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REBUILDING THE WILDLIFE SECTOR IN A NEW ZIMBABWE

- A PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION BY DONORS AND NGOs -

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Introductory Note: It is with great concern that we have observed the wanton destruction of wildlife and wildlife areas in Zimbabwe over the last decade. However, we are positive that the present political nightmare will come to an end and that the people of Zimbabwe will be allowed to rebuild their country. It should not be forgotten which important role wildlife has played in the economy of the country and the potential wildlife can have again in the future. "People and Wildlife e.V." a small German pro-wildlife NGO, has commissioned a study which should assist donors from the international, Governmental and private sectors to identify the potential and plan future assistance for the reconstruction of the wildlife sector. The study was written by Graham Child, now a consultant, and formerly Director of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management in Zimbabwe, and Rolf D. Baldus, a German economist with many years experience in wildlife management in Africa. Both have written the paper in their personal and private capacity only.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A decade ago Zimbabwe was one of the leading countries in wildlife conservation and management. The sector earned over US$ 300 million per year through conservation generated by protected areas belonging to the state, rural community run wildlife management areas and private game ranches and reserves. Sadly most of this has been destroyed or severely damaged within a few years of political lawlessness and corruption led by the Mugabe regime.

Wildlife however, has a great ability to recover within a relatively short period of time, provided the natural habitats remain intact, sound protection and wise management can be reintroduced. The formerly thriving wildlife sector can be restored, but to achieve this, a newly established democracy will need the assistance of bilateral and international donors and “hands-on” conservation NGOs.

The future political decision-makers of Zimbabwe as well as donor institutions must not overlook the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife once a new start is possible. Reconstruction of Zimbabwe will certainly draw substantial international support. Wildlife conservation is not a luxury that may be taken up at a later stage after the most urgent tasks of rehabilitation have been achieved. Zimbabwe's wildlife heritage is the draw card of the country's tourist industry, which is a sector that can quickly be turned around and play an important role in the reconstruction of the country.

For the recovery of the wildlife sector, it must be incorporated in economic development and poverty reduction strategies from the start of the reconstruction effort. Many tracts of land formerly devoted to wildlife are now occupied or resettled. Appropriate action is needed fast or the remaining wildlife in these areas will be lost forever. Past experience shows that these areas are unsuited to conventional agriculture, and that wildlife production is the most appropriate form of land use. It is therefore sensible to restore the wildlife populations for the benefit of community-based and/or private management regimes. As is shown, these wildlife-based land use systems mutually benefit one another and are not exclusive.

Furthermore, the sustainable use of wildlife is in line with the Convention on Biodiversity and the ruling principles of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), of which Zimbabwe is a member.

This paper takes a firm stand of zero cooperation with the current Government of Zimbabwe, which is responsible for country's current state of affairs. Also this paper is not a detailed analysis of that current state of affairs. Instead, this paper puts forward a range of ideas, but not project proposals in the fields of:

- Wildlife policy, organizational and administrative reform
- Rehabilitation of the estate, capacity building and strengthening of the field force
- Community based natural resources management (CBNRM) locally referred to as CAMPFIRE
- Private commercial game ranches and conservancies.

This paper is intended as a pre-feasibility study from where a future democratic Government and interested donors may initiate their own more detailed planning.

2. INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe had a proud record in the field of wildlife conservation and had developed an economically and ecologically sustainable wildlife sector by the early 1990s.
The country had contributed significantly to southern Africa's pre-eminence in the conservation of wildlife and its habitats and had achieved strong private sector growth. Areas supporting wildlife increased rapidly in support of a

significant and diversified wildlife industry guided by free market principles within a progressive institutional framework. The CAMPFIRE programme was one of the first institutionalised systems of community based wildlife conservation and use in Africa.

From being a world leader in the wildlife field Zimbabwe has been reduced to a non-entity in the last five years. The impressive progress the country once had was nullified by inept and corrupt administration, coupled with politically motivated lawlessness. In the case of the lucrative wildlife industry the resource base was squandered through wanton poaching and habitat degradation in which the Party and Government officials entrusted with the stewardship of the resources were often prominent.

