

THE AFRICAN PRIMATOLOGICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

A VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION

Thursday, 23rd April 2020 at 14:00 GMT

THEME: The growing evidence of the links between biodiversity loss and the emergence of epidemics: implications for human well-being and the Conservation of African Primates

TERMS OF REFERENCE & OVERVIEW

1. Background

The world is in the midst of a coronavirus-caused pandemic that has infected over 2.2million people and claimed over 150,000 lives from across 186 countries, not to mention the rippling adverse effects on global economy. This monumental loss has been traced to a food market located in Wuhan, China. According to geneticists, bats are the original host of SARS like coronaviruses and pangolins have been named as intermediate carrier of SARS-CoV-2 like CoVs, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease (T. Zhang, Wu & Z. Zhang, 2020)¹. Irrespective of the origins and hosts of this highly infectious and lethal virus, zoonotic diseases like the COVID-19 are bringing to light and to our consciousness 1) the stark realities of human pressures on wild landscapes 2) the destructive consequences of ignoring conservation-based solutions 3) the far-reaching risks of trade and consumption of wild animals 3) the inverse connections between habitat loss and human health 4) dangers of not promulgating policies and enforcing strict regulations to stem biodiversity loss on many fronts. 75% of all emerging infectious diseases come from wildlife (Taylor et al., 2001),² and this is a great cause of concern not only for the human race but also for non-human primate populations. For instance, infectious diseases such as COVID-19 are a major concern for great ape conservation due to their shared genetic characteristics with humans. Ebola for example – a hemorrhagic fever that affects humans and great apes – has led to mortality rates of up to 95% in gorillas some postulations suggest that some of the affected populations will need more than 130 years to recover (ASP conservation Action Network, March 2020)³. Similarly, in 2016, human coronavirus OC43 was observed in wild chimpanzee populations (Patrono et al., 2018).⁴ While health consequences abound⁵, there are also social and economic consequences of the pandemic which is now more than a looming threat to primate conservation in Africa but to wildlife all over. There are potentials for the loss of many gains and advances made in conservation efforts to be lost because protection activities have had to be reduced or suspended, and tourism suspended due to the resulting negative effect of the stay home orders,

¹ Zhang T WQ, Zhang Z. Probable pangolin origin of SARS-CoV-2 associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. Curr Biol. March 13, 2020. doi: 10.1016/j.cub.2020.03.022. [epub ahead of print]

² Taylor LH, Latham SM, Woolhouse ME. Risk factors for human disease emergence. Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci. 2001 Jul 29;356(1411):983-9 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11516376>

³ American Society of Primatology (ASP) Action News, Volume 1, Issue 2, March 2020

⁴ Patrono et al., Emerging Microbes & Infections (2018)7:118 DOI 10.1038/s41426 018 0121 2

⁵ Unpub research by Melin et al suggests Covid 19 will affect apes and monkeys in African and Asian

<https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.09.034967v1?fbclid=IwAR2f8jyabFFuqNrvUeFix6hNW4-F7zhpZAA5PQvD7aRnCNBzEBu4r6DTLVU>

lockdowns and curfews imposed by many national governments. In Thailand,⁶ Nepal, India,⁷ and South Africa⁸ there has been documented surge in poaching and wildlife-related crimes. Not to mention that loss in tourism revenue and employment for communities that have come to depend on these cash flows and incomes in exchange for their cooperation/support for conservation may also have a sweeping drawback effect across the continent.⁹

2. Purpose for the Panel Discussion

2.1 The purpose of this panel discussion is to call APS' members and public's attention to the implications of SARS CoV 2 – the highly infectious virus that causes COVID-19 on primate conservation particularly in Africa. It is good that we build preparedness amongst our colleagues and share on-ground experiences on how this is impacting conservation efforts as well as research work.

2.2. It is also an opportunity to call to action all stakeholders including national governments to prevent future pandemics by protecting all wildlife.

2.2 It is also important for members and the public to stay informed; the COVID-19 news story is an evolving one and the significance of accurate information and its application in our respective spheres of influence cannot be overemphasized.

3. Panelists

DR. GLADYS KALEMA-ZIKUSOKA

Dr. Gladys Zikusoka has become one of the leading conservationists and scientists working to save the Critically Endangered mountain gorillas of East Africa. She is founder and Chief Executive Officer of Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), a 16-year old non-profit organization that promotes conservation by improving the quality of life of people and wildlife to enable them to coexist in and around protected areas in Africa. She became an Ashoka Fellow in 2007 for merging Uganda's wildlife management and rural public health programs to create common resources for both people and animals. Dr. Gladys trained as a veterinarian at the University of London's Royal Veterinary College. Between 1996 and 2000, she set up the first Veterinary Unit at the Uganda Wildlife Authority. From 2000 to 2003, she completed a zoological medicine residency and masters in specialized veterinary medicine at North Carolina State University and North Carolina Zoological Park. Prior to setting up CTPH she also did a certificate in Non-profit management from Duke University. Most recently in 2016, she completed an MBA in Global Business and Sustainability – Social Entrepreneurship Track. Her most recent awards include the 2017 World Wildlife Day Award from the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) for outstanding contribution to conservation in Uganda and 2017 Golden Jubilee Award from the President of Uganda for distinguished service to the nation as a veterinarian and conservationist on International Women's Day. Other awards include San Diego Zoo's 2008 "Conservation in Action Award," the 2009 Whitley Gold Award for outstanding leadership in grassroots nature conservation; 2011 Wings World Quest Women of Discovery Humanitarian Award, and 2014 CEO Communications Africa's Most Influential Women in Business and Government Award

