

WEST AFRICA BUSH MEAT CONFERENCE
THEME: TACKLING THE BUSHMEAT CRISIS IN
AFRICA
22-24TH FEBRUARY 2005
ERATA HOTEL, ACCRA -GHANA

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

PREPARED BY

GHANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

**ORGANISERS: FAO, GHANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY, CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL-GHANA**

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WEST AFRICA BUSH MEAT CONFERENCE

22-24TH FEBRUARY 2005

1. CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

Wild animals provide a significant proportion of the protein consumed by the people of most African sub-regions. However, the poorly managed and largely uncontrolled harvesting of wild animals threatens to exterminate this valuable resource. This extermination will deprive millions of people, particularly the rural poor, of vital source of animal protein. It will also end up depriving those people involved in the trade in wild meat, commonly known as bushmeat, of their livelihoods. Furthermore, in the longer term, it will cause the collapse of habitats, particularly forest ecosystems.

There have been many initiatives in Africa to address what has been commonly named the bushmeat crisis. Over the past four years, the FAO has published papers on this issue and organized consultations and workshops with various development partners and national stakeholders.

In order to bring a sub-regional focus on the bushmeat issue for West Africa and to produce effective solutions to this growing crisis, a conference was hosted in Ghana, and jointly organized by the FAO, WWF International, Ghana Wildlife Society and Conservation International-Ghana.

Holding a conference to discuss the impact of the bushmeat issue across the entire West African region was intended to focus attention on a regional problem and generate regional solutions. Representatives from government authorities, Local communities and Environmental organizations from 12 African countries namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo were brought together, to debate

a critical, common crisis and to produce action plans for lasting solutions. As part of the follow-up actions, task forces will be mobilized from across the region, to ensure that the bushmeat issue is simultaneously addressed in each country.

It was intended that the Conference would come up with Action plans and establish task forces to implement these action plans across the region. The co-sponsors would further support these task forces in order to ensure that the action plans are effectively implemented in the field. WWF and Partners will also lobby the governments in the region to ensure that the bushmeat action plans receive the effective backing of all government departments. Hence, the ultimate objective of the conference was the development of long term programmes in each West African country that will effectively implement wildlife conservation strategies, enhance protected areas, significantly reduce illegal hunting activities and sustainably manage the harvesting of wild animals.

2. OPENING SESSION AND GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. The West Africa Bushmeat Conference was opened by the Professor D. Fobih, Minister of Lands, Forestry and Mines of Ghana after introductory statements made by the Chief Executive of the Ghana Forestry Commission, Mr A.S.K. Boachie-Dapaah, the Representative from WWF, Professor Yaa Ntiamoah-Baidu, acting FAO Representative to Ghana, Mr. Pape D. Koné and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mrs **Hannah** Nyamekye. The statements stressed the importance of bushmeat and its characteristics as an economic, social and ecological reality. It was recognised as a source of food, medicine, products for handicraft and cultural medium. It contributes to overall food production and eventually food security, and provides income for populations engaged in the exploitation of the resource.

2. Mr. Boachie-Dapaah recalled the objectives of the Conference of coming up with a set of appropriate recommendations and concrete action plans. He stressed the need to find long term sustainable solutions to the issues and problems relating to the resource base, the habitat of wildlife and their sustainable management.
3. Prof. Yaa Ntiamoah Baidu presented the three-pronged frame (Forests, Fresh water and marine and coastal ecosystems) from which WWF is considering their work in general and their action in relation to bushmeat issues and problems. She reviewed a number of operations through which WWF is supporting countries in West Africa and partnerships they are developing. She traced the origin of the Conference from the increased interest given to the subject these last years and more specifically the recommendations of the African Forestry Commission Working Party on the Management of Wildlife and Protected areas at its 15th session held in Accra, Ghana in February 2004.
4. Mr. Pape D. Koné dwelled on the important role of bushmeat in contributing to food and in particular protein intake in countries of the West African sub-region. He emphasised that it is also an economic asset, generating an export market that brings between 150 and 160 million USD. He raised a number of challenges facing sustainable bushmeat production including policy, law and regulation frameworks, safe utilization of the products and related health risks. He highlighted aspects relating to FAO support to the subject mostly based on the potential contribution of bushmeat to food security and the sustainable management of the resource base.
5. The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture of Ghana highlighted the linkages between food production and bushmeat production. She stressed

the need for a more productive agriculture and in particular the livestock performance to ease pressure from use of bushmeat as major source of protein. She pointed out the negative effects of some practices of bushmeat production on the overall management of forest resources (e.g. forest fires, poisoning of animals, etc). Consequently, she suggested positive alternative ways including domestication and husbandry of wild species, supporting grasscutter as well as ostrich farming.

6. Minister Dominic Fobih in his opening remarks welcomed the cooperation and partnership that has developed with regard to bushmeat issues and in particular, the holding of this conference. He reviewed the factors affecting bushmeat production and trade, including declining forests and loss of habitat, need and taste for bushmeat and increasing demand, economic importance, and dramatic development of the market up to the international level. He presented a number of elements and pathways to consider for developing policy and strategy, legislation, regulation and improving law enforcement.
7. He indicated that bushmeat in many cases, constitutes the most accessible source of protein. It generates income and thus constitutes a strong social and economic factor. He therefore suggested that approaches should include smoothening off concentration on a limited number of bushmeat species, finding sustainable alternative solutions including greater domestic animal production, involving communities, setting up community resource management areas, which Ghana is encouraging. He expressed satisfaction with the action-oriented format and goals of the Conference and strongly challenged participants to come up with the declared outputs, namely workable recommendations and plan of action. He committed himself to

consider with attention and facilitate follow-up to the outcome of the Conference.

