



WEAREAFRICA

THE
CONSERVATION LAB
REPORT

WRITTEN BY
GRAHAM BOYNTON



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR HOST

One&Only
Cape Town

BACKGROUND

We Are Africa is the spectacular new travel trade exhibition from Beyond Luxury Media Ltd. The first edition took place in Cape Town from 5-8 May 2014 at Cape Town Stadium and satellite venues across the city. A carefully curated selection of high-end African and Indian Ocean travel brands from Cairo to Cape Town and Dakar to Port Louis were given the opportunity to showcase their products and services to the world's finest travel trade buyers directly in charge of sourcing products from Africa.

From the onset, We Are Africa's mission and purpose has been to electrify travel to Africa by promoting a more progressive, sophisticated and positive image of the continent. While 'Rebranding Africa' has been the theme and driving force behind the marketplace and conference, it quickly became clear that this needed to be achieved hand in hand with 'Saving Africa' and more specifically conserving its natural assets that are under increasingly severe threat.

From early on the founders of We Are Africa in consultation with several key players decided that the event would also provide a strong platform for 'conversations about conservation' and an opportunity for the senior leaders in high-end travel to discuss how they could collaborate more in the area of conservation. With that in mind the concept of The Conservation Lab was born and rapidly began to take shape.

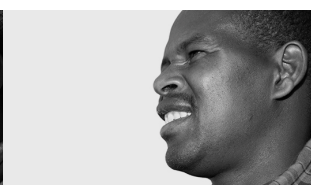
The inaugural session of The Conservation Lab was held in Cape Town on 4 May 2014 and was attended by a group of 50 senior travel industry executives and entrepreneurs, wildlife conservation experts and international journalists. The first aim of The Conservation Lab was to establish exactly what was the most appropriate way for the international travel industry to become more collectively engaged in the conservation of Africa's wildlife. And to act on it.

On 15 October 2013 a call for submissions to address the topic "What should we as an industry be doing together to boost conservation efforts" was issued by We Are Africa. A 500 word submission was a prerequisite to participate in The Conservation Lab in order to ensure relevant content and high levels of buy-in and active participation. A steady stream of submissions was received and 50 participants (see list of delegates on the final page) were invited to present their ideas and suggestions to kick off discussions on May 4.

THE PANEL



COLIN BELL
(SOUTH AFRICA)



JACKSON OLE LOOSEYIA
(MASAI MARA, KENYA)



DERECK JOUBERT
(BOTSWANA)



BLESSING MUNYENYIWA
(ZIMBABWE)

THE DEBATE

That more is required from the travel industry to protect a resource under siege was not contested. As Dereck Joubert, one of The Conservation Lab panellists, said: “Conservation worldwide spends \$58 billion and actually what’s needed is \$400 billion. So we are seriously underfunded.”

It was also Dereck Joubert who outlined the scale and urgency of the problem: “We are facing a tsunami of poaching. In South Africa alone we are losing a rhino every 8.3 hours, we lose five lions a day and we are losing five elephants an hour.”

“We have lost 95 percent of the three big animals that sustain everybody in this room today. Without these animals this room would be empty.” DERECK JOUBERT

With that in mind we drew up a short list of declarations:

1. That a Conservation Lab Advisory Board would be formed and include among its members significant players from the conservation, publishing and tourism industries.
2. That we should lobby for the outright ban of any trade in rhino horn and ivory.
3. That the Advisory Board debate as a matter of urgency the establishment of a Natural Capital Conservation Fund, potentially financed by a voluntary 1% levy on all travel and tourism to Africa.

It should be noted here that these dramatic and radical declarations intended to provoke debate and whilst we may not have achieved consensus on every single point we all agreed that the discussion needed to take place. While all the delegates agreed that an Advisory Board should be formed there were heated exchanges about both trade bans and a levy.

