



for a living planet



NEWBITES APRIL - JUNE 2009

### Socio political situation

Mid-April, Ravalomanana, from his exile in Swaziland, appoints Manandafy Rakotonirina, as Prime Minister, in charge of the Ministry of Defense. The latter appoints in his turn six others ministers, with the overall mission to restore the functioning of the State. Mr. Rakotonirina, is a well-known Malagasy Politician, head of a Party called MFM, advocating the struggle of the proletarian class.

The pro Ravalomanana march up to the High Constitutional Court to lodge a complaint against the High Authority of Transition. The security forces banned this march which ended in a confrontation and loss of 3 lives, injured and arrests. The sound of gunfires and grenades were once again heard.



Mr. Manandafy Rakotonirina

At the end of April, Mr. Rakotonirina and some of his companions were arrested by military.

### International Community

The traditional international community still does not "recognize" the High Authority of Transition.

Beginning of May, a strong delegation of Saudi investors arrives in Madagascar. They intend to invest 2 Billions USD in the tourist, communications, and energy sectors. According to the Prime Minister of the Transition, this would be done to "fight against poverty after many years of poor governance". As suspected it never materialized.

Mid-May, Andry Rajoelina goes to Libya. This is his first official trip after his coming to power. According to him, this visit "is the first step of a diplomatic campaign intended to convince the foreign leaders that he is the legitimate president of Madagascar and that he wishes for good relationships with the rest of the world".

The Kingdom of Morocco commits itself to give a donation of 550 tons of rice of a value of 600.000 USD to be distributed among the people suffering from the drought in the South of Madagascar. "The country is currently going through hard times. We would like the Malagasy people to know that we are always here to help them," declares the Ambassador of Morocco in office in Madagascar.



Leader Kadhafi and Mr. Rajoelina

The European Union, first donor for Madagascar, gives 30 days to the Malagasy parties to give their opinion on the holding of a consensus dialogue and 120 supplementary days to achieve this programme.

### One step forward, two steps backwards

An International Contact Group (ICG) on Madagascar was created to start up "multilateral negotiations aiming at establishing a neutral, peaceful and consensual transition in Madagascar". The group is made out of international mediators of the African Union, of the SADC, of the International Organization of the French Speaking World and the UN. According to a declaration of the ICG "all the political tendencies are represented at the table of negotiations. The negotiations are continuing in order to obtain the support of the participating circles in a Transition Chart which will provide a frame for the consensual management of the transition leading to free, just, fair and transparent elections in the shortest delays".

While everything seems to go smoothly, Didier Ratsiraka, from his exile in France, sends a letter to the facilitators informing them that he has ordered his representatives to suspend their participation in the negotiations. According to him, "the conditions are not complete to allow for a peaceful, honest and constructive dialogue".

On its side, the Ravalomanana circle, also suspends its taking part in the negotiations and sets pre conditions: the return of Ravalomanana at the power and the freeing of their Prime Minister and the pro-Ravalomanana militants.



The political detainees at the time of Ravalomanana, which were relaxed by the HAT, do not want to be outdone, and insist in taking part actively in the negotiations, despite the rules set by the ICG. Facing the intransigence of the ICG, they demand the suspension of the organization of the started dialogue and plan to organize a popular meeting if the ICG persists. They sent out a warning towards the international community and they even say that “ the participation of the international community in the current dialogue is only worsening the situation which is already very critical in Madagascar”.

The ICG suspended the negotiations for a few days after sharing the draft of the Transition Chart among the belligerents.

## Good News!

In our last newsbites, we mentioned how the political turmoil and the atmosphere of lawlessness had favored the escalation of illegal logging and trade in wild species.

During the last two months, conservation organizations (WWF, CI, WCS) actively engaged with the Madagascar's government and donor partners as well as the media to get the story out and put pressure on the Malagasy authorities to seriously address the issue.

The initial measures taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Madagascar National Parks board (see last newsbites) resulted in the closing of several loggers' camping grounds in the Marojejy and Mananara national parks. According to the last report from Madagascar

National Parks, both parks are now free from loggers and two new armed forces stations were opened at the boundary of both parks to discourage further intrusion. Several foreigners (mostly Asians) were expelled from Madagascar in April and May 2009 and delinquents caught in the parks are now under investigation by the gendarmes in Antalaha. The

Marojejy National Parks re-opened to tourists in early May 2009. The Ministry of Environment and Forests intends to hire an international investigation body such as Global Witness or Global Forest Watch to conduct a comprehensive survey of the illegal hardwood chain and its economic, social and environmental impacts.