Halting and reversing this trend will be a massive undertaking, but one well justified by the ability of African wildlife to maximise long-term rural production on a broad front, especially in disadvantaged areas unsuited to sustainable agriculture. It will require a focused programme to salvage the Parks and Wildlife Estate and allow the resource outside to resume contributing, as it should, to long-term human well-being and the alleviation of rural poverty. This paper suggests a prioritised holistic approach to rehabilitating the wildlife sector in Zimbabwe as soon as possible after the inevitable political change. Urgency in mounting such a programme is stressed because significant political change can be expected to result in a period of confusion as a new order establishes. Past experience shows that such periods are fraught with both dangers to and opportunities for the proper management of fugitive resources like wildlife. It is proposed that donors include wildlife conservation into their assistance programme when Zimbabwe's reconstruction becomes an international task. This would contribute to biodiversity preservation as well as poverty reduction through sustainable wildlife use. Planning for such projects should start now.

3. PAST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WILDLIFE SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 FROM 1960 TO 1990

Until 1960 wildlife was in serious decline in Zimbabwe but the pattern was common in much of Africa. Colonial legislation focused responsibility for managing wildlife in top-down bureaucracies, denied its inherent economic value and prevented people on the land from managing it in conjunction with the rest of the ecosystems of which it was a part. As a result, decision makers over looked its value, from politicians and civil servants to landholders who decided its fate on the ground. Population numbers and wildlife habitats declined through overt action to eliminate a worthless competitor for the benefit of agriculture or simply from benign neglect.

The decline in the wildlife resources of the country were halted and reversed with the introduction of the Wildlife Conservation Act (1960). Inauguration of the Act heralded a period of 15 years of adaptive institutional reform.

Landholders were allowed greater discretion over the management of wildlife on their land and could market its products with increasing freedom. Landholders were encouraged to maximise their profits from using wildlife sustainably. Benefits from the resource and accountability for conserving it were brought close together where they could interact positively and serve as a positive incentive for landholders in whom authority over the management of wildlife was now centred.

Institutional frameworks immediately halted and reversed the downward trend in large wild mammal populations. Furthermore, with the institutional framework in place, wildlife was able to benefit from the declining terms of trade for ubiquitous agricultural commodities that commenced in the mid 1970s. Farmers who had complained that they could not "farm in a zoo" now accepted that they could not farm sustainably and profitably "outside the zoo". In switching to wildlife alone or in combination with livestock they demonstrated the economic importance of having conserved the biological diversity inherent in a spectrum of large indigenous mammals and their habitats.

Confidence gained and lessons learned by the institutional reform process were consolidated and extended in the Parks and Wildlife Act, 1975 that replaced it. This Act recognised National Parks and five other classes of ecological reserve and provided for the better management of the reserves and wildlife, including fish, outside their borders. Landholders were allowed considerable freedom in the management and marketing of the wildlife and its derivatives from their land, without Government abrogating its responsibility for ensuring the proper conservation and use of the resource. Discriminatory implicit taxation, such as through the imposition of government hunting licence fees, and high transaction costs through an unreasonable requirement for permits, were effectively abolished. Instead, landholders including the State on State Land were encouraged to maximise the benefits earned by the resource within the limits of the land use policy for each property.

Within a decade, land with significant wildlife exceeded 30% of the country, with that in the private and communal agricultural sectors exceeding the area of the Parks and Wildlife Estate. A financially important industry dominated by recreational hunting and tourism and their ancillary services had grown up around the two, and the private sector was demonstrating improved environmentally friendly land use. Socio-economically sound institutional development had been integrated with ecologically sustainable resource management towards creating a self-supporting and holistic conservation programme.

CAMPFIRE grew from the confidence in wildlife, as a productive, profitable and competitive land use, that had been tested on commercial land. The two sectors remained mutually beneficial with communal farmers benefiting from the scales of operation, marketing strategies, examples, and standards provided by commercial game producers. They in turn benefited from the complementary range of trophy animals available on Communal Land. Piggybacking wildlife use in Communal Areas on that in Commercial Areas

was largely responsible for making the former viable and able to help counter land degradation and mitigate the resulting poverty vortex, even where the resource was limited. CAMPFIRE's biggest shortcoming was that benefits did not reach directly to the communities, but were channelled through secondary bodies at District level.

3.2 DESTRUCTION OF A THRIVING SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY

Profitable game ranching increased often to the exclusion of other forms of agriculture on commercial farms and ranches and the internationally renowned CAMPFIRE programme grew and flourished in the communal areas, despite covert Government opposition. On commercial land, wildlife was seen as a ruse to evade taxes, while on communal land it was resented because it was a powerful democratising force eroding central authority over the people. Success in both cases depended on individual landholder families benefiting directly in financial terms from having wildlife on their land. Use of wildlife in the two land classes remained highly complementary and its strength in the face of growing political adversity confirmed the soundness of the approaches to conservation that they embodied.

