

Media Release- 10 November 2000

Tri-Nation Agreement on development of the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park

The Ministers responsible for environmental matters in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe signed an Agreement this morning formally committing the three nations to collaboratively establish what for the time being is being referred to as the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park.

Government representatives, officials, donors and various dignitaries from the three countries converged on the Skukuza Camp of the Kruger National Park in South Africa to witness the historic signing of the agreement. The commitment to establish the GKG Transfrontier Park follows closely after the recent launch on May 12th 2000 of the first Transfrontier Park for the continent, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park between South Africa and Botswana, officiated by President Thabo Mbeki and President Festus Mogae.

The GKG Transfrontier Park will be one of the biggest conservation areas in the world, and certainly amongst the top eco-tourism destinations available anywhere.

The GKG Transfrontier Park will comprise the Kruger National Park in South Africa, the Coutada 16 conservation area in Mozambique, and the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe with a slice of communal land linking it with Kruger. Altogether this Transfrontier Park will cover slightly more than 35,000km².

South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mohammed Valli Moosa, said that the signing of the agreement on the Transfrontier Park was "an important moment in the history of our three countries as we will be building co-operation on conservation management as well as building an asset for future generations. This park will attract international tourism by its sheer size and diversity, and become the symbol of growing co-operation in Southern Africa".

"The proposed park has two main objectives: promoting biodiversity conservation on a regional basis across international boundaries, and equally importantly, socio-economic upliftment of rural communities living in and around the park. Private enterprise will be involved extensively in developing and operating the many eco-tourism opportunities made available by this initiative. In developing these eco-tourism opportunities, job creation for local communities will be a priority."

But he added that there was much work to be done before the opening of the park. A concept plan and action plan has been developed and officials from all three countries have already started working on these issues.

The Mozambican Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development Helder Muteia said that "In today's world, conservation can not be separated from human development, and this has been amply demonstrated in many countries in southern Africa, where conservation that does not consider social and economic factors is doomed to failure".

Minister Muteia went on to say that "The Transfrontier Park we will be formalising today is rich in cultural and biological natural resources, which if properly managed and marketed for eco-tourism could be a magnet for the majority of tourists visiting southern Africa and thus contribute to the socio-economic development of our countries and the region as a whole". Looking at the broader perspective, he added that "Since tourism world-wide is one of the most rapidly growing industries, we should collectively aim at optimising the economic returns from this industry through the development of TFCAs and joint tourism marketing, as one of our regional integration agendas under SADC (Southern African Development Community)."

Incoming Zimbabwean Minister of Environment and Tourism Francis Nhema also referred to the broader SADC objectives, indicating that the signing of today's agreement gives effect to the key principles embraced in the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, and also the SADC Protocol on Tourism. His view was "We need to develop management plans for these targeted TFCA areas which will woo the essential investment,

create the smart partnerships symbolised by mutual benefits and provide political leadership and an enabling environment for such developments to be a reality". In his closing remarks he stated that "If we succeed in this initiative I expect that the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park cannot only be seen as a symbol of regional co-operation among our countries but can be viewed as a 'showcase' which other states on our continent will emulate".

Contact persons:

Didi Moyle: SA Ministry for Environmental Affairs & Tourism (082 808 5108)

Dr Salifou Siddo: South African National Parks (082 802 3316)

[\[back\]](#) [\[top\]](#)