8. The detailed speeches summarized above have been provided in the Annexes of the report.

3. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO VARIOUS ASPECTS OF BUSHMEAT

9. The Conference was further introduced to the themes of its agenda by three overview presentations, which explored many other aspects of bushmeat. The first of these presentations made by Dr P. J. Stephenson of WWF International, dealt with WWF's Perspectives on the bushmeat trade in Africa. It characterized the so-called crisis, which encompassed threat on some species, social, economic and cultural issues, an important market and pressure on the resources. It also reviewed approaches and strategic elements towards long term, innovative and sustainable solutions. These would include i) the recognising the importance of bushmeat and the necessity to manage it and not ban it; ii) avoiding the killing of threatened species and securing overall sustainability of practices; iii) developing policy, legislation, education and capacity building; iv) developing partnerships among interested agencies (Traffic, CITES, FAO, WB, the private sector and NGOs).
10. A second communication entitled "The Bushmeat Crisis: In search of Action," was introduced by Douglas Williamson, wildlife and protected areas officer of FAO, covered a number of aspects characterizing and shedding more light on other relevant bushmeat issues. It emphasised the vast areas involved, the number of people interested, the strong economic contribution and the

definitely the unsustainable present harvesting models. It presented options for action including, i) rallying and building political support; ii) enlarging alliances around resource management and use with reference to logging companies; iii) building institutional frameworks; iv) defining policy, legislation and capacity.

11. A third communication introduced later by Dr Glyn Davies of London Zoological Society covered bushmeat trade options for West and Central Africa. He emphasised the need to i) label all forms of bushmeat to reflect the multi-species nature of the trade to ensure effective management; ii) recognise that wild animals involved in the are sometimes killed not only for food but as pest; iii) manage large species in the trade differently from small sized ones; and iv) consider the management of bushmeat exploitation driven by income

4. FOCUSED TOPICS

12. The Conference further proceeded with the presentation and discussion of focused themes including bushmeat and food security, bushmeat trade, socio-cultural aspects, education and awareness, the protection of threatened species. Issues of interest in each of the thematic areas were elaborated to elicit findings that would support recommendations for action and provide elements for a plan of action.

4.1 Bushmeat and Food Security

13. The theme was introduced by Ms. Lonneke Bakker wildlife and protected areas officer, FAO Regional Office for Africa, Accra. The essential focus of the presentation and the subsequent discussions addressed major considerations

and questions on how far bushmeat production, utilization and trade could contribute to food security, which is the adequate and sustained supply of food in appropriate quantity and quality. For bushmeat to become a sustainable, healthy and pleasant, and readily available as food, the ultimate goal would be to secure sustained availability of the resource, to apply appropriate exploitation techniques and utilisation technologies.

14. If bushmeat is to be a sustainable source for food security, the following elements should be considered and acted upon:

- Managing and conserving the resource base (maintaining the habitat; managing the resource; developing codes of conduct for multiple users, etc);
- Maintaining the resource in a balanced system of rural development, with limited predation;
- Devising and implementing appropriate exploitation models within the traditional and/or modern systems of resource management;
- Tackling inappropriate hunting and trapping processes;
- Developing alternatives to the primary use of natural resource through, rearing of wild species, ranching, advanced community-based resource management and domestication;
- Improvement of crop, livestock and fisheries production and access to their products.

15. Bushmeat as a healthy food also poses big challenges throughout the process including hunting, processing, transport and storage of the products. The Conference identified many types of action that would ensure sustainable management as follows:

- Identifying and monitoring health problems including interface wild/domesticated, human/animal health;
- Defining and applying standards;
- Assessing practices and improving hygiene throughout the production cycle;
- Informing, advising and training operators in this cycle.

16. Trade aspects: increasing accessibility, enlarging the scope as new markets develop:

- Reviewing local trading practices and improving them;
- Assessing and organizing local and national markets;
- Organising sub-regional and international trade;
- Deriving income, fighting poverty;
- Establishing enabling policies, legal and institutional environment taking account of the regional and sub regional setting;
- Assessing capacity and capabilities; training for efficiency.

4.2 Bushmeat Trade

17. A presentation was made under the topic, “Bushmeat Trade from West Africa” by Julius Mbotiji. This well documented paper reviewed the major steps through which bushmeat meant for sale in the North American markets is handled. Transportation, handling and health issues, illegal practices for the introduction of the products were examined. The economic and financial aspects, consumer populations were also thoroughly reviewed. Discussions at plenary and in working groups stressed the need to consider trade at local, national and international levels; the mostly informal and often illegal nature of the trade circuits at the moment; the importance of distinguishing various types and interest of bushmeat as its market goes beyond its traditional

boundaries; the legal and regulatory background and most importantly the health and safety issues. The following finally emerged from the discussions:

18. Issues around a sustainable, legal supply of local, national and eventually international markets were reviewed and special reference was made to the issues below, including:

- Studying the conditions of the legal access to resources and hunting permits and related needs to adapt/upgrade legislation and regulations;
- Monitoring and tracking of products along the trade lines to identify and correct malpractices;
- The importance of adequate statistics on the business and the need to find realistic solutions to the continued production of reliable information and data;
- Identifying target species for more sustained supply;
- Consideration of medium and long-term alternatives to primary killing such as domestication, rearing or game ranching as alternatives.

19. Health, Safety and Quality of the products are fundamental elements with due consideration to:

- Health risks arising at local levels through sharing the broad ecosystem with target animals and through primary processing and use of products;
- Feasibility of veterinary control at all levels;
- Support to conservation of the produce: the refrigeration nexus;
- Appropriate conditions for export and coping with trade barriers;
- Definition and classification issues.

