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ROAD MAP CREATED FOR CONSERVATION AND LAND-USE MANAGEMENT OF SUDAN'S BOMA-JONGLEI LANDSCAPE

JUBA, Sudan—International natural resources experts and the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), have designed a road map for conservation and land use planning of Sudan's Boma-Jonglei Landscape, the largest savannah ecosystem in East Africa. The Boma-Jonglei Landscape hosts one of the world's greatest mammal migrations, comprising an estimated 1.2 million white-eared kob, tiang, Mongalla gazelle, and reedbuck, as well as critical inter-continental bird migrations.

The road map aims to ensure effective zoning and management strategies to conserve biodiversity and encourage eco-tourism and other economic development in the region. The plan was the outcome of a technical planning workshop in Juba May 25-28, hosted by the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with funding from USAID. Participants included representatives of the GOSS ministries that comprise the Natural Resource Management Group (Wildlife Conservation and Tourism; Agriculture and Forestry; Energy and Mining; Water Resources and Irrigation; Cooperatives and Rural Development; Animal Resources and Fisheries; Housing, Physical Planning, and Environment; as well as the Southern Sudan Land Commission), the state governments of Jonglei, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria, and WCS.

The Boma-Jonglei Landscape encompasses Boma and Badingilo National Parks, broad pasturelands and floodplains, the vast swamps and internationally recognized wetlands of the Sudd, including the Zeraf Game Reserve and the proposed Loelle protected area. Stretching across some 200,000 km² of Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, and Central Equatoria states, the landscape supports an abundance of wildlife species, including elephants, giraffe, elands, oryx, lions, wild dog, buffalo, and the endemic, endangered antelope species Nile Lechwe. The region supports the livelihoods of 17 ethnic groups, has rangelands for livestock production and the potential for agriculture development, and holds a base of oil reserves critical for economic development of southern Sudan.

Growing and immediate threats of commercial wildlife poaching (for bushmeat, ivory, and skins), uncontrolled extractive industry concessions and development, and unplanned road development in and around protected areas threaten the biodiversity and local sustainable livelihoods in the landscape. If this trend continues, southern Sudan risks wildlife depletion, environmental degradation, increased conflict over natural resources and land, and the loss of opportunities for eco-tourism development.

To address these challenges, the technical workshop identified steps needed to develop zoning and management strategies for various land uses in the landscape, including national parks, community development areas, extractive industry concessions, and wildlife movement corridors. The plan will ensure balanced development and environmental conservation, conserve the great wildlife migrations, and contribute significantly to economic development in the Boma-Jonglei Landscape.

“Our land-use planning processes have been done in isolation, and this has created major errors and weaknesses in our management of natural resources,” said Mr. Emilio Jaden Tongun, Undersecretary of Forestry in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Chairman of the Natural Resource Management Group. “The road map outlined for the

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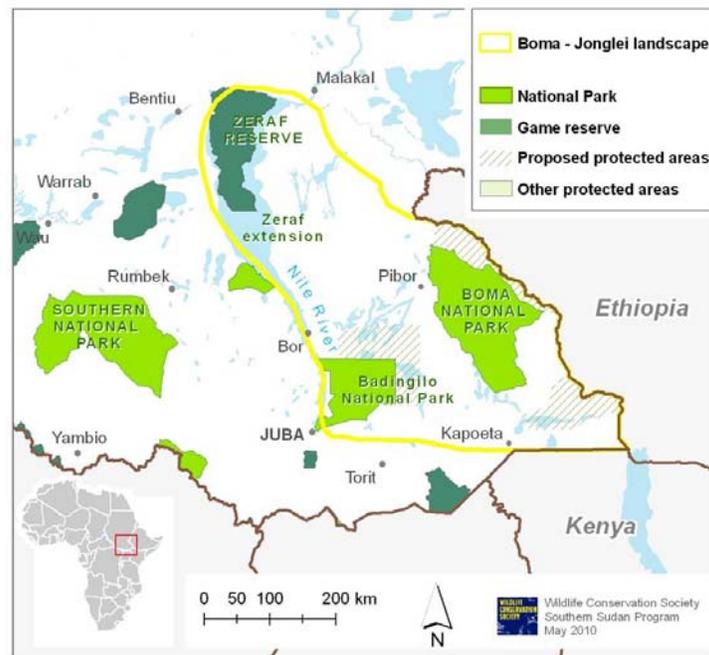
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land-use planning process needs to be urgently implemented. Several zoning problems need to be reversed and urgent emphasis placed on inter-zonal conflict resolution. Integration of local community land-use concerns should be a key priority in the process as well. This land-use planning process can serve as a pilot for replication in other areas of southern Sudan.”

According to Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism Undersecretary Lt. General Frazer Tong, “Wildlife conservation and protected area management can contribute directly and indirectly to improving security, creating economic opportunities, and conservation of the great natural savanna and wetland ecosystem and cultural heritage of our region. The Boma-Jonglei land-use planning process now can reconcile and balance competing needs to optimize development opportunities and ensure conservation of our tremendous wildlife and habitat areas forming the basis for wise natural resource use and development of the ecotourism sector.”

USAID/Sudan Mission Director Mr. William Hammink remarked, "USAID has a strong commitment to support the Government of Southern Sudan's natural resource management, conservation, and land-use planning. Southern Sudan has abundant natural resources—wildlife, livestock, agricultural lands, oil and minerals—and coordinating the use of these resources as they contribute to economic development will be a major challenge. USAID congratulates the leadership of the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, the Natural Resource Management Group, and WCS in working toward an integrated land-use and conservation plan for the Boma-Jonglei Landscape.”

USAID, WCS and the GOSS are working to put in place the necessary policies and practices to sustainably manage natural resources, conserve biodiversity, and secure the livelihoods of local people of the Boma-Jonglei Landscape. The program focuses on strengthening institutional capacity, participatory land-use planning and resource management, establishing protected area management, improving community livelihoods, promoting ecotourism, and developing other incentives for sustainable land use to conserve this remarkable ecosystem and its magnificent wildlife migrations for the benefit of the people of Sudan and the world.



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