The majority of delegates felt that the arguments were informative and that progress was made. Since our Cape Town meeting I have received a significant number of emails from attendees encouraging us to push on with the setting up of an Advisory Board and a subsequent series of initiatives that will engage the international travel industry in the conservation of Africa’s wildlife and also to help unify the conservation messages going out of Africa. Importantly, these messages have come from both Southern African and East African delegates.

It is our feeling that for too long the African conservation community has sent out fragmented messages to the outside world about what is required to stem what Dereck Joubert calls the “tsunami of poaching” and what are best practices in terms of wildlife conservation going forward. It is our belief that while there are certainly regional and country-specific problems facing conservationists and the wildlife tourism industry, there are also a vast number of issues that are common to East, Central and Southern Africa. That certainly came across in the Cape Town conference.



So, let us consider some of the key issues under discussion.

1. COST OF CONSERVATION.

Dereck Joubert's figure of \$400 billion needed continent-wide – based on a recent McKinsey/Credit Suisse paper – was supported by Zimbabwe's Blessing Munyenyiwe who told the Lab that it costs at least \$14.5 million to manage Hwange National Park alone. Two critical factors in the coming years are going to put extreme pressure on conservation costs. The population explosion currently underway across the continent means there is even more pressure on wilderness areas to come in the near future. Colin Bell distributed Google Earth pictures of South Africa's Ndumo Park that clearly illustrated the significant build up of neighbouring communities along the western border fence and, alarmingly, areas where they have broken down the fence and moved into the proclaimed park. "These are communities that are so fed up they have invaded the park. Unless we address these issues today there is more of this to come," said Bell.

Additionally, there will inevitably be an increase in poaching, not only of signature species with outrageous market values (elephants, rhino) but also animals such as zebra, giraffe and all the variety of antelope that serve the bushmeat market. Kenyan conservationists say that 600 animals are killed a day in Kenya that are not signature species and, according to one conservationist, "they are killed by ordinary people just trying to clear the land for agriculture because the competition for land is so intense."

Simply to intensify policing of wilderness areas, funding security staff, patrol vehicles and new technology surveillance equipment will require considerably more funding than is currently available. Clearly, one of the larger issues will be the involvement of local communities in conservation.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITIES

As Dereck Joubert pointed out the Botswana model is one of the few African conservation models that actually works. In many ways they have it easy: good political leadership, led by President Ian Khama, who is arguably Africa's most conservation-conscious president; a small population of some two million people, and 40 per cent of the country under wildlife.

In the 1970s, Botswana was one of the world's poorest countries, with a per capita GDP of less than £130 and little economy to speak of. There was one paved road in the entire country. Today, GDP per capita exceeds £6,000 and there are 6,500 kilometres (4,060 miles) of paved road. While diamonds, discovered in the late 1960s, were the catalyst, tourism has grown exponentially and now contributes 20 per cent. Tourism receipts have grown from £90 million in 1997 to £240 million in 2004.

Here the communities are major players in and beneficiaries of tourism, with 6% of turnover from tourism going to community structures. Neither Botswana nor Namibia, both exemplars of community conservation, do not have the population pressures that, say, Kenya and South Africa have, however the model is to be admired and emulated.



Another success story is Namibia, whose natural resource and wildlife management policies and track record are world-class; the Community-based Conservancy system alone is an example of village empowerment in the remotest rural areas. This advanced, mature and astute approach to sustainable natural resource management is a policy that has been introduced by an enlightened government. In the 24 years since independence and democracy the surface area of the nation under conservation management has increased from 13% to 46% - fantastic proof of the extraordinary performance and far-sighted vision of the country's leadership. As a direct result wildlife populations are booming and remote rural communities are, reportedly, directly benefitting. (Worryingly there have been recent reports of problems in these rural communities.)