20. Growing market of bushmeat and other products from wildlife resources raise a number of concerns. They include, i) understanding markets and market channels; ii) Free, informal versus regulated sector; and iii) the need to consider definition and/or classification questions to face new challenges and needs.

21. Capturing bushmeat related social and economic opportunities

- Valuing the employment potential of bushmeat;
- Considering and ensuring equity and distribution of benefits along the lines of bushmeat trade;
- Organizing key players to the extent possible.

4.3 Socio-cultural aspects in bushmeat production and trade

22. The subject was introduced by Conservation International-Ghana through a presentation on the use, significance and role of totems in social life and various value representations in Ghana and more generally in West Africa. Totems are understood here as the symbolic representation and partnership with animals whose values are shared by ethnic groups or individuals. The concerned groups generally have absolute taboo on any slaughtering or depredation of the selected animal species. This potent value can be used to further expand protection of the species or its habitat. From this apt illustration plenary and working groups identified the following issues and recommendations for action:

23. Using socio-cultural values for conservation: A number of cultural values and practices make taboo of any destructive act regarding species or landmarks. These values can be used to enhance awareness and readiness for conservation of natural resources. The values related to totems are among

those that are used for wildlife conservation. The following should then be considered:

- Developing further knowledge of totems through inventories and studies of local practices;
- Strengthening local and traditional authorities and devolution of some prerogatives to them to buttress their ability for better husbandry of traditional values;
- Flexible use of totems and related values for conservation causes: education, awareness-raising; symbols and fund raising, etc.

24. Recognising the modification and/or erosion of values and the need to revisit and regenerate them to the extent possible: Participants discussed the evolution of values and related distortions and the fact that all traditional values and practices are not bearers of good husbandry of natural resources. Activities should aim at keeping a watch on and monitoring situations in critical areas including:

- Identification of values and practices which undermine conservation and discourage their use;
- Assessing evolution/erosion and pollution of values through immigration and intake of new populations;
- Analysing the weakening processes of traditional authorities and their consequences on local resources management.

4.4 Education and Awareness-Raising

25. The theme was introduced by the Ghana Wildlife Society. It highlighted the need for an aggressive education programme. Discussions of the theme narrowed down on the observations and recommendations below:

26. General education and awareness-raising are essential pillars in the conservation and development of wildlife resources. Target audience, key messages and the media used should be clearly defined. In the case of bushmeat, participants agreed that targets are the major stakeholders including hunters and traders, restaurant owners, the youth, consumers, officers of National Parks, Forestry and Customs services, politicians and policy makers. Messages should address preoccupations; need to understand major issues, overall general education and culture about wildlife.
27. In principle all media are appropriate to serve education and awareness-raising on the issues of bushmeat. However those addressing the primary tier of the audience in rural areas should take into account affordable technologies and accessibility. Innovative approaches, tools and materials need to be devised and used so as to be able to reach all players in remote areas.
28. Education programmes should incorporate traditional values and practices conducive to better conservation of resources and in particular the wildlife and plant resources. Indeed the traditional, cultural and religious systems may have much to offer in reaching populations in rural and remote areas, in enriching messages targeting all the sections of the society.
29. In education and awareness-raising, it may be useful and efficient to mount and participate in campaigns and alliances in which sound and solid knowledge of the issues should be incorporated, sometimes to avoid generous and emotional assertions which do not provide right, realistic and effective solutions. This would help send the true and right messages on the bushmeat problems and opportunities within producer countries and conservation circles all over the world.

4.5 Identification and Elimination of Threatened Species from Bushmeat Hunting and Trade

30. Professor Chris Gordon of the University of Ghana, Legon, introduced the theme. He reviewed issues regarding threatened and endangered species and presented a number of specific cases. He gave very practical approaches to the assessment of situations and policies, strategies of action, which should be well targeted to address well-identified problems. He highlighted the need for a clear identification of objectives and well defined pathways to solutions envisaged.

31. The Conference abundantly discussed this important chapter and arrived at a number of observations and recommendations:

32. The knowledge of the Biology and systematics of species is essential to identify and monitor the level of threat affecting individual species. This knowledge is not adequate in many cases and the Conference has made a set of recommendations aiming at improving it in particular on what relates to species and their status and the establishment of continued systems of control and monitoring. Specifically the following are recommended:

- Identification and monitoring of wildlife populations and characterisation of the conservation status of species;
- Establishment and periodical review of data base and national lists of threatened and endangered species;
- Improvement of the knowledge and expertise of the staff of agencies involved on species, their status and their products;
- Involving and mobilizing research institutions and the world of learning in research programmes addressing above needs;

- Appropriate management of protected areas and other wildlife resources including management plans implemented with effective practices.

33. The participants discussed the important role of updated legislation and regulation as well as a comprehensive policy for bushmeat sector. The lack of overall policy in the sector perpetrates low interest and low level of information on wildlife species. Appropriate and in some cases urgent activities should address the need for:

- Reviewing policy aspects of hunting and wildlife conservation and management, taking care of the need to protect threatened and endangered species;
- Updating legislation and regulation to take into account the growing exploitation of bush meat, the necessary protective measures and considering dispositions taken to implement CITES;
- Making specific legal and regulatory provisions which incorporate changes in status of species.

