

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: ASIAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP

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After two years of development, the Global Environment Fund (GEF) project on the conservation strategy for rhinoceros in south-east Asia has been approved by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia. The project will be activated in January 1995 and will continue for three years. The development of this GEF project was initiated at the December 1992 "Preliminary UNEP Conference among Rhinoceros Range States, Consumer States, and Donors". The Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) has been facilitating development of the project and will continue to provide technical co-ordination and support for its implementation.

It is believed that this project represents the first GEF project which specifically concentrates on the rhinoceros, and, in fact, on a species as opposed to on more general ecosystems or biodiversity. This is in recognition of the "emergency" situation which exists for the Sumatran and Javan rhino in south-east Asia. However, the project will use the rhinoceros in these areas as both an "umbrella" and a "flagship" species for conservation of its ecosystem.

The GEF project will help to catalyse full implementation of the conservation strategy and action plans for the rhino in both Indonesia and Malaysia, the only significant range states for the Sumatran rhino. The project will concentrate on the Sumatran rhino, but benefits will accrue to the Javan rhino. The Sumatran rhino is considered the more critically endangered of the two species. Although fewer in total number than the Javan rhino, the Sumatran rhino population has declined by perhaps 50% over the last decade, during which Javan rhino populations have remained relatively stable. It is considered that the Javan rhino, at least the Indonesian population in Ujung Kulon, is less exposed at the moment than the Sumatran rhino.

The project will provide technical training, operational support, and a long-term funding plan. Basically, the project has three major elements, each to be accomplished by specific outputs:

## **1. To enhance the capabilities of conservation agencies (governmental and non-governmental) to arrest and reverse the decline of the rhinoceros due to poacher activity and habitat disturbance.**

### Outputs

- Rhino protection units will be organised, for which personnel will be trained and deployed in both Indonesia and Malaysia (ten in each country). These units will be effectively engaged in both anti-poaching and community outreach programmes. Moreover, they will be able to train more units and serve as models for other areas with rhinos.
- Improved management structures with dedicated national co-ordinators (Rhino Conservation Officers or RCOs) in both Indonesia and Malaysia will be established.
- The rhino protection units will reduce poacher activity to the point of elimination within the areas covered. Reduction will be measured by numbers of traps and poachers detected, and numbers of rhinos known to be lost.
- A number of rhinos, particularly in Malaysia, will be translocated from isolated situations into intensive protection zones, represented by the operating areas of the rhino units.
- Monitoring of rhinos by radio-telemetry will provide improved information on rhino status and biology, which will benefit the conservation programmes.

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**2. To develop more involvement by, as well as benefits and incentives for, local human communities in rhino conservation.**

**Outputs**

- Persons from local communities will be employed in the rhino protection units; income generating activities (e.g. eco-tourism) will be delineated and initiated; local communities will develop appreciation of, and pride in, the rhino, its ecosystem and its conservation.
  - In conjunction with the World Bank Kerinci Seblat programme and possibly another project to be proposed, baseline data, which is required for the development of an effective community involvement programme, will be collected.
- 3. To formulate, catalyse and initiate a**

**comprehensive, sustainable funding plan for rhino strategy.**

**Outputs**

- A strategic funding plan will be formulated to link target donors with specific modules of the conservation programme.
- Proposals to these donors (government and nongovernmental, within and beyond Indonesia and Malaysia) will be prepared and presented.
- At least one major long-term income generating eco-tourism project will be facilitated in conjunction with the development of a Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary where rhinos, currently in captivity, will be placed. It is hoped that the more natural conditions of the sanctuary will stimulate propagation.

## **RAPPORT DU PRESIDENT: GROUPE DE SPECIALISTES DU RHINOCEROS ASIATIQUE**

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Après deux ans de mise au point, le projet du Fonds Global pour l'Environnement (Global Environmental Fund - GEF) pour la stratégie de conservation des rhinocéros de l'Asie du Sud-Est a été approuvé par le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD) et par les gouvernements d'Indonésie et de Malaisie. Le projet sera mis en route en janvier 1995 et durera trois ans. La mise au point de ce projet GEF a démarré lors de la "Conférence Préliminaire du PNUE pour les Etats de distribution des Rhinocéros, les Etats Consommateurs et les Donateurs", en décembre 1992. Le GSRAs a facilité la mise au point du projet et continuera à fournir une coordination technique et son soutien pour la réalisation.

On croit que ce projet est en fait le premier projet GEF qui se concentre spécifiquement sur les rhinocéros, et même réellement sur une espèce, par

opposition à des écosystèmes plus généraux ou à la biodiversité. Cet événement souligne l'urgence de la situation qui affecte aujourd'hui le Rhinocéros de Sumatra et le Rhinocéros de Java en Asie du Sud-Est. Cependant, le projet se servira du rhinocéros dans ces régions à la fois comme une justification et comme une pièce maîtresse pour la conservation de son écosystème.

Le projet GEF aidera à catalyser la pleine réalisation de la stratégie et des plans d'application de la conservation des rhinos tant en Indonésie qu'en Malaisie, les seuls pays de distribution significatifs pour le Rhinocéros de Sumatra. Le projet se concentrera sur le Rhinocéros de Sumatra mais le Rhinocéros de Java en retirera des avantages accrus. On considère que le Rhinocéros de Sumatra est l'espèce la plus menacée des deux. Bien que leur nombre total ait été inférieur à celui des Rhinocéros