

FOREWORD BY JOELISOA RATSIRARSON

A warm Welcome to the MCD-Journal

Madagascar is considered as one of world's highest priority in biodiversity conservation. This is linked not only with the high degree of diversity and endemism but also the ongoing threats of the natural communities. However, efforts have been underway at different levels in Madagascar with the new vision *Madagascar Naturally* and the proposed five year plan *Madagascar Action Plan (MAP)*, to protect and valorise the unique and rich biological diversity, in collaboration with all stakeholders, including the International communities.

The new Protected Areas System of Madagascar represent an important benchmark in an overall plan for conservation and sustainable development, first unveiled by Excellency President Marc Ravalomanana at the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa in 2003. The President committed to increase the total size of protected areas to 10% of the country's territory, from 1.7 million hectares to 6 million hectares, in a five-year period to ensure the conservation of these unique biodiversity. One of the key aims of the new Protected Areas System of Madagascar is to strengthen the integration of Conservation and Development for sustainable management of resources. In addition, the involvement and empowerment of stakeholders, including local communities, traditional leaders, private sectors, government or non government organizations, play an important role in this new system of protected areas. The Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, has targeted about one million hectares of protected areas to be classified each year, to reach this objective of six millions hectares over five years. The first one million hectares of this system of protected areas has been classified in 2005, and the classification of the next one million hectares for 2006 is going to the right direction. In addition to the declaration of the President of Madagascar in Durban, recently during the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York in September 2005, the President of Madagascar has also announced to allocate 8% of the cancelled external debt of Madagascar, to support biodiversity conservation and environmental management, for sustainable financing of all efforts in Madagascar

Conserving the natural communities is critical not only to biodiversity, but also to the people who rely on the resources for their livelihoods. Conservation does not mean full protection, and exclude human being. We all need to understand that conservation includes sustainable management, protection and preservation. The importance of zoning would play an important role in this undertaking. One would need to consider a zoned area that could be harvested with control, another one for ecotourism, another zone for protection and so on. To live in a safe and healthy environment does not only mean protecting species in their natural habitat, but also enhancing the life quality of each citizen. Therefore it is very important that we all work together to achieve this goal and that conservation efforts go hand in hand with development.

I welcome this new journal MADAGASCAR CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT as it deals largely and exclusively with Conservation and/or Development in Madagascar. Biodiversity Conservation would not go alone without Development and vice versa. I encourage Malagasy researchers, students, decision makers to contribute to this journal as this new journal aims to provide a forum for exchange of information and experiences, about all aspects of conservation and development work in Madagascar. It will also play an important role as an early warning for interested people to threats to nature and culture as they arise. Therefore, this new journal arrives at the right time, as it will provide a kit for both, conservation and development practitioners in Madagascar. I wish a long life to the MADAGASCAR CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT new journal, and warm congratulations to its Editorial Board. Sincerely Yours,

Joelisoa Ratsirarson, Ph.D.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, Madagascar

FOREWORD BY JANE GOODALL

Sharing the information with locals

It is rare for a journal to provide information not only about research and conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitats, but also about human development. The editors are to be congratulated, since my own experience in Africa makes it clear that long-term conservation can never be successful unless local people are taken into consideration. It is essential to raise the standard of living and education of the very poor, whilst ensuring that any development that results is environmentally sustainable. This journal thus provides a unique forum for the exchange of ideas and sharing of information between research, conservation and humanitarian organizations. There is no shortage of NGO's in Madagascar, but many are working in isolation, unaware of others with similar concerns and projects: yet my experience suggests that when such organizations agree to cooperate, their effectiveness often increases dramatically. Madagascar, despite the damage inflicted on its island environment, is still stunningly beautiful with a rich diversity of flora and fauna. But unless everyone works together to save what is left and restore some crucially important habitats, whilst gaining the goodwill of the local people, many species will become extinct during this century. Thus I hope that, over the years, this journal will grow, both in scope and in its ability to reach ever more interest groups.

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