The wildlife sector became the fourth major strut in the national economy and continued to grow until the early 1990s when political circumstances caused it to falter. New appointments with limited competence and hence confidence began to curtail the liberalisation that had led to the growth of the sector, because they saw it as a threat to their power base. Ordinary landholders paid a high price for this political patronage and the incompetence and corruption it nurtured.

The strength of the wildlife sector based on commercial and communal land and the Parks and Wildlife Estate showed considerable resilience in the face of the abnormal politically motivated challenges. This occurred despite considerable discrimination in favour of incompetent and corrupt party supporters in the award of concessions and other permissions, and in the appointment of officials. It was not until the countrywide politically sponsored lawlessness accompanying the redistribution of land that the wildlife sector succumbed.

The land redistribution exercise encouraged widespread poaching, which extended to the military and the Parks Authority itself. Law enforcement agencies often refused to take action against it, on the spurious pretext that the offences were a political act and thus outside their jurisdiction. Objective data as to the extent of the countrywide poaching is difficult to assemble, but knowledgeable observers believe 60 to 80% of the wildlife outside the Parks and Wildlife Estate has been slaughtered, with the situation in some parts of the country worse than in others. Additionally, there has been serious poaching in the Estate and the Party paid destitute people to destroy habitats on many farms through the wanton felling of woodland and its destruction with fire. It is of little surprise that the tourism and to a lesser extent recreational hunting previously supported by wildlife has been greatly depressed.

In the absence of reliable economic data it is impossible to determine the extent of this collapse or the loss to the national economy that it represents. Both are, however, considerable. Some recreational hunting has continued as international hunters are less prone to being put off from visiting a trouble torn country than are ordinary tourists, but generally both sub-sectors of the tourism industry are in a depressed state. Many private sector ventures have closed down, patronage of others is minimal, and many highly qualified Professional Hunters, Guides and other essential staff have emigrated in the massive brain drain that is afflicting Zimbabwe and depriving it of skills and people with the right attitude towards tourism in all its forms. There is reliable information that many hunting blocks have been taken over by political cronies of the party and government and that they exploit these areas in cooperation with unscrupulous operators and professional hunters unsustainably.

The good news is that wildlife has a remarkable ability to recover in a relatively short time provided some protection is reintroduced and the habitat has not been lost. It will be possible to reverse the present trends in the industry provided law and order is brought back ad the sector receives the necessary support.

4. THE TASK AHEAD

Rebuilding the wildlife and tourism sector in Zimbabwe following political change will be a considerable undertaking. It will present both opportunities and challenges and will be difficult without carefully directed and prioritised external assistance to recreate an effective system suited to local Zimbabwean conditions. These conditions are changing all the time so that a new management system should seek to combine considerable appropriate past experience with new innovative measures to accommodate the future.

Urgency is important as a measure of confusion is bound to occur during the political transition, especially as the new hierarchy will probably lack experience in managing wild resources at the national level. This period will be one of opportunities and risks for wildlife. Opportunities will arise because the new government is likely to have an open mind on many day-to-day actions before its position with respect to particular issues becomes entrenched. At the same time there is a risk that if there is a vacuum of indecision, unscrupulous elements, many of which are already in position, will continue to abuse the resource and will entrench themselves. Radical realistic action is needed quickly to halt abuses and set the direction for an effective and efficient phased recovery of the wildlife industry, based on sound socio-economic and ecological principles acceptable in the country and to the new government.

The aim must be to halt and root out corruption and simultaneously to replace it with action to promote recovery of the resource and the industry it supports. This should commence with a review of policy and the setting and prioritising of goals within a realistic time frame; apportioning accountability to recognisable individuals and organisations to achieve measurable objectives; and allowing those responsible to act within a policy agreed by the new Minister. This is bound to be influenced by the nature of future land tenure and in particular the extent to which a new government will reinstate the former pre-eminence of commercial agriculture. The revival of wildlife production outside the Estate will then depend on:

The resuscitation of game ranching on suitable large properties;

The combination of these properties into conservancies with shared wildlife populations wherever possible, and the creation of integration groups of large and small scale producers wherever practicable;

