

Consensus, followed by formal agreement on principles of rhino management is key to co-operation and development of partnerships between management authorities, custodians, and private owners, initially on a national basis. On a regional basis, co-operative management of subspecies, where countries may one day effectively share rhinos kept and exchanges under common management practices, may solve some of the problems outlined. This is one of the main objectives of the SADC rhino programme.

### 3.9 Priorities for Rhino Conservation (M. Brooks, AfRSG)

Dr. M. Brooks went through the AfRSG system for categorizing rhino projects, according to priority for donor funding. This system is outlined in the African Rhino Status Survey and Conservation Plan, published IUCN in 1999. This report was given to all participants and the system therefore does not have to be repeated in these proceedings.

The presentation of this priority ranking system led to some confusion at the meeting, since participants wondered how it might be applied within a regional programme that should involve even those member states that do not currently contain “key” or “important” rhino populations (as defined by AfRSG). Dr. Brooks and other members of the regional consortium clarified the debate by saying that range state representatives must be informed of the factors that give some populations a greater continental conservation priority than others, but it is not intended that these criteria should automatically apply to the SADC programme. Within this programme, attention must be given to regionally significant projects which may not currently include “key” or “important” populations but which have definite potential to do so, or which can be linked within a viable metapopulation plan (incorporating more than one population). Dr. A. Guillet endorsed this as a view that is shared by the Italian Government. He said that as far as his government is concerned, their aid should be not necessarily be used up equally in each country and nor should it be devoted only to those countries with the largest rhino populations. The funding should, first and foremost, be used to catalyse regional co-operation in rhino management.

### 3.10 Outline of Activities in Year 1 (R. du Toit, WWF-SARPO)

The remaining period of Year 1 is up until September 2000. Although the funding for the programme is significant, it will not go far if it is used to attempt major field projects in all the range states. If asked to state their primary requirements related to rhino conservation, most range states are likely to identify surveillance and management needs (for which the programme would not be a sustainable source of funding) and/or restocking and infrastructural needs (for which the programme simply does not have sufficient funding to achieve any regional impact). Therefore, it is the implementing consortium’s view that rather than trying to do a little bit here and a little bit there, the programme should focus on achieving a target that would be catalytic and strategic at the SADC level: the creation of a framework for the sharing of information, expertise and other resources within range states and between range states. Thus the emphasis of the programme must be on process (co-ordination, strategic planning and motivation of rhino conservation initiatives, taking advantage of the political impetus of SADC) rather than on fragmented products.

Activities within Year 1 of the programme should concentrate on developing or enhancing the institutional and co-ordination arrangements that are required within each country as well as at the regional level (i.e. Output #1 listed in the Technical Framework for the SADC Rhino Programme – see Section 6). Once such