34. The Conference also discussed issues relating to overall documentation, information, sensitisation and awareness-raising. It noted the various needs linked to them and which managers and users should take into account. It stressed the need to take action on the following:

- Training of officers of agencies involved so as to increase capacity in the recognition of endangered or threatened species and products derived from them;
- Capacity building and sensitisation on laws and regulations for relevant staff, through focused training on and familiarization with, the specific laws and regulations protecting species and of the dispositions of CITES;

- Appropriate dissemination of the information available to appropriate target populations in particular local communities and consumers at national level.

5. CLOSING SESSION

5.1 Adoption of Action Plan

35. At its final session the Conference reviewed and discussed its major conclusions and recommendations. It heard the presentation of a draft Action Plan prepared by the conference secretariat on the basis of the work of the Conference and in particular drawing from the reports of the various working groups, which discussed each theme further. The Action Plan incorporated major recommendations for action. Participants largely discussed the draft and adopted it in principle. The secretariat incorporated the additions and suggestions provided in these discussions in a final draft Action Plan attached to this report.

5.2 The Way Forward and Implementation of Actions

36. The Conference took a number of measures to finalise and follow up on its work, including the following:

- Finalisation of the draft Action Plan by end March, and circulated for eventual last comments;
- Setting up of a steering Group to follow-up on the recommendations and the implementation of the action plan. This would include the Ghanaian host Organisations, Ghana Wildlife Society, Conservation International-Ghana, the Ghana Forestry Commission, FAO and WWF;

- Establishment of an electronic Newsletter to disseminate information on follow-up and on events and activities of interest to the Group;
- The participants to the Conference decided to form a network that would be opened to other persons to join. This network will exchange information through the above electronic newsletter and any other opportunities. It will strive to follow up on their recommendations and the implementation of the Action Plan;
- Adopting the final version of the Action plan for a 2005-2010 timeframe, with a mid term evaluation in 2010.
- Opportunity of relevant meetings will be taken including the two-yearly sessions of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission Working Party on the Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas in 2006, 2008 and the following biennium.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

37. The Conference recognised that despite the great number of workshops and meetings that have previously discussed the issue of bush meat, it was very useful to hold this Conference. It reviewed issues discussed earlier but added a number of other considerations in an action-oriented spirit. It noted the strong support at the policy level through the strong presence of the Ghanaian Government at the opening session and their promise to assist in the implementation of the outcome of the Conference.

38. The presence of many West African countries, African and Non-African NGOs and of important regional and sub-regional Organisations, in particular the UEMOA and the Organization for Conservation of African Wildlife gave a flavour of appropriation of the bushmeat crisis within African institutions. This will probably lead to a stronger interest and political will, to

effectively move into action and open an era of concrete commitment to effectively tackle the now well documented bushmeat crisis in West Africa.

39. A number of Conference participants took the floor to thank the conveners and call for their continued support. There were specific calls to Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, Conservation International-Ghana, FAO and WWF to continue their support and promote the implementation of recommendations featured in the regional action plan. The Conference also recommended making good use of the readiness of the Ghanaian Government through the ministry of the Lands Forestry and Mines to support the Action Plan that would arise from its discussions.
40. The representatives of the sponsoring Organisations - FAO and WWF - expressed satisfaction with the organisation of the Conference and indicated their readiness to continue and broaden the partnership. They expected that an effective team work, including efforts by interested countries to provide support and continuity in addressing the bushmeat crisis, could yield positive results as far as possible. OCAW and UEMOA reiterated their interest and commitment to continue their support in all elements within their capacity, in particular for UEMOA, the trade and regulation related issues. The Conference requested the conveners and sponsors to rally further support from other players including UN Organizations (UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, the CITES and CBD Secretariats, etc) and major NGOs (IUCN, Conseil International de la Chasse...) in the follow-up to this Conference and in particular the implementation of the Action Plan to tackle the Bushmeat Crisis in West Africa.

ANNEX I

WEST AFRICAN BUSHMEAT CONFERENCE - WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FORESTRY COMMISSION, MR. A. S. K. BOACHIE-DAPAAH, ERATA HOTEL, FEBRUARY 22-23, 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers of State (MFLM, MOFA, MES),
Representatives of FAO, WWF, CI,
Participants from West African sub-region,
Personnel from the media,
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my singular honour to welcome all participants to this important West African Bushmeat Conference.

Mr. Chairman, indigenous people in West and Central Africa have used wild animals as part of their food items from time immemorial. Both rural and urban societies have come to accept bushmeat as a legitimate food item without questioning its source, species and sometimes the health aspects related to production and handling.

The market for bushmeat is very vibrant and ready to accept any amount that is produced. In countries like Ghana where other forms of meat are not readily available to rural dwellers, bushmeat may be the only animal protein source that is handy and affordable. Furthermore, with the migration of our friends and relatives to the developed countries in search of greener pastures, their taste for bushmeat has been carried along thus fostering a possible international bushmeat market.

Mr. Chairman, this conference is to discuss and come out with strategies to address one of the most daunting challenges facing the Forestry commission and the conservation fraternity - "Bushmeat consumption and its impact on wildlife conservation". It is the expectation of the Forestry Commission that the conference deliberations would bring out appropriate recommendations and action plans to address some major challenges associated with bushmeat production, namely:

- a. unregulated harvesting of wild animals
- b. habitat destruction by hunters
- c. presence of endangered species in bushmeat production
- d. sustainability of bushmeat production itself
- e. understanding the full dynamics of the bushmeat trade
- f. un-coordinated multi-agency involvement in bushmeat trade (i.e. CEPS, Civil Aviation, Ghana Export Promotion Council, Police, DAs etc).

The Forestry Commission has limited number of staff on the ground, which hinders its ability to adequately regulate wild animal harvesting and the bushmeat trade. Effective collaboration with all stakeholders is, therefore, very essential. Any recommendations on how to achieve this would be most welcome.

