

In Cameroon, WWF is implementing the Jengi initiative, a pilot project to establish sustainable forest management and a protected areas system in the forests of southeastern Cameroon. Although the Lake Lobeke Reserve (part of the Sangha River Trinational Protected Areas complex) and Boumba-Bek-Nki Complex (a component of the trans border initiative) will preserve part of this forest and help ensure a homeland for the BaAka pygmies, the speed and nature of current commercial logging, if unchecked, will result in three forest islands in a sea of devastation.

Jengi to the BaAka is the spirit of the forest. Jengi presides over the initiation ceremonies of youth and provides guidance for these forest people whose cultural, physical and spiritual life depends on an intact forest. The BaAka have lived in harmony with the forest for centuries and now their songs are being drowned by the noise of bulldozers and chainsaws. Poaching camps follow the bulldozers, the wildlife disappears, and in many villages, the Jengi has not come for years. The Jengi project aims to halt and reverse forest mining, to achieve large-scale sustainable forest management and timber production, to develop alternative sources of income for local communities and to develop a conservation trust fund to support the three protected areas. The aim is to restore the Jengi as the guardian of the forest.

Most of the protected areas in Central Africa are surrounded or impacted in some way by logging concessions. Logging operations often bring in a significant immigrant labor force and become a pole of attraction for others seeking economic opportunities with these companies. Those that find work have money to buy food and clothes, and those that don't have time to kill—literally—by becoming bush meat hunters to supply the concession work force. In many concessions, bush meat is the only source of protein available and is sanctioned by the companies, who are responsible to ensure adequate food and supplies to their laborers.

Although to date, the forest certification process has had limited success in Central Africa due to a reluctance by companies to adopt logging practices that may be more costly and where there is limited market demand for certified products, we have found a willingness by companies to try to limit bush meat hunting and transportation on their concessions. Concessions bordering the Minkebe Forest Reserve in Gabon, the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve in CAR, Lake Lobeke in Cameroon and Nouabale-Ndoki in Congo-Brazzaville have all put in place measures to control bush meat exploitation, including sanctions of employees and drivers involved in hunting or transportation, closing roads to prevent access, providing alternative food sources, and closer collaboration with international NGOs and government authorities.