The World Wildlife Fund terms Namibia "Africa's Greatest Wildlife Recovery story". This includes rare and endangered species such as black rhino (over 400% population increase since independence), desert dwelling lions and national elephant populations are all stable and increasing. This track record of responsible, inclusive, sustainable management of the nation's resources provides a role model for the rest of Africa. Again, however, recent reports are of an increase in poaching, so it is clear even the best models are susceptible in modern Africa.

By contrast, Kenya and Tanzania are suffering from the most rapid decreases in wildlife on the continent. Despite the successes of the conservancies on the borders of the Masai Mara, in Laikipia and so on, the overall picture is bleak. The recent Al Shabab terrorism attacks have intensified the problems, as there have been mass tourist cancellations in the wake of UK Foreign Office and US State Department travel warnings.

Jackson Ole Looneyia: "For you to tell a Maasai not to have cattle is like telling a white man not to drink wine. We started the OOC (Olare Orok Conservancy, now the Olare Motorogi Conservancy) and turned it from a dust bowl run down by goats and cattle and sheep to become one of the most beautiful places to visit in the Mara."

"We need to partner with the Maasai. The only way we can succeed in Africa is to partner with local communities. We have turned the community around to surrender their land to wildlife and now we need to compete with the agricultural world".

For the countries with inadequate community relations to properly emulate those with excellent relations will require more than simply private sector initiatives. It will require governments to become committed and it was noted that at the Cape Town Conservation Lab the only representative of an African government to attend was from Botswana.

Most African governments show an indifference to the needs of wilderness and wildlife. It is thus seen as a key function of the Advisory Board to act as a lobbying group with governments that require persuading.

3. TO TRADE OR NOT TO TRADE

This was one of the two hot topics of The Conservation Lab, the other being the call for a 1% Natural Capital Wildlife Tourism Fund.

The strongest argument for trade was put forward by several operator/conservationists who used the example of South Africa's successful rhino breeding programme as an argument for the commoditisation of wild animals. Whereas South Africa had a mere 30 white rhinos in the 1960s today there are more than 20,000, which is more than 80% of all Africa's surviving rhinos. "Don't kill a successful model," they said.

Equally Julian Sturgeon, Executive Director of Resource Africa, offers a sobering assessment of the debate. He says that when he heard Michael Power saying that trade = dead rhinos "I felt a sense of despair. There are a few chestnuts that the anti-trade and AR people hold dear, and that's one of them - another is that if you open trade then demand goes through the roof. We have no data whatsoever about open and transparent trade, the closest we come to actual trade are these big one-off deals every decade, and all they do is give the illegal traders fresh stock.

"They grab it (ivory or horn) because it's in short supply, and it reinforces the notion that free trade will cause demand to rise. This is against the law of supply and demand, which only works in a market that has been in operation for some time and has stabilised. What should happen is that the market is stabilised by price movements, but since we have never had open trade, we can't prove it. It's a vicious circle."

"Bottom line is that we do not know how trade will work as we have never had anything but illegal or under-the-counter trade, and it scares people. But it is the only way to go - if only because it's never been tried before. Ask the Mafia. Prohibition made them, and what we are doing with the horn trade is making gangsters very rich."

However, several speakers, principally Dereck Joubert and Investec's Michael Power, argued that the economic numbers were against trade in key species such as rhino, elephant and big cats. "These species earn their place in this world alive much more than dead."

The economics of animals alive in Kenya are such that there were in 1977 when hunting was banned and there are 15 times more people employed in tourism. The industry has grown around wildlife.

The view expressed by the panel was that The Conservation Lab must have an opinion on this subject and that one cannot worry about people not agreeing with that opinion. In the end a vote was taken and only four delegates voted against a trade ban and around 50 voted for. However this is a deeply dividing issue and will require serious discussion when the Advisory Board meets.