⁶ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1899155/hunters-busted-while-breaking-curfew>

⁷ <https://eia-international.org/blog/glue-made-from-the-bones-of-endangered-tigers-is-being-sold-to-promote-health-during-the-pandemic/>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/science/coronavirus-poaching-rhinos.html>

⁹ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2020/04/wildlife-safaris-halted-for-covid-boost-poaching-threat/>

in Medicine and Veterinary category. Dr. Gladys recently became a National Geographic Explorer and winner of the Sierra Club's 2018 EarthCare Award. CTPH recently won the 2020 Saint Andrews Prize for the Environment.

PROF. JONAH RATSIMBAZAFY

Prof. Ratsimbazafy is a native of Madagascar. He received his PhD at the State University of New York USA 2002 and his HDR at the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar in 2011. He is a Faculty lecturer at the University of Antananarivo and the University of Toamasina. He is the President of the Madagascar Primate Research Group (GERP). He is the Co-Vice Chair - Madagascar section, IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group; the Director of Houston Zoo, Madagascar Program; and the President of the Madagascar Primate Research Group (GERP). He is a member of the Malagasy Academia and the African Academic of Sciences. He was a former Vice President of Conservation of the International Primatological Society. He was the PI of the Earthwatch project entitled: "Lemurs and Forests of Madagascar". He has published over 200 research papers, review articles and book chapters and he sits on the Editorial Boards of 13 international journals. He organized the 5th International Congress of Prosimians in 2013 and the 1st Madagascar Primatological Society Congress in 2017. With his team, he discovered two lemur new species during the last decade. He has organized the World Lemur Festival. He contributed to more than 10 documentary films on the Madagascar biodiversity by CNN, BBC, French TVs; Malagasy, Brazilian, Polish and German TV, etc. He has won many international awards and prizes such as: the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in 1998; the Galante Award in 2002 of the International Primatological Society; and the Disney's Hero Conservation Award in 2015. Recently, he received from the Council of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) who unanimously approved his selection as a 2019 Lifetime Honorary Fellow. This is the highest honor awarded by ATBC. He also received the African Primatological Society Award 2019. Prof. Ratsimbazafy was recently elected the president of the International Primatological Society (IPS).

PROF. BASSIROU BONFOH, DIRECTOR AFRIQUE ONE-ASPIRE

Prof. Bonfoh holds a DVM and a PhD in epidemiology. He worked for 5 years (1995-2000) in West Africa as a livestock development program coordinator for *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières*. He went for a 4 year (2000-2004) epidemiology postdoctoral fellowship at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ) and Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH). He subsequently led for 4 years (2004-2008) a research group in the Horn Africa, West Africa and Central Asia where he contributed to validate the One Health concept. Between 2009-2018, he was the Managing Director of CSRS where he led the North-South science diplomacy. He is since 2009 to date the Director of the consortium Afrique One (DELTAS I) contributing to scientific foundation of One Health and the capacity development of young scientist in the same field. He is a guest lecturer at University of Liège (Belgium), African universities (Côte d'Ivoire, Togo) and at the Inter-States Veterinary School (Senegal) of which he is the chair of the scientific advisory board since 2017. He is author and co-author of up to 200 peer review papers and fellow of the African Academy of Sciences.

DR. SIÂN WATERS

Dr. Sian Waters is the founder and director of a community conservation project in Morocco which practises an inclusive, bottom up strategy to decrease the illegal trade in the Endangered Barbary macaque. She is affiliated to the Department of Anthropology of Durham University UK. Her consultancy work focuses on the human dimensions of conservation particularly around marginalised and remote communities and environmental justice issues. She has been working with wildlife for over 20 years, specialising in primate conservation issues and is passionate about the benefits of using ethnographic data to drive conservation project strategy. Her current research focuses on the complex facets of human-primate coexistence including primate tourism the social and cultural aspects of the primate and trade, and she is vice-chair of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group's Section on Human-Primate Interactions (SHPI).