The strengthening and up grading of the CAMPFIRE programme in communal areas which a recent US Aid survey (early 2003) showed had weathered the recent land upheaval remarkably well;

The extension of the CAMPFIRE concepts to land set aside for resettlement, where there is presently a free for all among settlers who are abusing the wildlife as a free resource due to the absence of suitable institutions to guide the conservation and use of the shared fugitive resource;

Encouragement of the private sector infrastructure in support of these land holders. This will range from strengthening the CAMPFIRE Association, and re-establishing a Game Producers' and other associations relevant to the wildlife industry. It will extend from supplying affordable seed stock of animals to repopulate denuded properties to encouraging rejuvenation and future growth of commercial safari and tour operators, lodge keepers, and the many other commercial enterprises that combine to service the industry based on wildlife.

The resulting action programme should be flexible, opportunistic, and sensitive to the independent variables that are bound to emerge as it is implemented. It is not possible, at this stage, to predict the opportunities that will arise as the result of future land tenure and other political changes. The availability of skills to exploit the various options is also not known as many potentially valuable skills that emerged during the growth of the industry have left the country. Because of this lack of information and the many variables likely to impact on the revived wildlife sector, this initial strategy for action omits detail and concentrates on the general form that the action should take, stressing important priorities. It must concentrate in the wildlife sector on a few priority areas, the following in particular:

1. Wildlife policy and reorganization of the wildlife administration

2. Rehabilitation of the public protected areas

3. Bring CAMPFIRE back to life and improve it

4. Encourage the commercial wildlife sector

A number of ideas for action in those fields to be taken after change to a majority rule government committed to democratic representation, the rule of law, good governance and economic reconstruction will follow.

5. AN ACTION PLAN

5.1 REPLACE AND STRENGTHEN PARKS AND WILDLIFE BOARD

The Parks and Wildlife Board of some 12 members is a body appointed by the Minister and is responsible for advising him/her on policy issues. It is suggested that, as a matter of the utmost urgency, the present Board should be retired and a new one appointed to oversee the transition period. Future Board members should be representative of the wildlife industry, and committed conservationists who will ensure implementation of the spirit and letter of national wildlife policy and the legislation flowing from it. Board members should bring a variety of useful talents and skills to the administration of wildlife.

With national wildlife management having become a parastatal function, it is desirable that the Board should assume certain executive functions on behalf of the Minister. In particular it should:

Be accountable for ensuring the proper control of the executive agency's finances, including the investment of its assets;

Ensure that as much authority as practicable is devolved to field level, to staff on the ground within the Parks and Wildlife Estate and to landholders outside the Estate; and

Create a system to audit and report to the Minister on all aspects of the agency' s management programme to ensure that it is effective and efficient.

Local management advisory committees, representative of local interests in wildlife, should be appointed to assist in both the management of the Estate and wildlife outside, and their geographical areas of interest should be defined. A member of the Board should serve on each of theses committees, which should in turn have representation on the Board.

Such a restructuring will be the task of the new representative Government and might facilitate effective donor and NGO support to the sector.

5.2 REVIEW OF POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The wildlife policy and legislation in Zimbabwe remains largely sound although the original liberalisation envisaged for managing and using the resource has been curbed by policy and legislative changes. Both institutions should be reviewed to encourage good conservation and the rapid expansion of the industry in the spirit of the original policy and legislation. The aim should be an ecologically sound, ethical, diversified, but integrated wildlife industry, that is financially profitable and self supporting and sets and maintains its own standards. It should work with government in the best interests of the resource, people with it on their land, and the country.

Donors should support this process by provision of funds and technical assistance necessary to implement such a reform process that will contribute to good governance, decentralisation and devolvement of power to the people.

Concerns have been raised regarding the implications of possible future Foot-&-Mouth Disease control measures that may be implemented to boost the beef industry and its access to European markets. Policies relating to wildlife need to be strong to ensure that cognisance is taken of regional land use initiatives and Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas.

Activities of 5.1 and 5.2 are however minor in comparison to those which follow.

5.3 RESTRUCTURING AND REBUILDING THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

The National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority should be restructured and reformed as a matter of urgency. This will require three related actions:

- A thorough financial audit
- A post by post evaluation of the organisation leading to new job descriptions, creating new positions and dropping others
- A restructuring of the organisation to better reflect its changing functions, underlining accountability, strengthening transparency and to ensure appropriate devolution of authority within the organisation.