## Unfortunately, still some concerns

Major concerns remain regarding the use of the wood seized so far as authorities have clearly expressed their wishes to export these and indeed exports are currently going on. Conservation organizations are worried that this would be a means of “whitewashing” illegally harvested wood and also that it could send the wrong message that the wood trade is still opened and permitted. We also do not have information on illegal logging outside protected areas although the likelihood is very high.

WWF, WCS and CI held an informative meeting on the issue of illegal logging with environmental donors and the international community in Madagascar on April 29, 2009. This resulted in the preparation of a joint communiqué to emphasize the need for stronger commitment from the Malagasy government to “still more proactive and aggressive response in addressing this increased harvesting of Madagascar's unique natural resources by implementing a legal transparent system of wood trade that effectively controls all points in the supply chain”.

A brown bag presentation on the crisis and its impacts on biodiversity conservation was also held by WWF, CI and WCS at WWF-US headquarters in Washington DC on May 22, 2009 and was attended by several NGOs and State Department representatives. It aimed to explain to donors that cutting funds for the environment would have high significant negative impacts on biodiversity since weak presence of conservationists on the ground means an increase of the intensity of illegal natural resources exploitation. This will in turn seriously affect the sustainability of the local people's livelihoods, as well as medium term availability of natural food sources.

However, the US Government cuts off funding two days ahead of this action.

We still hope this joint presentation will have an effect on non-governmental donors, and that US Government would reconsider their position.



## Illegal logging, some figures...

586 containers: it is the rough estimation of the quantity of wood logged since the beginning of the crisis (it is difficult to get exact data because of the prevailing insecurity). The World Bank estimates the value of the logged wood to be 55 millions USD. The actual area of primary forest affected and the impacts are more difficult to assess, as there is no way to know whether the wood was taken exclusively from the parks or from the wider SAVA region. According to informal estimation, “*If cut exclusively within the 2 protected areas, this would correspond to a cut of 100% of the rosewood trees on 4% of the protected areas surfaces.*”

*The ecological damage depends whether in certain areas all rosewood has been cut down, thus stopping reproduction there, or if only larger or smaller trees were cut, still permitting slowed down reproduction. (WWF is undertaking research in some areas to assess timber stock left.)*

*Thus, the biggest damage might not be the actual 586 containers, but the break down of the rules, set up in a several years effort, and the confirmation to the rosewood exploiters that cutting and exporting is allowed to go on.”*

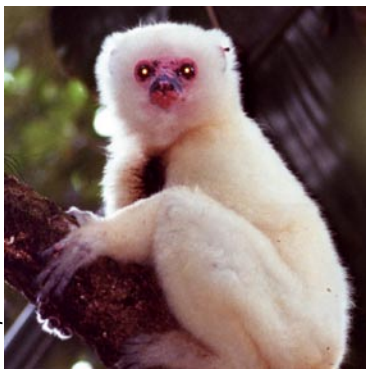


As a matter-of-fact, we have just been notified by local forest service staff and local authorities of illegal logging and collection of medicinal plants in the Ivohibe forest corridor in southeastern Madagascar. Apparently loggers are protected by armed militaries and products are evacuated to Farafangana, where there is a port.

## Financial support for the environment

The non-recognition of the new regime by the international community has led to the suspension of donor support for the environment. The US government has recently decided to suspend funding USD 7 million biodiversity for 2009-2010 and World Bank have suspended all new payments for the Environmental Programme subsequent to the change of power on 17 March 2009.

This will mainly impact the Ministry's ability to function in a normal way and fulfill their duties properly. This could result in more laxness and hence greater demotivation of local actors to engage in conservation. In WWF intervention zones, our agents are often the remaining link between local populations and the “formal system”. Given this situation, WWF has redirected its support to focus more on people and maintaining local livelihoods as well as supporting community-based and civil society organizations during this transition period.