DR. JOHANNES REFISCH

Dr. Johannes leads the secretariat for the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), a unique alliance of member nations, research institutions, conservation organizations, United Nations agencies and private supporters that is based at UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) headquarters in Nairobi. Johannes has a Diploma degree in animal ecology and has held scientific positions in Germany, Switzerland and the United States. He was co-director of the Tai Monkey Project in Cote d'Ivoire, and the results of his PhD work in 2001 resulted in a Research Conservation Award from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques. Johannes relocated to East Africa in 2005, and worked as a programme manager for the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), then joined GRASP in 2006. He is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Primate Specialist Group and the IUCN Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group. He has a wide experience in natural resource management (NRM) and assisted GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), IGCP, WWF and UNEP in designing, supervising and implementing NRM projects. Johannes is a Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions (CEED) at the University of Queensland, Australia. Johannes has visited many great ape range states in Africa and Asia, and the GRASP great apes photo exhibition "Their Fate is Ours: the Humanity of Great Apes" features his pictures and tours around African great ape range states and European donor countries.

4. Moderators

PROF. INZA KONE

Inza Koné is Full Professor of Conservation Biology at the *Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny*, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Since July 2018, he has been Managing Director of the *Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire* (CSRS). His work focuses on the management of natural resources and the conservation of large mammal species, particularly primates. This work makes the link between ecology, economy and culture for the empowerment of rural communities. Inza Koné has won several international and national awards, including the 2009 Future for Nature Award (Netherlands), the 2012 Whitley Award for outstanding leadership in grassroots nature conservation (United Kingdom), the 2015 National Research Award (Côte d'Ivoire), and the Officer medal in the order of merit of national education in Côte d'Ivoire. He is particularly active in several international professional organizations: President of the African Primatological Society since 2017, co-vice chair of the Africa Section of the Primate Specialists Group (IUCN), member of several Committees of the International Primatological Society, member of the of Hippopotamus specialists Group (IUCN), member of the Regional Advisory Committee of the BIOPAMA program for West Africa, Chairman of the Group of Evaluators for the Green List of Protected Areas in Côte d'Ivoire (IUCN)... Recently, Inza Koné has been selected to receive a Presidential Award of the International Primatological Society in recognition of the services rendered to the said society and his leadership in primate research and conservation efforts in Africa.

RACHEL ASHEGBOFE IKEMEH

Rachel Ashegbofe Ikemeh has 15+ years' experience in biodiversity conservation and a wide-range of subject matter in environmental science; much of her experience ranges from coordinating research, biological monitoring and conservation project administration/management. Rachel is the Project Director of SW/Niger Delta Forest Project, a conservation effort that puts conservation footprint in about 5,000sqkm of threatened forest ecosystems in southern Nigeria. She is a member of IUCN/SSC

Primate Specialist Group since 2010 where she also serves as executive member i.e. as co-Vice Chair African section, and she serves as committee member of the International Primatological Society (IPS) conservation and education committees and was a member of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group 2005 - 2015. Rachel is also a member of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) Education Caucus and she is a National Geographic Explorer. Prior to becoming a conservation professional, Rachel worked in some community projects that involved Rural Mobilization and Orientation, Social Impact Assessments (SIA) and Conflict Management Studies. She is also a trained and experienced public administrator – negotiating alternatives with stakeholders and advocating policy changes for environmental and community development.

5. Tentative programme

The virtual panel will take place on Zoom with a maximum number of 300 participants.

- **13:30** – Selected videos will be broadcasted on the platform (Interview of the APS president and shorth highlights of selected primate conservation successes by African primatologists)
- **14:00** – Welcome address and Presentation by APS President, Prof. Inza Kone
- **14:10** – Short Introductory remark on the theme and introduction of first panelist by Rachel Ashegbofe
- **14:15** – Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka’s presentation on ***‘On-ground realities of the connection between the pandemic (viz-a-viz human health) and non-human primates’ population/conservation’***
- **14:20** – Prof. Jonah Ratsimbazafy’s presentation on ***‘The gains and pains of human-wildlife interactions and the implications for primate research and conservation’***.
- **14:25** - Prof. Bassirou Bonfoh presentation’s on ***‘Spotlight on emerging diseases: the interface between human health and wildlife.’***
- **14:30** – Dr. Sian Waters presentation’s on ***‘Should we ban the wildlife trade? Avoiding a knee jerk response to plan for a sustainable future’***
- **14:35** - Johannes Refisch’s presentation on ***“Environmental change and zoonotic diseases: lessons for policy makers”***.
- **14:40** – Moderators summarize key points from all panelists and Moderator-curated questions directed to panelists
- **14:50** – Q&A and Interactive Session commences (opportunity for audience to comment, share experiences and ask pertinent questions directed at panelists)
- **15:40** – Concluding remarks by each panelist
- **15:50** – Summary, keynote adoption/declaration and Call for Action(s) by the **two rapporteurs** (Dr Ekwoke Abwé, APS Secretary General and Dr Karim Ouattara, APS treasurer).
- **15:55** – Vote of thanks by APS president
- **16:00** – APS Virtual Panel Discussion ends.

**the final titles of the communications of panellist might change slightly*

Considering the enthusiasm for the theme and the limited number of registrants, the panel discussion will be tape recorded for further dissemination using several channels including the web site of the International Primatological Society and those of other partner organizations. The IUCN PSG Section for Human-Primate Interactions will also be delighted to host this discussion on their website.