



PRESS STATEMENT

16th July 2022

Launch of the Policy Brief on Responsible Tourism to Africa's Great Apes

In collaboration with African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA), International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) and Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) are launching a policy brief on 'Responsible Tourism to Africa's Great Apes' at the IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) in Kigali, Rwanda on 19 July 2022, 4:00 PM CAT, at the ACBA pavilion.

The event will have a keynote address by Dr. Andrew Seguya, Executive Secretary, Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration and a panel discussion with Ms. Clare Kamanzi, Chief Executive Officer, Rwanda Development Board; Mr. Sam Mwandha, Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority; Dr. Emmanuelle Normand, Country Director, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation; Mr. Praveen Moman, Founder and CEO, Volcanoes Safaris; and Mr. Manzi Kayihura, Managing Director, Thousand Hills Africa. Mr. Frank Turyatunga, Director and Regional Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Africa Office will moderate the panel discussion.

The Responsible Tourism to Africa's Great Apes' Policy Brief, co-authored by IGCP and CTPH in collaboration with ACBA, highlights the key challenges and threats facing Africa's endangered great apes which include gorillas, bonobos, chimpanzees, particularly in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The policy brief offers practical and actionable recommendations for a One Health approach that can achieve great ape conservation, responsible tourism, and community benefits simultaneously.

The policy brief advocates to African governments, global donors, as well as local and international tour operators in the 21 African countries with populations of great apes and, specifically, the 13 countries currently offering great ape tourism, calling on them to strengthen measures that minimize the risk of infection of diseases and other related threats which impact on the survival of great apes.

Ahead of the Policy brief launch, CTPH Founder and CEO, Dr Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, said *"this is an opportunity for all countries in Africa to adopt responsible tourism to the great apes and achieve the same gains in gorilla conservation as Uganda and Rwanda have over the past three decades."*

She added that *"We all have a responsibility to enact measures which protect Great Apes from unnecessary risks and threats. Infectious human diseases present a major threat to closely related primates. It is our sincere hope that all governments of countries and tour companies offering great ape tourism adopt these policy recommendations and guidelines,*

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which will help to secure the future of Africa's endangered and critically endangered Gorillas and Chimpanzees."

Wellard Makambo, IGCP Director said *"There is no room for complacency in securing a stable future for great apes. We must first acknowledge the existing and emerging threats and then collaboratively work to address them with the urgency that they deserve. Strengthening existing conservation measures like enforcing strict adherence to great ape visitation rules can go a long way in ensuring that the current successes are sustained long into the future."*

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