The financial audit and the organizational analysis of the Authority will best be done by a highly competent and independent chartered accountant or similar consultant of international standing. Thereafter political decisions have to be taken on the role and functions of the Authority. Which of them are really semi-governmental and which can be delegated to other actors, in particular the private sector, associations of stakeholders etc.

Fitting the agency's form to its function will first require a review of the policy and objectives it is to achieve, how it is to achieve these aims and its relationship with the Minister and the rest of Government. This will determine the agency 's mandate, including what constitutes its core functions and the extent it should focus on these while outsourcing or privatising ancillary responsibilities. It will also determine the functions to be devolved from the centre to the periphery, how this is to be formalised, and the reporting procedures to be followed.

During the re-organization it will be necessary to eliminate some 'deadwood' and make redundant personnel having been implicated by the above audit in misappropriation of funds or abuse of their authority.

Procedures for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of staff have to be introduced. These should include objective systems for ensuring that:

- The acquisition of the skills and experience needed for initial recruitment and advancement to particular postings;
- Conditions of service for all grades are sufficiently rewarding to attract and hold calibre staff;
- Individual postings are adequately rewarded for the responsibilities they hold; and
- Incentives are offered as a reward for initiative, arduous work, or actions beyond the call of normal duty.

The Director and his senior staff should be assisted in the cultivation of a suitable corporate culture. This should be based on loyalty to the organisation, a sound work ethic and what the organisation stands for, including the aesthetic, biological and economic values of wildlife, it's potential for enhancing rural productivity and long term sustainability, and hence for alleviating poverty. Donors will have to accompany this process with organizational advice, training and other support services.

It is important that management of the Parks and Wildlife Estate and wildlife outside is resumed as quickly as possible following a political transition. This will be an especially sensitive period for surviving breeding stock, making it important to position and maintain an interim management team until it can be replaced with suitable trained and experienced local staff. This may take anything from six months to several years and will include the hiring of experienced personnel to fill key postings. Within the Estate there will be a need to refurbishing the infrastructure, including game water supplies, roads and tourist accommodations, and to intensify anti-poaching measures. Emphasis must be placed upon outsourcing where possible, but particularly in the fields of hospitality, infrastructure maintenance and even aspects of wildlife management such as monitoring, capture and if necessary, culling.

5.4 STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The proposed strategy visualises more efficient ecological and economic management of the Parks and Wildlife Estate and greater liberalisation of wildlife management outside. This requires a motivated, well-trained and confident staff with a common corporate culture. With the likelihood of high staff redundancies following the weeding out of corrupt and incompetent staff from the executive agency and its restructuring there will be an urgent need for training of new recruits. There will also have to be considerable reorientation of existing staff so they can maintain the resources during the transitional period and guide the wildlife sector through the changes to be expected in the future.

The training should be tailored to the specific needs of the agency and the wildlife industry. Much of it will be straightforward and will require little more than the teaching of skills common to similar agencies throughout Africa and beyond.

Training should include amongst others:

- Law enforcement, paramilitary functions, field crafts.
- The role of different categories of staff in the monitoring of ecological phenomena, tourism management, public relations and outreach
- Financial, legal, staff administration and the maintenance of fixed and movable asset.
- Community Based Natural Resource Management
- Policy and related issues; and
- Gender issues should be considered within the corporate agency culture.

The Mushandike Training Staff College should to be refurbished and re-equipped for short and longer courses. Additionally, training-on-the-job is of importance. Instructors should also travel to field stations to undertake trainings and initiate on-station training programmes to the implemented by local staff for their peers and subordinates. Complementary and for courses which cannot be offered in Zimbabwe the College of African Wildlife Management in Mweka in Tanzania and the Southern Africa Wildlife College in South Africa.

5.5 CBNRM / CAMPFIRE

Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE was the first programme which introduced CBNRM in Africa at a large scale. Communal wildlife management became a form of sustainable land use in many marginal areas. CAMPFIRE provided the institutional structure under which communities managed their wildlife resources and earned significant incomes. The programme was generally regarded as a success and a step forward in the long-term conservation of wildlife. It spearheaded the introduction of similar programmes in other African countries. CBNRM, different as it may be in different countries, is nowadays regarded as the major strategy to sustainably use and conserve natural resources outside the protected areas. It will not be possible to combat the illegal bush meat trade without involving the communities into the management of the wildlife resources on their land.