## Some news of our Programme

### New concepts

#### Protected Areas and Climate Change

**Donor:** EU

**Financing:** 1,59 million euros

**Duration:** 3 years

**Status:** Expression of Interest submitted by WWF-International to WWF-EPO and accepted for a full proposal.

Development project and methodology test to integrate the adaptation to climate change in the conception and the management of the PA. Madagascar will be a pilot country.



**Restoration of the forest landscape of Fandriana Marolambo for the improvement of the life conditions of the surrounding people.**

**Duration:** 3 years

**Status:** Expression of Interest submitted but rejected

### New projects

Four new projects come in to fill out our portfolios.

**Project Number:** MG0933.01

**Title:** Mangrove conservation in western Madagascar: A vulnerability assessment

**Start date:** 1 March 2009

**Planned end date:** 30 May 2010

**Donor:** Mac Arthur Foundation

**Summary:** The national vulnerability assessment workshop identified mangrove areas around Madagascar that are key priorities for climate-change-related conservation action. The project will assess the vulnerability to climate change of the mangroves in the Tsiribihina and Manambolo areas which have the most expansive and developed mangroves in the country.

**Objectives:** The project objective is to conduct a credible vulnerability assessment of mangroves in the Tsiribihina and Manambolo areas to provide solid baseline data for future conservation and sustainable management in the context of climate change.

The goal of this project is to build the key knowledge about mangrove system in Madagascar, develop effective approaches for building resilience in this system and to work with the Malagasy government to incorporate that knowledge into conservation planning.

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**Project Number:** MG0934.01

**Title :** Scaling up of PHE (Population Health Environment) Approach in Madagascar

**Start date:** 1 November 2008

**Planned end date:** 30 June 2010

**Donor :** USAID

**Summary:** The project is seeking to scale up previous PHE experience in Madagascar in order to influence the support of sustainable livelihoods of communities around conservation zones, through awareness raising inside/outside WWF and building synergy between all stakeholders.

**Objectives:** In collaboration with other national and international organizations, the project will support the creation of a sustainable PHE network as a platform of organizations for the coordination, communication, follow up, training, M&E reinforcement, capitalization of learning from field implementation of integrated activities including Health, Education, Wealth, empowerment, conservation areas.



After relevant learning of field implementation during the last five years, the ambition of the project is to scale-up and promote PHE (Population Health Environment) approach as a tool for strengthening of synergy between all stakeholders (inside/outside WWF) at all levels to influence for the support of sustainable livelihoods of communities and sustainable biodiversity conservation.

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**Project Number:** MG0935.01

**Title :** Change Adaptation Capacity in Madagascar

**Start date:** 1 May 2009

**Planned end date:** 1 May 2012

**Donor :** WWF NORWAY/NORAD

**Summary:** The project will contribute to the sustainable development of Madagascar and poverty reduction at local, national and regional levels, through the improvement of in-country capacity to understand and deal with climate change. This project is to develop WWF and other conservation organization's capacity in integrating climate change into conservation programmes and supporting the development of adaptation measures in such programmes.

**Project Number:** MG0936.01

**Title:** Girls Scholarship II

**Start date:** January 2009

**Planned end date:** December 2009

**Donor:** WWF-US

**Summary:** The Girls Scholarship II aims to reduce pressures and threats to the dry forest in the Mahafaly Plateau by empowering 125 women through literacy classes with locally-relevant environmental lessons, by helping women to create and manage family plantation that contribute to reduce unsustainable natural resource use, and by promoting the use of improved cooking stoves that reduce deforestation for fuel wood purpose.



**Objectives:** As a second phase of the girls scholarship program, the project aims to educate and empower women who have a key role in forest conservation in the Mahafaly Plateau area. One of the key problems in this area is deforestation and habitat destruction due to increased fuel wood and charcoal production.

consumption. The main goal is to reduce pressures and threats to the dry and spiny forest associated with women's illiteracy, lack of information and disempowerment.

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### Some works worth mentioning

#### Training sessions on conservation planning and evaluation of management effectiveness

From mid January to end March, WWF carried out training sessions on conservation planning and evaluation of management effectiveness targeting:

- key department units within environmental ministries involved in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation and management of protected areas (Direction du Système des Aires Protégées or DSAP and Direction de la Coordination, Planification, et Suivi-Evaluation or DCPSE)
- protected areas promoters and,
- local communities and authorities.