4. IS A LEVY VIABLE?

The principal proposer of the Natural Capital Wildlife & Tourism Fund is Colin Bell, who said that the model for such a levy is Patagonia's "1% for the Planet" initiative which owners Yvon and Melissa Chouinard introduced in 1985. The company pledged 1 % of sales to the preservation and restoration of the natural environment and the company claims to have awarded more than \$46 million since then. Colin Bell told the Lab that "our suggestion is that we actually add on to the bottom of our invoices a line that says: 'Plus 1% for Africa', a fund that we would operate in all the countries, so there would be a Kenya Fund, a Tanzanian Fund and so on and so forth.

"In South Africa the tourism industry earns between R200 and R250 billion a year, but even if we were to take a conservative estimate, say R100 billion, that 1% would come to R1 billion."

Bell admitted when he raised this idea at an Africa Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA) event last year the response was less than enthusiastic as delegates thought he was suggesting that the industry should pay this levy from their already tight margins. In fact, Bell believes the levy should come from guests. That lack of enthusiasm was also evident among Conservation Lab delegates, many of whom felt that they were already working on narrow margins, as well as that to ask clients for more money could well lead to losing business.

To be clear, the Chouinards' "1% for the Planet" actually means 1% of profits on new business and there is argument that this is a donation on a different scale to the proposed African Wildlife Levy. Then there were questions about how the fund would be managed and administered and precisely where it would be deployed. Clearly some companies would want money deployed in some countries and not others and the question of their role in the choice of recipients has been raised.

Then there is the matter of global responsibility. Steve Butterworth from Chilo Lodge in Zimbabwe said that companies "coming in from overseas that will benefit greatly from the industrialization of Africa should be making a significant contribution to such a fund." This was met with widespread agreement from delegates.

Colin Bell has, subsequent to the Lab and the abovementioned criticisms, made the following points: "South Africa has a new Minister of Tourism who is innovative and his appointment could be a great opportunity to start fresh new initiatives. In my view, we should try to create the fund in one country and let the news from the success of that fund to filter around Africa to encourage other countries to start their own."

"The country where it may be easiest to create this conservation fund is here in South Africa. We already have the TOMSA Marketing levy which is a semi-voluntary 1% addition to one's hotel bills, car hire etc. There is a whole private sector driven infrastructure already in place that handles the collection and the payment of money collected. Each year they raise around R100m which is paid to SA Tourism to boost the marketing of South Africa internationally."

Consequently, one of the first tasks of the Advisory Board would be to determine the viability of the 1% levy and the setting up of a fund. Clearly, for this Conservation Lab operation to become a viable



Pan African conservation organisation some considerable funding is required and although there have been grave reservations expressed this must be the best way to go.

As Colin Bell said: "In 30 years time will we in Africa still have a tourism industry based on wildlife?"

5. THE CONSERVATION LAB ADVISORY BOARD

At the end of the Cape Town Lab Dereck Joubert said: "There is certainly a general feeling that an Advisory Board/Association should be formed, so we have achieved something important. Everybody now knows the stakes.

"The reason to form a body like this is to have political and economic leverage. How to spend the money after that – whether it's in the Okavango or in marginal areas – is the detail."

As the issues described above reveal the role of the Advisory Board will be complex and multi-faceted. Initially the principal task will be to establish the best method of raising revenue, whether it be a levy, voluntary contributions from the international community as discussed by Zimbabwe's Steve Butterworth, or another method.

The Board would then begin a series of initiatives that would involve everything from engaging with individual governments on national and international conservation issues through to raising international awareness of the growing threats to identified ecosystems and their wildlife. Keith Vincent from Wilderness Safaris made a point about recent poaching raids from Zimbabwe into Botswana. He said the Zimbabwe authorities failed to pass on information they had to their Botswana counterparts. One of the key initiatives for the Board would be to encourage and facilitate cross-border co-operation.



PLAN OF ACTION:

The first We Are Africa Conservation Lab was always intended to be more than a debate group although it was important that the issues so passionately debated in Cape Town were aired. Now the time has come to act.

