



# Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and their Habitats of the Convention on Migratory Species

Distribution: General

UNEP/GA/MOP4/Doc.3

20 November 2023

Original: English

FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES  
Paris, France, 11-15 December 2023  
Agenda Item 28

## REPORT OF THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT (2019-2023)

*(Prepared by the Interim Secretariat)*

### Introduction

1. The present note is submitted by the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), which serves as the Interim Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats (Gorilla Agreement) for consideration at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP4). It provides information on the secretariat services provided by the Interim Secretariat since MOP3 held in Entebbe, Uganda in June 2019.
2. At MOP3, Parties to the Agreement adopted [Resolution 3.5 Budget and Programme of Work \(2019-2021\) of the Gorilla Agreement](#). This document reports on the budget and programme of work as well as on the implementation of the Resolutions adopted at MOP3.

### Progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work

#### **Conservation Projects**

##### *Develop project concepts and raise funding*

3. A contribution from the Government of Monaco is still available for project activity. A meeting was held on 20 November 2020 with the Secretariat of GRASP and members of the IUCN Section on Great Apes to identify potential projects and funding sources that would benefit Gorilla conservation and support Parties in implementing the Gorilla Agreement.

##### *Implement small-scale projects for Gorilla conservation*

4. In October 2021, the Interim Secretariat published the report "*Legal Assessment of the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species and the Gorilla Agreement in Cameroon and Nigeria*". The assessment was made possible through the funding from the Government of Germany. It covers two CMS-listed species, the Cross River Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) and the Nigerian-Cameroon Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*). The study analysed more than 60 national laws and regulations of Cameroon and Nigeria to verify the implementation level of selected norms contained in the Convention text and the Gorilla Agreement.

## Organization of Meetings

### *Prepare and hold fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP4) of the Gorilla Agreement*

5. Through Resolution [UNEP/GA/MOP3/Resolution.3.4](#) (Paragraph 4), the Parties at MOP3 instructed the Interim Secretariat to cooperate with the GRASP Secretariat to organize the Fourth Meeting of the Parties (MOP4) in conjunction with the Third GRASP Council meeting, subject to the availability of financial resources. Due to the lack of financial and human resources and the global COVID-19 pandemic, both MOP4 and the Council had to be postponed. MOP4 will be held from 11 to 15 December 2023 in Paris, France jointly with the GRASP Council, organised by the Interim Secretariat together with UNEP and the United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), which are co-hosting the GRASP Secretariat.

### *Contribution to the organization of GRASP Scientific Commission meeting*

6. Also, through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 5), the GRASP Scientific Commission was requested, instead of the Technical Committee of the Gorilla Agreement, to provide scientific advice on the implementation of the Gorilla Agreement in accordance with Article VI, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Gorilla Agreement and continue its service unless otherwise decided. Although the GRASP Scientific Commission did not meet in this intersessional period, due to lack of financial resources, it provided advice to Range States and other stakeholders through contributing to a number of scientific publications and reports including:
  - a. United Nations Environment Programme and International Livestock Research Institute. *Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission*. Nairobi, Kenya. 2020
  - b. Gillespie TR, Leendertz FH. *COVID-19: protect great apes during human pandemics*. Nature. 2020
  - c. Meijaard, E., Ariffin, T., Unus, N., Dennis, R., Meijaard, E., Wich, S., Ancrenaz, M.. *Great apes and oil palm in a broader agricultural context*. A report by Borneo Futures and the IUCN Crops Task Force commissioned by the UNEP/GRASP Program. Brunei, 61 pp. 2021
  - d. Wright E, Eckardt W, Refisch J, Bitariho R, Grueter CC, Ganas-Swaray J, Stoinski TS and Robbins MM *Higher Maximum Temperature Increases the Frequency of Water Drinking in Mountain Gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*)*. Front. Conserv. Sci. 3:738820. 2022

## Communication and Outreach

### *Develop flyers and outreach material*

7. Due to the lack of financial and human resources during the intersessional period, no flyers, posters and publications were developed.

### *Maintain and update web-contents*

8. The Interim Secretariat continued to maintain and update the website of the Gorilla Agreement (<https://www.cms.int/gorilla/>).

## Partnership Development

*Develop partnerships with relevant organizations and ongoing initiatives*

9. The Interim Secretariat, together with the GRASP Secretariat, held a meeting on 21 September 2023 with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation to explore funding opportunities for Gorilla conservation and to support Parties in implementing the Gorilla Agreement.

