



Arusha Declaration 2012

We, the 264 delegates representing rangers from 40 countries on six continents, gathered in Arusha, Tanzania, at the 7th World Ranger Congress, November 2012,

Consider that:

- a. The founding principles committed to in the Zakopane Declaration of 1995 and the Santa Cruz Declaration of 2009 continue to be relevant to rangers today.
- b. World protected areas, however they are defined, and the rangers working in the field to look after them, are coming under greater levels of threats than ever before, and those threats are accelerating at an unprecedented rate.
- c. These threats include greater encroachments on protected areas, increasing attacks on rangers, world population growth and escalating poverty resulting in the perception of protected areas as a removal of access to basic survival needs, and small and large scale changes as a result of climate change.
- d. A prevailing and escalating threat is the illicit international trade in wildlife products, and this is not something we can tackle alone.
- e. Our best achievements come when we are working together, through partnerships and collaboration at many levels: a) between protected areas and communities; b) between member associations; c) between associations and other organisations; and d) between the IRF and international organisations.
- f. Sharing the stories of what's happening on the ground, providing opportunities to learn from each other in a tangible way and drawing lessons learnt and inspiration from others is essential.
- g. As rangers we have a demonstrated strength in field operations, and an increasing strength in providing field support to our colleagues and their dependents.
- h. An approach of 'business as usual' will not address the modern threats we face. If we are to succeed in reversing these threats we need to adapt our responses.
- i. It is essential that we step beyond our field-based comfort zone towards more effective high level representation, gaining long term support to advocate for rangers and protected areas from a higher strategic perspective.
- j. The importance of rangers having sufficient skills, knowledge and resources is undeniable, yet access to all of these is still insufficient in many regions.
- k. Rangers and protected areas are an integral part of society, subject to the social and economic influences of the day and the location. To ignore this, and to ignore our neighbours and to not consider this wherever we work, is to our own detriment.

We therefore resolve to:

- a. Share lessons learnt, case studies, guide material, toolkits, best practice standards and procedures, educational aides etc. through mechanisms such as the IRF website, newsletters, social media and through partnerships with other organisations such as the World Commission on Protected Areas.
- b. Actively foster more senior, high level partnerships, such as with government agencies, international NGO's and the IUCN, lobbying for more support in high priority areas to make a difference for our colleagues and the protected areas where our help is most needed.
- c. Through partnerships and members, encourage organisations to ensure their ranger workforces are sufficiently trained and have access to sufficient resources to reverse the threats being faced.
- d. Embrace the power of ranger volunteerism through programs such as Rangers without Borders and organisational exchanges, to impart knowledge, share ideas, change perceptions, and provide tangible support to the ranger community.
- e. To tackle the massive problem of international wildlife crime through communication and action across regions, and multi-level action from better equipping patrols on the ground, to good neighbour programs, to advocacy and lobbying with international governments such as the European Union, the United Nations, and Interpol.
- f. Encourage as a priority the formation of ranger associations in particular in the currently under-represented regions of Asia and Africa – these regions are facing the greatest level of threats, currently have the lowest level of representation, and could benefit from the exchange that emerges from inter-association partnerships and the like.
- g. Link the work of rangers to poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and community benefits, working across the boundaries of protected areas with neighbouring communities, helping to resolve land use conflicts and rights, providing technology and skills to invest in sustainable use, adding value to nature as something to benefit from rather than be excluded from.

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