Is the presence of endangered and fully protected species sometimes found in the bushmeat trade due to greed, ignorance or some other factors? The answer must be found to enable us tackle the issue effectively.

Mr. Chairman, the sustainability of bushmeat production itself is a matter of serious concern. From available records the resource base cannot satisfy the

current and future demands; a solution must therefore be found to increase production within the conservation measures that we put in place.

Mr. Chairman, on this note, I would like to warmly welcome all participants to this conference and wish you happy and fruitful deliberations. Please enjoy the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality.

Thank you and May God bless you all.

ANNEX II

WEST AFRICA BUSHMEAT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

(Accra, Ghana 22-24 February 2005)

Statement by the World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF

Prof. Yaa Ntiamoah-Baidu

(Director, WWF Africa and Madagascar Programme)

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Minister of Lands and Forestry, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues and Friends, it is a great pleasure for me to be able to join you here today and to participate in the deliberations on an issue that has been of concern to me personally for many years. On behalf of Dr. Claude Martin, Director General of WWF, the WWF Africa and Madagascar Programme, and on my personal behalf, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the institutions that have worked together to organize this workshop.

It is exactly one year ago, when the FAO organized the African Forestry and Wildlife meeting, hosted by the government of Ghana, here in Ghana. At this meeting, the delegates from the various wildlife and Forestry agencies in Africa outlined what they considered to be the key issues impacting on wildlife conservation in Africa, and the issue of unsustainable bushmeat exploitation came up as a most important issue that needed urgent focus. The delegates recognized the need for sub-regional co-operation and concerted actions at local and national levels, to address the dwindling wildlife resources in West Africa as a result of over-exploitation and habitat degradation. They also recognized the need for partnerships between governmental agencies, national and international NGOs, private businesses and local communities in order to tackle the bushmeat issue effectively, and called on international organizations for support. This week's workshop derives from the discussions a year ago. I am pleased to note the partnership and collaboration between the Ghana Forestry Commission (through Wildlife Department), FAO, WWF, the Ghana Wildlife Society and

Conservation International-Ghana, to bring delegates from so many West and Central African countries to take the bushmeat debate further, and come out with concrete proposals for follow-up action.

WWF's focuses its global conservation programme on three priority biomes: forest, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems and on two global issues: climate change and toxic chemicals, concentrating on a selection of globally important ecoregions, to promote large-scale conservation strategies. Species conservation is a key aspect to WWF's work that cuts across all the different biomes, with particular attention to selected flagship species and species of general conservation concern. In Africa, WWF invests some US\$35-40 million annually on conservation projects and programmes, ranging from site and species protection to promotions of sustainable use of natural resources through community based-natural resources management projects.

The survival of plant and animal species is at the heart of WWF's core business. However, WWF recognizes also the value and the importance of bushmeat in Africa. We appreciate that bushmeat is a valued source of animal protein, especially for people in rural communities, who may not have access to or cannot afford other forms of animal protein. In some cases, even where people have access to other forms of animal protein, bushmeat may be the preferred choice. Bushmeat may also constitute an essential ingredient, without which certain cultural and ceremonial events among many African communities cannot be complete. Bushmeat contributes significantly to household and national economies, accounting for a good part of household incomes in rural areas. In Ghana, at Atwemonom market in Kumasi, one finds fourth generation bushmeat traders and women who have supported the education of their children to university level through proceeds from bushmeat trade.

WWF is therefore not advocating for a ban on eating bushmeat. We are concerned about the current rate of bushmeat exploitation, which is clearly unsustainable. The populations of most species groups within the West African sub-region are very low, many species of monkeys are threatened with extinction, we are witnessing local extinctions of several species, and traditional norms that encouraged good practice in the harvesting of wildlife resources have either broken down completely or are totally ignored. If wild animal species exploited for bushmeat are all wiped out, it is the people who live in rural areas, who often are the most disadvantaged, that will suffer most from the impact of wildlife resource depletion. WWF therefore advocates sustainable management and harvesting of wildlife resources, and long term strategies that would ensure food security in rural Africa, and secure livelihoods of the many people who depend on these resources. Species that are vulnerable to exploitation must be conserved, species that are threatened must be recognized and their populations monitored, and alternative livelihood sources must be provided to reduce the pressure on wildlife resources.

We encourage this meeting to come out with plans for concrete field-based actions as well as policy, advocacy and public awareness programmes that can be implemented to address the bushmeat issue. On its part, WWF will support your efforts and assist you to mobilize national and sub-regional actions to ensure sustainable management of wildlife resource in this region.

We wish you a very productive workshop.

ANNEX III

WEST AFRICA BUSHMEAT CONFERENCE
(Accra, Ghana, 22-24 February 2005)
STATEMENT BY MR. PAPE DJIBY KONÉ, FAO REPRESENTATIVE IN
GHANA a.i.

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Prof. Dominic Fobih, Minister of Lands, Forestry and Mines

Chief Executive, Ghana Forestry Commission

Mrs. Yaa Ntiamoah Baidu, WWF Programme Director for West and Central Africa,

Distinguished guests,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a real pleasure for me to represent Mr. Oloche Anebi Edache, Assistant Director General and FAO Regional Representative for Africa, to the opening ceremony of this important conference, which is being organized in partnership with WWF International, Ghana Wildlife Society and the Ghana Office of Conservation International. We are profoundly grateful to our Partners for the excellent collaboration, which permitted this project to become a reality.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as we are no doubt aware, that in Africa, wild animals have always significantly contributed to the protein needs of the population, especially in rural areas where bushmeat is reported to be representing up to 75% of protein supply in most countries of the West Moist Africa. Communities in this region, as in many parts of Africa, have from time immemorial depended on locally available biological resources for food, medicine and materials for shelter.

