



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

20 January, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honoured to inform you that Professor Toshisada Nishida is a Special Envoy to the United Nations Environment Programme.

He has kindly accepted to act as a special envoy for great apes and to work with us to raise funds and awareness for the Great Apes Survival Project, (GRASP).

GRASP

I formulated the GRASP project in response to the very precarious situation in which the great apes (Chimpanzees, Bonobos, Gorillas, and Orangutans) now find themselves. As their habitats have become reduced, degraded and fragmented, ape populations have fallen; often dramatically. War and conflict; human expansion; mining; agriculture; logging; forest fires; hunting for bushmeat and the capture of live specimens for sale threaten the remaining scattered populations.

National laws in each of the 23 countries they inhabit protects apes, but there is a lack of enforcement capacity in most ape range states. Even in officially protected areas, poaching, illegal logging and mining all impact on vulnerable ape populations.

UNEP is aware of the urgent need for commitment—at the highest levels—to the survival of these endangered species in all great ape range states. UNEP, together with UNESCO and a partnership of key ape conservation NGOs and biodiversity related convention secretariats, is endeavouring to bring world-wide attention to the ape crisis, raise funds for conservation, and develop a global conservation strategy for all great ape populations.

As a first step, I have appointed three UN Special Envoys for Great Apes, supported by several technical experts, not only to seek political support for great ape conservation, but to give particular priority to fund-raising for the key conservation activities identified by the project.

The envoy team consists of the following distinguished experts:

- Dr. Toshisada Nishida, world renowned primatologist and President of the Primate Society of Japan,
- Dr. Russ Mittermeier, President of Conservation International and Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Committee ,
- Dr. Jane Goodall, chimpanzee expert and head of the Jane Goodall Institutes.

As such, Prof. Nishida has the full backing of the United Nations Environment Programme, in his efforts to raise funds for the Great Apes Survival Project.

Yours sincerely,

Klaus Toepfer
Executive Director