

# **THE CAPE VIDAL MEMORANDUM**

## **STATEMENT TO THE 5<sup>TH</sup> WORLD PARKS CONGRESS**

From the following South African communities:

Richtersveld, Khomani San, Riemvasmaak, Makuleke, Mbila, Nibela, Mnqobokazi, KwaJobe, Bhangazi, Sokhulu, Mabibi, Mabaso

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The "People and Parks: Processes of Change" Community Workshop was jointly organised by the following organisations:  
Greater St Lucia Wetland Park Authority, GTZ-Transform, IUCN South Africa, Mafisa Research and Planning and the University of Natal

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STATEMENT TO THE 5<sup>TH</sup> WORLD PARKS CONGRESS  
 OUTCOME OF THE “PEOPLE AND PARKS: PROCESSES OF CHANGE” COMMUNITY WORKSHOP  
 CAPE VIDAL, GREATER ST LUCIA WETLAND PARK  
 5-7 SEPTEMBER 2003

As South African communities who were removed or threatened with removals from protected areas to make way for wildlife, this statement represents our vision for the World Parks Congress. At a joint meeting of communities and social and natural scientists on the eve of the WPC, community representatives discussed issues related to the restitution of their land in protected areas. For each community represented here, the lack of clarity around land ownership and rights has or continues to fuel the conflict between communities and conservation agencies. Representatives from the following communities attended the meeting and will be present at the World Parks Congress: Richtersveld, Khomani San, Riemvasmaak, Makuleke and communities in St Lucia (Mbila, Nibela, Mnqobokazi, KwaJobe, Bhangazi, Sokhulu, Mabibi, Mabaso). We all agree that our land can be managed for conservation in perpetuity, provided that we are actively involved in this process.

Conservation in South Africa has been made possible through the suffering of rural communities. Prior to 1994, protected areas were created through a regime of forced removals, fences and fines. We saw the ending of apartheid in 1994 as an opportunity to reclaim the land of our ancestors, our rights and access to natural resources, which are necessary for survival and new economic opportunities. Even though our vision for the use of our land is development linked to conservation, we have been disappointed by the slow pace of settlement of land claims in protected areas.

One of the few successful cases of restitution of land and rights has been the case of the Makuleke community who, with the support of resource people, have managed to reclaim their land. They have been able to use that opportunity to reclaim their dignity as well as create partnerships that are bringing real benefits to their people. In most cases, the story of conservation and communities in South Africa is still one of frustration and broken promises. Conservation agencies in South Africa developed under apartheid, and have taken time to transform. The fact that South Africa is hosting the WPC with its theme of ‘Benefits Beyond Boundaries’ gives us hope that they are accepting a more progressive and humanistic approach that doesn’t view nature as divorced from communities, but rather recognises their interdependence.

In the last two days, we have evaluated the draft outcomes of the WPC against the following issues:

- access to, control over and rights to land, resources and commercial opportunities
- clear and defined roles, responsibilities and interests of different roleplayers

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In general, we support the spirit and intentions of the Durban Accord and Action Plan. However, it reads much like the policy we have lived with during the last 9 years without their practical implementation. We have agreed upon specific actions that must be implemented if the commitment to 'Benefits Beyond Boundaries' is to be proven.

- Clear land ownership and rights are the basis for secure access to resources and the ability to unlock the benefits that can come from partnerships. However, too many of our communities still do not have secure land title and are not in a position to participate in partnerships and realise the benefits that can come from conservation and tourism. The following actions are required:
  - Urgent resolution of all outstanding land claims affecting conservation areas in South Africa.
  - Equal treatment and respect for community and private owners that are prepared to make their land available for conservation.
  
- We welcome the WPC emphasis on the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in the governance of protected areas. The challenge for us in South Africa is to put this theory into practice. We have noted that there is a lack of capacity in both communities and conservation agencies for effective co-management. The following actions are required:
  - As land owners we must be involved in policy formulation, drafting of management plans, and natural resource use plans.
  - Understanding that where communities might not currently have expertise to undertake certain functions, we have the right to appoint others to act on our behalf or give us advice.
  - Co-management is not necessarily an end in itself, but should be seen as a means for building the capacity of communities to become full managers should they want to.
  - Real inclusive management requires champions and strong committed leadership from conservation and communities.
  - Our traditional resource use practises that contribute to conservation should be integrated into management plans and practices in protected areas.
  - There is a need for an enabling national framework for co-management that sets the parameters and principles but allows flexibility to adapt to local contexts.
  
- We acknowledge that protected areas are fundamental to the conservation of biodiversity. Given that we lost our livelihoods through forced removals, the tangible economic opportunities available to us are mostly through tourism. This requires:
  - An enabling framework that provides us with the necessary support from conservation and government agencies to enter and establish equal partnerships that generate real benefits for our communities.
  - We value and acknowledge the role that resource people, such as financial, legal and technical advisers, play in facilitating beneficial partnerships.

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The communities that attended this workshop are at very different stages of negotiating land settlement and co-management agreements with conservation agencies. We would like to highlight some of the immediate needs of the communities attending this workshop.

For communities in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park:

- We support the creation of the World Heritage Site, however the urgent settlement of outstanding land claims, that includes the transfer of title, is required to enable us to fully participate in negotiations for benefits and decisions for the continued use of our land within the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

For the Riemvasmaak community:

- Due to the breakdown in negotiations with SANParks to establish a co-management arrangement for the Melkbosrand land that we own and which still falls within the Augrabies National Park, we demand the deproclamation of the land as a national park. We intend to create our own community conservation area and associated tourism development for the benefit of our community.

For Makuleke community:

- We support the establishment of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park, however our land was incorporated into this park without our prior consent. We need recognition and respect for allowing our land to be incorporated into the GLTP and a commitment to involving us in all future developments regarding the GLTP.

For Richtersveld community:

- Transfer of the title deed for the communal land in the Richtersveld, including the National Park, to our community as agreed in the referendum held in December 2002. This will enable us to enter into negotiations with tourism developers and effectively take part in the co-management and development of the Transfrontier Conservation Area, including the national park and the community conservancy.

For the Khomani San in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park:

- Acknowledging the Khomani San as owners of a section of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park with the rights to harvest natural resources and access to local economic development opportunities. This includes the ability to sell our arts and crafts to tourists inside the Park and actively share in the tourism developments.

This forum has provided us with an historic opportunity to share experiences with communities in similar situations, to learn from each other and to articulate a common appeal to our government and the World Parks Congress. We urge the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to convene an annual forum of communities and conservation agencies to assess progress around land restitution, and whether benefits really are being extended beyond the boundaries of protected areas.

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