## Secretariat Services

*Implement MOP3 resolutions*

10. The Interim Secretariat implemented the mandate it was given through MOP3 Resolutions as follows:

### [Resolution 3.1: Updating the Action Plans](#)

11. Through Resolution 3.1 (Paragraph 6), the Interim Secretariat was instructed to monitor the review process, revision and implementation of the Action Plans and keep Parties, Range States and other interested stakeholders informed. Through its contacts with GRASP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group, Section on Great Apes (IUCN SSC PSG SGA) the Interim Secretariat executed its mandate and provides the statuses of the three Action Plans adopted under Resolution 3.1 as follows:
  - a. *Regional Action Plans for the Conservation of Western Lowland Gorillas and Central Chimpanzees 2015-2025* — the Action Plan is still valid and under implementation.
  - b. *Revised Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cross River Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) 2014–2019* — the Action Plan expired in 2019 and its updating is delayed due to sensitivities in the regions of implementation. Meetings are planned by the IUCN SGA Action Planning Working Group in 2024 in Nigeria and Cameroon to initiate the Action Plan update process.
  - c. *Grauer's Gorillas and Chimpanzees in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Conservation Action Plan 2012-2022 as revised in 2015* — the Action Plan expired in 2022 and actions to revise and update it have been initiated by the Jane Goodall Institute.
  - d. Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) - no Action Plan has been developed in this reporting period, however the planning process is being initiated by the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) and the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) and a meeting on the matter was held in Rwanda in November 2023.
12. On 31 July 2023 and in accordance with Article IV(1)(c) of the Agreement, the Interim Secretariat requested Parties to submit reports on its implementation of the Agreement with particular reference to the conservation measures they have undertaken. Five Parties out of eight submitted their reports.
  - a. Angola reported on activities undertaken for the Western Lowland Gorilla in the Maiombe National Park that include capacity building of rangers and outreach to local communities; the use of camera traps to identify key Gorilla habitats within the

- National Park; and the reactivation of the Mayombe Forest transfrontier conservation initiative between Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Gabon.
- b. The Central African Republic reported on activities undertaken to implement the *Regional Action Plans for the Conservation of Western Lowland Gorillas and Central Chimpanzees 2015-2025* including conservation activities in the Sangha Trinational; national level capacity building and outreach activities; and an aerial survey to identify a potential corridor linking the Mbaéré-Bodingué and Dzanga-Ndoki National Parks.
  - c. The Republic of Congo reported in detail on activities undertaken to implement the *Regional Action Plans for the Conservation of Western Lowland Gorillas and Central Chimpanzees 2015-2025* including anti-poaching and conservation activities in the Nouabalé-Ndoki and Odzala-Kokoua National Parks, Lossi Sanctuary and Lésio-Louna Reserve; and community outreach.
  - d. Nigeria reported on activities undertaken to implement the *Revised Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cross River Gorilla (Gorilla gorilla diehli) 2014–2019* and beyond as the action plan has expired. Nigeria reported on activities undertaken in the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Mbe Mountains and Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park including regular patrols by rangers reducing levels of poaching and education and awareness raising on Gorilla conservation issues.
  - e. Rwanda reported on activities undertaken to strengthen its national legislation; the development of a plan of operations of the Volcanoes National Park; the recruitment of staff for the adequate protection of Gorillas in the Volcanoes National Park; and activities to protect Gorillas from human pathogens such as Ebola.
  - f. Uganda reported on activities for the Mountain Gorilla in the Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks that include increased monitoring, surveillance and protection of Gorillas; education and awareness raising; and the development of systems and mechanisms for the protection of human and Gorilla health.

### [Resolution 3.3: Institutional Arrangements for the Gorilla Agreement](#)

13. Through Resolution 3.3 (Paragraphs 1 and 2), the Interim Secretariat was requested to remain the Interim Secretariat of the Agreement and to submit this request for secretariat services for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species at its 13th meeting (COP13). As requested, the Secretariat of CMS remained the Interim Secretariat of the Gorilla Agreement and as instructed, the Interim Secretariat requested the CMS COP13 for secretariat services. Support was confirmed as stated in paragraph 24 of [UNEP/CMS/Resolution 13.2 Financial and Administrative Matters](#).
14. Also, through Resolution 3.3 (Paragraph 3), the Interim Secretariat was requested to work with the GRASP Secretariat, the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) Secretariat and any other partners to undertake an analysis on workable options for hosting the Secretariat. As such, the Interim Secretariat has been in discussions with the GRASP Secretariat and the GVTC Secretariat on the possibility of their permanently hosting the Secretariat of the Gorilla Agreement with the following outcomes:
  - a. The Interim Secretariat has been in communication with the GRASP Secretariat since MOP3 regarding the possibility of their hosting the Secretariat of the Gorilla

Agreement, however no proposal was submitted.