It was impossible for the programme not to be affected by the lawlessness and the political interventions of recent years. Nevertheless CAMPFIRE has shown an astonishing resilience to the chaos. Over the years it was normal to find certain shortcomings of CAMPFIRE. A new beginning will be the right time to assess the programme's past performance, to identify weaknesses and to revive and improve CAMPFIRE with the assistance of donors. Four main issues need to be addressed:

CAMPFIRE had the district as smallest administrative unit. This was the level where contracts were made, revenues received and distributed and where decisions were taken. Experience showed that this was too far away from the communities. Decision-making was not always transparent, the influence of the communities was too little and much money never reached them. The former system has to be analysed, and an improved structure should have the communities as the decisive level for decision-making and for receiving benefits.

For political reasons "appropriate authority" to use wildlife has been assigned to many district and even municipal councils. This eroded the central principle of CAMPFIRE that benefits from wildlife require conservation inputs. There should be nothing like a "free lunch". If communities neglected their wildlife and tolerated poaching or encroachment into their wildlife areas, they would be punished by diminishing benefits. There was a strong nexus between conservation and use. This principle has to be established again.

Cooperation between governmental protected areas and CAMPFIRE areas was weak. Both were managed as separate units. From a biodiversity point of view, however, a certain degree of integrated planning and management would be beneficial. At least there should be strong cooperation.

Integration of the communal and commercial wildlife production sectors. A distinction between these two sectors is artificial and unhelpful. Integrating conservancies with neighbouring communal producers should be a high priority.

5.6 GAME RANCHING AND PRIVATE GAME RESERVES

In the last thirty years a strong private wildlife sector has developed, consisting of game ranches and farms, of hunting areas, private game reserves and conservancies as larger units consisting of a number of private properties. Overused, eroded and marginal agricultural lands were increasingly turned into wildlife production. This did in most cases not only increase returns to the landowners, but also greatly improved biological diversity including wildlife populations. The Wildlife Producer's Association counted nearly 500 members, half of which had game ranches of sizes between 20 and 400 km². It was a great economic and environmental step forward, when such properties joined together and formed conservancies where game had much greater scope to roam freely. The Save Conservancy has a size of ca. 340 km². This all has come to a standstill. There are only a few areas still working, the big ones being the conservancies in the south-east lowveld, like Sabi, Chiredzi and Nuanetsi and a few game ranches like Cawston/Rosslyn, Imire and Bally Vaugn.

The future of commercial game ranching in Zimbabwe depends very much on the future land reform, which land tenures will be chosen, also a new Government's policy towards wildlife as a form of land use. However, if wildlife was the appropriate land use under the previous white owners, then it must surely be the appropriate land use now regardless of who holds the land. The biggest support donors can probably give to this sector is using their political weight to find acceptable and economically rational solutions. One should not forget that many of the game ranches were acquired in accordance with the law by their owners after the Government had declared the areas as unsuitable for agriculture, earmarked them for wildlife and agreed to the purchase.

Reintroducing the rule of law, security of tenure and clear policies will certainly be the greatest impetus to the investors in this sector to give it another try. They had accumulated vast expertise on all aspects connected to the management of their ranches and the marketing of their products (mainly hunting and tourism). The need for technical advice in the private sector is therefore very limited. Some technical assistance may be necessary as far as a stronger integration of such game ranches with the communities are concerned. A stronger inter-linkage between the two sectors is needed than before. Also there might be a need for mitigation in conflicts which can be expected as soon as law and order will be reintroduced. There might also be a certain potential for the development of Private-Public-Partnerships once the private sector gets back on its feet again.

Under normal circumstances the game ranches were able to develop on the basis of their own capital and with commercial bank credit. As presently much of the infrastructure has been looted and destroyed, fences removed and stolen and game stock poached and depleted, and there is an extraordinary need for fresh capital. Development banks may be required to come in with grants, credits, credit guarantee funds and similar instruments. Such capital is presently needed by the private sector to reconstruct and rehabilitate these

farms, renew the road network and fences and translocate wildlife where appropriate. The extent of the capital needs have to be established by specific studies and assessments of technical experts.

In general, the private sector itself knows best how to manage the rehabilitation provided it is allowed to do so.