Wildlife in West Africa and many parts of Central Africa is under pressure not only from rising demand for bushmeat by rural populations but also from the shrinking and degradation of the places that most wildlife can comfortably survive. West Africa lost 60% or more of its forest areas by the 1980, in turn precipitating tremendous declines of wildlife populations. The pressure on wildlife varies from country to country and from ecological zone to another.

Since the colonial period, in most Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, policies and legislations pertaining to wildlife were mostly oriented to conservation, especially with the creation of National Parks and Reserves and to Game hunting in specific areas. Only subsistence hunting was allowed to local communities. However, from the years 70-80s, bushmeat trade grew alongside with urbanization and worsening living conditions in rural areas.

Over the last decade, the demand for this commodity has in many countries exceeded the capacity of the wildlife resources to sustainably cope with the level of exploitation. This led Governments to adopt policy and regulatory frameworks guiding the utilization and trade of bushmeat. In some cases, the utilization and trade of bushmeat is officially prohibited or restricted; effectiveness of these measures is often hampered among others by lack of adequate information education, and responsibility of local people who are the primary users of and dependant on this resource.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately, bushmeat for purely local subsistence is very poorly documented so far. Thus, the role of wild meat in directly combating food insecurity is not in my opinion, sufficiently known. In West Africa, bushmeat trade according to FAO 2000 Publication, is an informal enterprise which caters for the livelihood of a substantial number of people. Transactions start with the hunter and involve middlemen and traders in various

markets. One of the major outlets for bushmeat are the restaurants and chop bars which are drinking and eating places located in various places usually near rural markets and/or trading centers.

The last few years, it has been reported that bushmeat trade also is increasingly becoming internationalised. The FAO study in 2000, estimated that in West Africa alone, foreign trade in bushmeat amounted to US\$150-160 million annually, excluding the export income revenue from wild animal trophy, which are accounted for in the Gross Domestic Product.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, in-depth analysis of bushmeat, mostly in West and Central Africa, cannot be complete without including public health and food safety aspects.

A major concern of public health and bushmeat consumption comes from two main reasons: i.e. consumption of bushmeat polluted with pesticides and other dangerous chemicals used in hunting, and contact with animal pathogens.

Regarding the latter, Ebola in Central Africa, Rift Valley Fever in West Africa, and Congo-Crimea Hemorrhagic Fever in East Africa attest to the risk. Research is beginning to indicate patterns of sero-prevalence and to confirm relationships between human and non-human primate strains of various viral diseases. These indications demand further study to uncover outbreak risks, mechanisms of resistance, or both, depending upon the economic and ecological changes in the human communities being considered.

I am delighted to hear that these issues are also in the agenda of this conference and I have no doubt that the eminent experts and resource persons around this table will give them due attention.

Ladies and Gentlemen, FAO has been involved in many activities designed to address what is commonly called “the bushmeat crisis”, especially in West and Central Africa. My organization has commissioned two studies on “Bushmeat and Food Security” and “Bushmeat Consumption and Trade in West Africa”, respectively released in 1997 and 2000. FAO also assisted in collaboration with other Partners, in Bushmeat surveys in a few countries in West Africa, and supported workshops and expert consultations in Central Africa.

The African Working Party on the Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, included bushmeat in its agenda during both its 14th and 15th sessions in 2002 and 2004 respectively, and the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held in Johannesburg in March 2004, discussed a paper on: “The bushmeat crisis in Africa, reconciling food security and biodiversity conservation”.

This clearly is an indication of the interest and commitment of our Organisation to address the various facets of the bushmeat issue, which all fall within its international mandate. In this respect, we have established strong partnership with Sub-Regional and Regional Institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations and Private Organisations interested in the bushmeat issue. This workshop is one among the different collaborative initiatives supported by FAO.

Ladies and Gentlemen, countries in West and Central Africa have various forms of legislation and policies dealing with the hunting and marketing of bushmeat. It is important to point out that although some national policies do recognize that wildlife populations are being seriously depleted (for example policies in Ghana and Guinea), no legislation in West Africa addresses specifically the bushmeat problem per se.

During the Ministerial Conference on “African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG)” held in Yaounde, Cameroon in November 2003, African ministers issued a declaration which called for development of mechanisms to finance support for forest law enforcement and governance initiatives in order to address among others the issue of sustainable management of wildlife. I take the opportunity to encourage this conference to come up with concrete and implementable recommendations to West African Governments in this regard.

It should be also noted that the demand for bushmeat, both at national and international levels, offers business opportunities to exploit major wildlife species through domestication and ranching. This would contribute in combating poverty and improving access to food products while preserving biological diversity. Next-door experiences in Southern and East-Africa can be advantageously borrowed and adapted to the context of West Africa in this regard. Even here in West Africa, the Grasscutter and the Guinea fowl, have been successfully domesticated and commercialised. In Ghana, Ostrich Farms have generated a number of products that can be found in supermarkets.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude this address by thanking the Government of the Republic of Ghana, the World Wide Fund for Nature International and the Ghana Office of Conservation International, without whose cooperation and support this conference would not have been possible. I also thank Ghana Wildlife Society for the painstaking arrangement that has been made for a comfortable and rewarding conference.

I wish you a fruitful meeting and thank all for your audience.