- b. In September 2021 the GVTC Secretariat submitted to the Interim Secretariat a proposal including a cost estimate for their hosting of the Gorilla Agreement Secretariat. The proposal can be found in the Annex to this document.

[Resolution 3.4: Strengthening Cooperation between the Gorilla Agreement and the Great Apes Survival Partnership \(GRASP\)](#)

15. Through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 1), the Interim Secretariat was instructed, and the GRASP Secretariat was called upon to enhance their cooperation and coordination on common areas of work relevant to gorilla conservation. As such, the Interim Secretariat has been in close cooperation with the GRASP Secretariat on all areas of work relevant to gorilla conservation.
16. Through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 4), the Interim Secretariat was instructed, and the GRASP Secretariat was called upon to work together to organize the Fourth Meeting of the Parties in conjunction with the Third GRASP Council meeting, subject to the availability of financial resources. The Interim Secretariat is organizing the Fourth Meeting of the Parties in conjunction with the Third GRASP Council meeting in Paris, France from 11 to 15 December, with funding from the Government of Luxembourg.
17. Through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 6), the Interim Secretariat was instructed, and the GRASP Secretariat was called upon to develop joint activities relevant to gorilla conservation to be presented as the proposed programme of work of the Gorilla Agreement at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties and the Third GRASP Council meeting. A Programme of Work will be discussed during the joint sessions of MOP4 and the GRASP Council.
18. Through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 7), the Interim Secretariat was instructed to engage in joint outreach and fundraising activities with the GRASP Secretariat as well as in cooperation with other relevant partners to enhance conservation of Gorillas for implementation of the programme of work adopted by the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement. The Interim Secretariat together with the GRASP Secretariat held a meeting on 21 September 2023 with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation to explore funding opportunities for Gorilla conservation and to support Parties in implementing the Gorilla Agreement.
19. Through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 8), the Interim Secretariat was instructed to make all necessary amendments reflecting this resolution to the Gorilla Agreement Rules of Procedure for submission and approval by the Fourth Meeting of the Parties. The Interim Secretariat has been in communication with the GRASP Secretariat about formalizing the cooperation by amending both bodies' rules of procedure to reflect this resolution. The GRASP Secretariat will not be proposing amendments to the GRASP rules of procedure to the Third GRASP Council Meeting. Therefore, the Interim Secretariat does not have amendments to the Gorilla Agreement Rules of Procedure to propose, as it is not pragmatic to unilaterally strengthen bilateral cooperation through amended Rules of Procedure of only the Gorilla Agreement.
20. Through Resolution 3.4 (Paragraph 9), the Interim Secretariat was instructed to work with the GRASP Secretariat to formalize cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding or other collaborative arrangements, as appropriate. In April 2022 a Collaborative Agreement between the Gorilla Agreement and GRASP was signed by the Executive Secretary of CMS for the Gorilla Agreement Interim Secretariat and the Head of Biodiversity & Land of UNEP for the GRASP Secretariat. The Collaborative Arrangement includes agreement of both entities to undertake the following non-

exhaustive list of activities:

- a. *enhance their cooperation and coordination on common areas of work relevant to gorilla conservation;*
  - b. *strengthen coordination among the relevant national authorities of the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement and seek to have the same national focal points for the Gorilla Agreement and the GRASP;*
  - c. *work together to organize Meetings of the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement in conjunction with GRASP Council meetings, subject to the availability of financial resources;*
  - d. *develop joint activities relevant to gorilla conservation to be presented as the proposed Programme of Work of the Gorilla Agreement at Meetings of the Parties and GRASP Council meetings; and*
  - e. *engage in joint outreach and fundraising activities, also in cooperation with other relevant partners, to enhance conservation of Gorillas for implementation of the Programme of Work adopted by the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement.*
21. The Collaborative Agreement covers the implementation of the mandate issued by MOP3 through Resolution 3.4 Strengthening Cooperation between the Gorilla Agreement and the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP).

22. Furthermore, the Interim Secretariat contributed to the organization of the 14th meeting of the GRASP Executive Committee, held in Bonn, Germany from 9 to 10 October 2023.

#### *Collect annual contributions and arrears*

23. The Interim Secretariat sent invoices to all Parties in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, urging the payment of annual contributions and arrears. However, only the Government of Uganda made some contributions. Consequently, the total unpaid contributions which have been invoiced stands at €220,902.

24. A detailed report on the status of contributions and arrears can be found in UNEP/GA/MOP4/Doc.6 Budget and Programme of Work (2024-2026) of the Gorilla Agreement.

#### *Facilitate accession of non-Parties*

25. The Interim Secretariat supported the accession to the Gorilla Agreement by the Government of Angola, which took effect on 1 January 2021. This makes eight of the ten Gorilla Range States Parties to the Agreement.