We Are Africa thus offers this plan of action:

1. **Distribute this Report to the delegates of the first Conservation Lab and a select group of travel industry executives and conservationists to further stimulate debate.**
2. **Form The Conservation Lab Advisory Board.**
3. **Develop Advisory Board Declarations and Activities**

KEY REMARKS FROM THE CONSERVATION LAB, CAPE TOWN:

“What is Africa going to be like in 30 years time and will we still have a tourism industry that is based on wildlife? This is the question we need to ask ourselves today.”

COLIN BELL, Conservationist

--

“In South Africa we lose a rhino every 8 hours, 5 lions a day, and 5 elephants an hour. So when South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe opened up the ivory trade they ended up stimulating poaching and now it’s running hellfire. So I think the tsunami of poaching will continue.”

DERECK JOUBERT, National Geographic Explorer and conservationist, Great Plains Conservation

--

“Everything we’ve talked about concerns African solutions. I think most of the solution lies in Asia. We must partner with organisations in Asia.”

PETER ALLISON, Wilderness Safaris.

--

“Can Africa’s wilderness justify its place economically in the new emerging Africa? If it can’t, it will fail.”

MICHAEL POWER, Investec Asset Management



THE DELEGATES:

COMPANY NAME:

Ryan Hilton
Ross Kennedy
Colin Bell
Beks Ndlovu
John Pieterse
Ryan Powell
Peter Anderson
Nigel Vere Nicol

A
 Admiral Travel
 Africa Albida Tourism
 Africa's Finest
 African Bush Camps
 African Luxury
 andBeyond
 Anderson Wildlife Properties
 Atta - African Travel &
 Tourism Association

Serge Dive
Ryan Wallace
Obenne Mbaakanyi

B
 Beyond Luxury Media
 Beyond Luxury Media
 Botswana Tourism

Fabia Bausch
Steve Butterworth
Suzanne Bayly-Coupe
Calvin Cottar
Mary Jean Tully

C
 Chem Chem Safari Lodge
 Chilo Gorge
 Classic Portfolio
 Cottars 1920's Safari Camp
 Cruise Professionals

Ingram Casey

E
 Escape + Explore

Maria Shollenbarger

F
 Financial Times - How To
 Spend It

Brett McDonald

Flame of Africa

Mohanjeet Brar

G
 Gamewatchers Safaris
 & Porini Camps

Graham Boynton
Beverly Joubert
Hilton Walker
Dereck Joubert
Michael Lutzeyer

Graham Boynton & Associates
 Great Plains Conservation
 Great Plains Conservation
 Great Plains Conservation
 Grootbos Nature Reserve

Michael Power

I
 Investec Asset Management

Jackson Looseyia

J
 Jackson Looseyia
 Private Guiding

Assefa Azene

K
 Kibran Tours

Lisa Scriven
Blessing Munyenyiwa

L
 Levelle Perspectives
 Love For Africa

Helen Wilson

M
 Makweti Safari Lodge

Sue van Winsen

N
 Now Media / Southern African
 Tourism Update

Debra Algie
Sandy Cunningham

O
 One&Only Cape Town
 Outside Go

Michael Lorentz
Nicky Williams

P
 Passage To Africa
 Passage To Africa

Julian Sturgeon

R
 Resource Africa

Carina Grueninger
Matt Wilkinson
Tony Leidenkrantz
Anna Leidenkrantz

S
 Safari Destinations
 Safari Talk
 Stars of Africa
 Stars of Africa

Danilo Rondinelli
Phil Biden
David Frost

T
 Terra Mundi Viagens
 The Royal Portfolio
 The Southern Africa Tourism
 Services Association (SATSA)
 Tsogo Sun

Elke Menz

U
 Uncharted Africa

Ralph Bousfield

V
 Vanity Fair

Victoria Mather

W
 Wilderness Safaris
 Wilderness Safaris
 Wilderness Safaris

Keith Vincent
Roberto Viviani
Peter Allison

Z

Dr Anne-Kathrin Zschiegner Zeitz Foundation