ANNEX IV

ADDRESS BY HON. MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE AT THE WEST AFRICAN BUSHMEAT CONFERENCE ON 22ND FEBRUARY, 2005

Prof. Owusu Bennoah, Dir. General of CSIR,

Chairman of this workshop,

Prof. Fobih – Minister of Lands, Forestry and Mines,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to be asked to address such an important meeting of experts and other stakeholders assembled here to discuss the impact of bushmeat issues across our entire sub-region.

Mr. Chairman, one of the important challenges facing the countries in our sub-region is how to feed our people and alleviate rural poverty. I believe that appropriate management and sustainable harvesting of some of our wildlife resources have a major role to play in our food security.

Even though the importance of animal protein in human nutrition is well acknowledged, the livestock industry in Ghana has received less attention than required. The contribution of the livestock sub-sector to food security by supplying part of the daily calories and the protein intake essential for nutritional adequacy has not been impressive.

The declining consumption of animal products, as indicated by the low caloric and protein intake, suggests that the supply of animal products from both the local and imported sources have not kept pace with increasing demand. This is partly due to population growth and increased urbanisation. It is within this context that this conference is of much importance to the ministry of Agriculture and the nation at large. It should therefore receive the desired attention to

ensure adequate contribution of wildlife to the nation's food security under a more sustainable and environmentally friendly condition than what pertains at the moment.

Mr. Chairman, the growth of the domestic ruminant livestock industry in Ghana has been impeded by several constraints, including lack of breeding stock, inadequate stock water and poor marketing systems. Notwithstanding this, recent developments in the livestock industry show that, the country has the potential to increase the take-off of livestock and produce good quality meat and milk to satisfy a greater part of the nation's animal protein requirements.

I must however admit that the country is far from meeting her demand for animal protein from local sources within the next few years. We therefore have no option but to continue to utilize substantial part of scarce foreign exchange to import large volumes of livestock, meat and dairy products annually to supplement local production.

I wish to acknowledge the complimentary effect of wildlife to food security in the country. It is a well known fact that bushmeat has over the years contributed significantly to the total animal protein intake of Ghanaians and in particular, those in the rural areas. Agriculture has however, experienced some negative effects of harvesting, e.g. wildlife. Occasional damage to economic trees has been attributed to some large animals, while rodents are known to have caused tremendous damage to various crops. Birds in their attempts to satisfy their nutritional requirements do cause considerable loss to rice harvests.

We should however, not underestimate the numerous beneficial effects of wildlife to agriculture as demonstrated by the role of flying insects and bats in

pollination. We must therefore find appropriate ways of optimising the benefits of the symbolic effects of agriculture and wildlife in enhancing food security.

Mr. Chairman, although bush fires sometimes occur as a result of uncontrolled burning of bush after harvest for the purpose of removing rank vegetation, most of the bush fires could be attributed to hunting for wildlife. Damage done by such fires to the natural pastures, which provide sustenance to ruminant livestock and to a larger number of our wildlife, is very significant. This makes bush fire a major contributing factor to decline in the condition of grazing land in the dry seasons as well as a great constraint to the development of our domestic livestock. It also causes high mortalities to wildlife and it is common to see a large number of burnt wildlife, including snails, after occurrence of bush fires.

Currently, most of the grasscutter meat found on the market comes from activities of groups of people and individuals who hunt down these animals by either setting fires to bushes, especially during the dry season, or using traps and even chemical poisons to trap these animals. None of these methods is commendable and should be totally discouraged due to their harmful effects on the environment and on consumers.

One may therefore ask how we can continue to enjoy our cherished grasscutter meat. In the light of the above circumstances, we have to decide between two options - to change our eating habits (which we cannot) or to develop a sustainable means of producing the meat we enjoy eating most. The latter option which is more progressive, sustainable and environmentally friendly will guarantee year-round supply of the meat that Ghanaians so much relish.

To this end, Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, in collaboration with the Animal Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and

Industrial Research and some NGOs, has commenced grasscutter domestication and breeding programme, as well as extension services to get as many people as possible to be interested to take up grasscutter production. The recent past has also witnessed the emergence of ostrich farming with populations growing steadily in the last five years.

As a Ministry, we intend to upscale the grasscutter domestication, not only to address the bushmeat problem, but also as an income-generating activity. Results from our trials have been encouraging and there is the need therefore to continue with the programme.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, I hope the outcome of this conference will help create the necessary conditions for the implementation of efficient and sustainable programmes for managing and harvesting of wildlife in the West African sub-region to the benefit of our food security.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to your recommendations for consideration by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture for the improvement and sustainability of wildlife.

Thank you.

ANNEX V

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF LANDS, FORESTRY AND MINES, PROF. DOMINI FOBIH AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE WEST AFRICAN BUSHMEAT TRADE CONFERENCE HELD AT ERATA HOTEL, ACCRA, GHANA, ON TUESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY, 2005

Hon. Chairperson and Colleague Minister of State,
Representatives of FAO, WWF, CI-Ghana,
Distinguished Delegates,
The Ag. Executive Director of Ghana Wildlife Society,
Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission,
Heads of Forestry and Wildlife Institutions in Ghana,
Niimeɪ, Naameɪ, Nananom,
Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel greatly honoured by the invitation to attend the Opening Ceremony of the West African Bushmeat Conference which is being hosted by Ghana presumably for the first time and to deliver the Keynote Address to signify commencement of business.

On behalf of H. E. the President of the Republic and the people of Ghana, I wish to extend a warm welcome to you to Ghana and to this important Conference, which falls within the ambit of Forestry and Wildlife Institutions in the Sub-Region.

I am happy to express my profound gratitude to organisers of this Conference namely, WWF - International, FAO, CI-Ghana and the Ghana Wildlife Society for this noble initiative and for selecting Ghana as the venue for the conference.