26. The Interim Secretariat has been liaising with the Government of Cameroon on several occasions to support its accession to the Gorilla Agreement.

27. The Interim Secretariat, supported by the intersessional Chair of the Gorilla Agreement (Uganda) has been encouraging Equatorial Guinea to accede the Gorilla Agreement.

#### *Facilitate information exchange and maintain regular contacts with Parties*

28. The Interim Secretariat maintained regular contact with Parties, including by providing them with the paper *COVID-19: protect great apes during human pandemics* published in Nature in 2020.

*Provide information on the Gorilla Agreement in relevant fora*

29. The Interim Secretariat provided information on the Gorilla Agreement in relevant fora including bodies of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).



## The Gorilla Agreement Headquarters- GVTC Kigali

<a href="#">TABLE OF CONTENTS</a> .....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
<a href="#">1 INTRODUCTION TO GVTC</a> .....	1
<a href="#">2 LOCATING THE GORILLA AGREEMENT AT GVTC- KIGALI, RWANDA.</a> .....	2
<a href="#">3 COST OPTIONS</a> .....	3

### Introduction to GVTC

The Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) Treaty was signed in 2015 by Range states of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda for harmonious wildlife conservation and tourism development. Before signing the agreement, GVTC had evolved from grassroots rangers in 1990, who were required to monitor the daily movement of Mountain Gorillas to reduce the threats to the then critically endangered Mountain Gorillas. The Population then in Virunga Massif was about 240 individuals. While the gorillas would easily cross from one country to another, the rangers found it difficult to cross within the wildness or even determine precisely where the border line was, as illustrated in Figure 1, with the triple point marking where the three countries' borders meet. Within themselves, the rangers from the three countries agreed to cooperate and make monitoring easy without involving travel through migration. As their informal cooperation yielded results, the supporting non-governmental organisations supported this arrangement on the sidelines until the Wildlife Authorities recognised it and finally signed it by the Partner States. The efforts from this conservation strategy have seen the Mountain Gorilla Population surpass the 1000 individual mark of 1925 when Virunga National Park was formed, and the treaty has expanded to cover the entire Greater Virunga Landscape.



#### Locating the Gorilla Agreement at GVTC- Kigali, Rwanda.

The GVTC Executive Secretariat is based in Kigali, Rwanda, under a headquarters agreement that offers a diplomatic status. It's also an entity and can sue or be sued and has a TIN to transact in business as an entity. Housing the Gorilla Agreement (GA) within the GVTC Secretariat would come with the following advantages:

1. GVTC is located in a Gorilla Range State and would easily extend appropriate privileges to the GA Secretariat as it did with GVTC ES.
2. GVTC Executive Secretariat has wide experience in the management of collaboration and coordination of gorilla range states and their conservation, as well as development partners that have resulted in the growth of the population of Mountain Gorillas. It would build on this experience and lessons learned to scale it up in the other gorilla range states.
3. The cost of doing business would be low because of the following
  - a. GVTC-Executive Secretariat has a parallel structure with the current GA secretariat, so the agreement services can easily be streamlined within the GVTC Secretariat part-time of the existing staff.
  - b. The cost of living in Kigali, Rwanda, is far lower than the current position in Bonn. Even if the GA were to have its own staff, they would be paid at not more than 60% of what they would be paid in Berlin. The office running costs, for the same reasons are also low.
  - c. Managing delayed or no payment of party state contributions would scale up the strategies that have worked and lessons learned to ensure that party states contribute to running the secretariat. In addition, GVTC would engage the development partners that have supported it over the period to support this expanded role.

### Cost options

We plan to use the existing GVTC administration structures to run the GA secretariat by devoting time to GA work. Using the Financial report as presented to the third meeting of Parties in Entebbe Uganda in June 2019 and benchmarking the 5-Gorilla agreement staff as of 2012, we have come up with the following budget:

Position	Equivalent GVTC Position and Part time %	Annual Budget (USD)
Executive Secretary	Executive Secretary @ 10%	9,000
Deputy Executive Secretary	Deputy Executive Secretary Programmes @ 10%	7,200
Agreement Officer	Programme Coordinator @ 30%	18,000
Associate Programme Officer	Programme Assistant @. 40%	19,200
Administrative Assistant	Accountant @10%	4,800
	Administrative assistant @ 10 %	4,800
Office running costs	@30% contribution to vehicle running costs and fuel, office rent, internet etc.	40,677
Total		103,677

The gorilla partner states will be expected to contribute to these minimum costs and the GVTC secretariat will also approach development partners for specific programs agreed upon by the partner states.

**Approved by: Executive Secretary.**