6. CO-ORDINATING THE RECOVERY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A programme to salvage what is left of the wildlife industry in Zimbabwe and to build it back into an important sector of the economy will require a carefully integrated programme. The core process should be a single coordinated effort and not a series of discreet projects managed in isolation from each other. It is envisioned that this should be provided by a coalition of donors working together and pooling their resources as a co-operative group with knowledgeable locals to provide a suitably equipped technical team with its own logistical support. This technical assistance can be broken down into a number of interrelated components or groups of experts.

The following expertise might prove necessary to be provided.

Lead Group. A group of up to three highly experienced top managers may be needed to assist the new Minister and to guide the whole process of rehabilitating the wildlife resource and re-establishing the wildlife sector as a major element of the economy. More specifically the team would be responsible for identifying suitable new members for the Board, facilitating their review of policy, legislation and basic procedures, and developing a system to enable the Board to audit all aspects of the executive agency's functions and report progress to the Minister. It should also work with the CEO of the agency to facilitate the orderly devolution of Parliamentary authority, from the Minister to the agency and on down through the agency to field level, as exemplified by the local management structure within the Estate and land holders outside.

The lead group should guide overall management in the agency that combines responsibility for conserving the nation's wild resources, and encouraging growth of an ethical wildlife sector, while itself striving for financial self-sufficiency. The team's members should combine innovative wildlife management with experience in top management, including the drafting policy and legislation, preferably along the lines of that in Zimbabwe. A second need is experience in the governance of regulatory organisations that provide a public service with expertise in how to ensure proper accountability and provide staff incentive structures within such organisations. The third requirement should be expertise in how to grow and develop businesses with a strong social and service commitment that must also seek to be profitable.

The lead group should work with the CEO of the management agency assisting and advising him on a day-to-day basis, on a range of issues, including:

Re-establishing or upgrading private wildlife sector institutions to better represent, co-ordinate and, as far as is reasonable, to self regulate the sector;

How to encourage the private sector by minimising unnecessary and costly bureaucratic controls and encouraging regular liaison and co-operation between the private and public sectors towards the more effective and efficient implantation of policy. This should include the maintenance of high ecological, ethical and service standards throughout the industry;

Assisting and encouraging the private sector by capturing and relocating animals to restock and diversify the fauna where habitats are suitable but have been denuded;

Prioritising management activities towards achieving policy goals and refurbishing the Estate's assets; and

How to upgrade and diversify local management of the Estate to better reflect neighbouring attitudes and enhancing income generation to the local economy, without prejudicing the natural values for which the Estate was created;

The setting and achieving of awareness and training objectives for Board and Management Committee members, the personnel in the executive agency and members of the private sector; and

Other day-today issues as they arise.

Investigation Group. Two or three highly experienced investigators, auditors and/or accountants are required to help the CEO analyse the financial and business situation of the organization and later weed out members of staff guilty of past corruption or incompetence. This exercise is bound to send ripples of upset through staff and for this reason and so that corrupt officials can be removed quickly, it is important that the exercise is concluded as fast as possible, by experts alert to the sensitivity of their mission. They should be hired from a consultant or chartered accountant with experience in the wildlife industry and high reputation.

Restructuring the Organisation. This will be a substantial undertaking. The first phase should be to help structure a recruitment process for the agency so it can replace necessary posts that fall vacant as corrupt, ineffective and redundant staff is removed from office. Once policy and the organisation's mandate have been decided the next phase will be to design the structure of an organisation to implement this mandate in consultation with the CEO and Board. This may be a staged process taking into account the organisation's likely annual budget. Experience in Zimbabwean has taught that staff

emoluments should not exceed 55% of total budget if the organisation is to be reasonably effective and financially efficient.

This phase of the programme should also prepare:

- Initial position charters for all categories of staff;
- A post by post set of job descriptions and staff contracts with adequate flexibility to suit the functions of the agency;
- Levels of training, experience and skills needed for an officer to qualify for a given post;
- A comprehensive staff incentive programme;
- Codes of conduct and instructions on how to prepare work plans and different types of reports for higher authority; and the like.

The aim should be to make the agency into an effective and efficient operating unit, and to provide it with a range of manuals to this end.

Interim administration. Around nine highly experienced field managers will be needed for between six months and four years to assist the executive agency to tide over the transition period and until they can be replaced with qualified local officers. With help from the programme as a whole and working with local management committees representing the local wildlife sector, the experienced field managers should evolve and implement management programmes for their geographic area or field of responsibility. Priority areas requiring experienced field officers during the transitional period include:

- Hwange National Park (based at Main Camp);
- The Victoria Falls/Matetsi/ Zambezi National Park area (based at Victoria Falls);
- The Matusadona/Chete/Chirisa/ Chizarira complex (based in one of the areas);
- The Lower Zambezi Valley including Kariba (based at Marongora);
- The Inyanga Special National Park (based in the Park);
- Matopos Special National Park (based in the Park); and
- Gonarezhou National Park (based in the Park).