Madam Chairperson, you as stakeholders will agree with me that all over the world today and in particular, Africa, where poverty is high, forest and wildlife resources are declining at a rather faster rate than they are being replenished or regenerated. This situation could pose a serious threat to the economic, social and biological wealth of many nations especially those of us in the developing countries, whose livelihoods are most dependent on the forest and wildlife resources.

I understand that the main focus of this Conference will be the development of an Action Plan, establishment of a Task force to implement this action plan across the sub-Region to address what has been termed the Bushmeat Crisis.

The Conference will in other words, kickstart a process aimed at:

- ❑ Effective implementation of wildlife conservation strategies;
- ❑ Enhancing management of protected areas;
- ❑ Significant reduction of illegal hunting, and
- ❑ Sustainable management of harvesting of wild animals.

I consider the conference objectives to be very critical for the socio-economic development of our respective countries and it is in this light that I deem the conference as a timely intervention and a very important initiative for addressing the growing bushmeat crisis in Africa and the sub-region.

Madam Chairperson, wild animals provide a significant proportion of the protein consumed by the people in most African countries. However, the poorly managed and largely uncontrolled harvesting of wild animals threaten the

sustainability of this valuable natural resource. This situation is likely to deprive millions of people, particularly the rural poor of vital source of animal protein. It will also end up depriving those who are involved in bushmeat trade of their livelihoods and in the long term, it will cause the collapse of habitats, particularly forest ecosystems.

In Ghana, bushmeat harvesting, processing and trade provide household income for a significant number of families and it is extremely important for both local and national economies.

The family income and livelihood of a wide range of people including hunters, market women, chop bar (Ghana's traditional restaurant) operators as well as a whole range of helpers depend on the sustainability of bushmeat production.

Recent studies carried out by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission indicate that the annual volume of bushmeat harvested by hunters in Ghana is estimated at 225,000 tons worth about US\$350million.

The trade involves over 300,000 people in the rural areas and these include about 270,000 self-employed "professional" hunters (some of whom have formed associations) who supply bushmeat through a network of traders and chop bar owners.

Madam Chairperson, the records of Wildlife Division also indicate that trade in wildlife has moved beyond the local, urban and regional market into the international area. This has resulted in a considerable increase in the off-take of the resource in its various forms. The situation makes monitoring and regulation of trade imperative in the interest of wildlife conservation, livelihood security and the integrity of the environment.

A major challenge for us as resource managers is to introduce a more formal structure for bushmeat trading, through the establishment of recognised hunters and traders associations that are able to regulate their own members and ensure more sustainable use to protect the resource base.

Madam Chairperson, the management and conservation of wildlife resources in Ghana are the responsibility of the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission. There are several legislation and regulations that govern the utilisation of these wildlife resources.

The existing legislation categorises wildlife animals according to their conservation status, thus providing legal protection to endangered species throughout the country. Protected Areas (PAs) serve as the primary facility for the protection of rare and endangered species of fauna in Ghana and hunting is normally not allowed in these areas.

Outside the Protected Areas, wildlife resources are subject to various legislative provisions, which are intended to ensure sustainable use. Hunters are required by law to obtain license to hunt and may only do so during a designated hunting season. They are also to respect the closed season (1st August - December) every year. The closed season is usually preceded by educational and sensitisation programmes usually in the form of radio - TV discussions, press statements, advertisements and holding of durbars at endemic bushmeat harvesting areas. Hon. Members of Parliament, the Security Services and the District Assemblies play significant roles in the abatement of the bushmeat trade.

In addition to these legislation, Ghana is a party to all the international biodiversity-related conventions, namely the

- ❑ Convention on Biological Diversity;
- ❑ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna;
- ❑ Ramsar Convention, and
- ❑ Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

Madam Chairperson, in order to promote community participation in the conservation of wildlife resource, the Ministry of Lands, Forestry and Mines, through the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission has introduced a new approach known as the Community Resource Management Concept. This concept seeks to transfer ownership and management responsibility back to rural communities, which is based on the establishment of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMA).

The aim is to encourage farmers to integrate wildlife management into farming and land management systems and have responsible ownership and authority for wildlife that may be on their land. The CREMA concept is currently being piloted in communities around two protected Areas in South Western Ghana, but the intention is to replicate it wherever feasible.

Madam Chairperson, I am more than convinced that the composition of participants which include Public Officials, Local or Community Representatives, Traditional Rulers, Environmentalists, Bushmeat Traders will enhance debate on critical issues and cross fertilization of ideas on how to effectively and efficiently address the numerous challenges of the wildlife sector in Africa and the Sub-Region. I am also hopeful that lessons drawn from experiences in sustainable resource management will be shared.

We all owe it a collective responsibility to promote sustainable bushmeat trade in the sub-region to enhance the socio-economic status and livelihoods of our rural people.

I wish to assure the organisers that my ministry will co-operate fully with them, NGOs and all other key stakeholders to bring some sanity into the bushmeat trade/crisis. We shall also implement credible action plans to protect the resource, taking into account, the health needs of our people as well as the sources of livelihood.

Madam Chairperson, sub-regional co-operation has often suffered on account of inaction and lack of leadership. It is my ardent hope that this initiative will not suffer the fate of their co-operation or reform activities. I look forward to receiving your Communiqué or report for appropriate action.

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the pleasure is now mine to formally declare the West African Bushmeat Conference opened.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and invite you to have a taste of the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality whilst you are in this country.

I also wish you safe journey back to your various destinations.

I thank you for your patience and attention and May God bless you all.

ANNEX VI

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