The major responsibilities that need initial supervision include:

Reorganisation of the various facets of income generation for the Parks and Wildlife Estate;

Maintaining ecologically stable wildlife populations.

Liaison with the CAMPFIRE movement and other game producers, to generate planning information and provide advice, assistance and seed animals, where these are needed, with a view to growing a financially and ecologically sound ethical wildlife sector on communal and commercial land.

This transitional management team and such local personnel as are suited to the task should assume responsibility for directing management in accordance with the policy approved by the Minister in the various parts of the country or for the tasks for which they are responsible. As soon as possible the transitional managers should be integrated fully into the organization or hand over their responsibility to local counterpart staff, remaining on as advisors to these staff for as long as this is advisable.

7. PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities for action would appear to be as follows:

Technical support to the Ministry and the Authority; positioning of interim advisors/managers to assist the agency during the early transitional period.

Reviewing and revising policy, legislation, utilization and any other activities and institutions that may need to be updated.

Restructuring of the executive agency.

Introducing a structured training programme to meet the needs of both the executive agency and personnel from the private sector, refurbishing the Mushandike staff training college,

Support to CAMPFIRE/CBNRM and the private commercial wildlife sector

Rehabilitation of the protected areas and support to the field force including equipment, transport, communication etc. in order to make the law enforcement force and the park managers effective in the field again.

8. DONOR ASSISTANCE

Rehabilitating the wildlife sector in Zimbabwe and assisting it to better serve the nation in general and disadvantaged rural people in particular is a major challenge. It is an aspect of national development in which poor parts of Zimbabwe globally have an inherent comparative economic advantage.

Growth in this promising sector has been halted and reversed in recent years by destructive political elements with a determination to cling to power at all costs. While considerable damage has been done it can be repaired and growth restarted in a viable and ethical wildlife industry relatively quickly, but this will need considerable outside assistance in the form of both funding and expertise.

Donors traditionally tend to focus on state/communal/NGO sectors and to avoid the private sector. But the private sector has borne the brunt of the damage in the past few years and is going to need help to play its role in reconstruction.

It is a venture with a high chance of success in environmental conservation, national and local income generation, and the alleviation of poverty in geographically disadvantaged areas. It is the sort of situation in which donor assistance is likely to be cost effective in a high profile demonstration of measures to advance the welfare of poor people while also conserving the biosphere and the biodiversity on which future prosperity on a broad geographical front is likely to depend. It is a matter of helping to restore, upgrade and implement a home grown institutional framework that has already been successfully but needs help to take off afresh. The former wildlife sector probably earned the equivalent of over US$300 million p.a. and benefited at least 5% of the total population of Zimbabwe who received cash directly from the industry. It is doubtful if the surviving remnants of the industry are earning as much as US$100 million. The aim should be to restore the lost US$200 million in earnings and to grow this figure and those benefiting directly from wildlife.

Tourism is one of the sectors of an economy that can most quickly be turned around and thus play an important role in the reconstruction of the country.

It is desirable that interested donors should start now to plan for a wildlife sector support programme and should not wait until a democratic government is in place. As soon as possible they should commit themselves to a joint co-ordinated effort to achieve the desired objectives and should form themselves into a steering team. It is also desirable that this team should plan and agree its strategy for action early enough to be in a position to take immediate action as soon as possible. This is necessary for ensuring that the transitional period of damaging confusion between governments is minimised. To this end the donors should also identify a pool of key technical assistance personnel who can be fully briefed in confidence and mobilised for deployment in Zimbabwe as soon as possible after the formation of a new government. Given the high level of indigenous experience which once was existing in the country, it is more important to revive this and bring it back into the sector instead of employing expatriate staff from abroad.

Abbreviations

CAMPFIRE – Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM – Community Based Natural Resources Management
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
DNP – Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management
NPA - National Park and Wildlife Management Authority
IUCN – World Conservation Union

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"People and Wildlife" e.V. is a registered NGO and charity in Germany. Its objective is to foster community based wildlife conservation in Africa.

Disclaimer

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