22 staff from the Ministry, 31 representatives from 12 promoters and 11 members from association leaders and local authorities were trained during that period on:

- contextual analysis (both biological and social- economical and cultural) and prioritization,
- management and governance (management structure, identification of appropriate category and governance type for the PA),
- elaboration of strategy, monitoring system and workplan.



Marojejy National Park

These sessions also constituted opportunities to train all participants on the use of Miradi, a conservation planning tool based on standards approach developed by CMP (Conservation Measurement Partnership), a consortium including major international institutions (IUCN, WCPA) and non profit-entities and NGOs (WWF, WCS, TNC, Fondation of Success, CI etc). The goal of this campaign was to promote good practices on planning among conservation practitioners and partners involved in the setting up of new protected areas.

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#### New technologies to monitor forest degradation

Dr Gregory Asner, from the Carnegie Institution, visited Madagascar from April 26 to May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 to help the project monitoring forest degradation from satellite imagery with CLASlite, a tool him and his team developed.

Greg Asner's technology will help the project in two main aspects:

- In developing the carbon density map of the project's sites with the LiDAR technology;
- In monitoring the forest cover change and disturbance with the CLASlite software.

The LiDAR technology will provide us with the carbon density of the forest while the CLASlite will allow us to monitor disturbances (degradation), which has always been very difficult to monitor before and even impossible using solely satellite imagery.

However these two technologies are the state of the art in the field of forest carbon, there is still a need to do field measurements for calibrating and adjusting the models developed by default for the LiDAR.

Apart from the advanced level of technology used, practically, the combination of the field measurements and the new technology brought by Greg Asner is that we are going to be able to allocate the project's resources more efficiently (time, finance and labor) without losing anything in precision of the estimation of the carbon stock. Moreover, the ability to use any regular, free satellite imagery is an enormous advantage compared to the other possible alternatives.

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#### Marine Protected Areas Network on the Indian Ocean Countries

In the framework of its ecoregional analysis, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Ecoregion (WIOMER) has achieved with success its first technical workshop held in Mauritius last April 2009.

About forty marine experts from different domains including taxonomy, ecology and biology, conservation planning, and environmental vulnerability were gathered to discuss and set up the foundation and process to conduct the WIOMER marine priority setting process.

This workshop successfully created enthusiasm and strengthened collaboration with and between experts and come through different aspects to be integrated into the process such as the list of species, habitats and threats, environmental layers for modelling species distribution, environmental vulnerability and climate change and the subecoregion classification.

The WIOMER priority setting process adopted is the combination of both expert and computer based approaches in order to maximize the complementary aspects of each method and following the principles of systematic conservation planning as guidelines. Different tasks have been planned until November 2009 where the results of this priority setting analysis will be presented for approval in front of marine experts, governmental institutions and decision makers.

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#### Capacity building in advocacy

Two training sessions were organized (one for Antananarivo and another one for Toliara). In total, 33 participants were trained. The trainings were co-facilitated by a consultant, who refined the module, and the project team. The aim is to build the capacity of the staff members on the advocacy techniques in order to help them in the conception and the implementation of the initiatives and the objects of advocacy.

The workshop has allowed all the staff members to have a common understanding of capacity building and to act in an appropriate way in the planning and implementing of the capacity of the development and activity strategies, in view of supporting the conservation actions on biodiversity and the management of the resources.

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WIOMER workshop-Mauritius



*Coordination of actions Wood energy in the Atsimo Andrefana Region for greater efficiency, coherence and complementarity of the various actors*

A meeting of the Energy Forest Regional Commission (EFRC) was held in Toliara on 20 May 2009 on the theme "Wood Energy and alternatives".

This meeting helped to initiate research collaboration and complementarities between actors in the wood energy network in the Atsimo Andrefana Region. Thirty participants attended.

Based on the objectives and activities under the Strategy for Sustainable Wood Energy of Toliara, the participants could clarify their position and action in this common framework, and identify synergies to put in place between stakeholders. Works in groups of targets are expected to clarify and implement these collaborations.

For the Atsimo Andrefana Region, which assigned a Technical Secretary to mobilize and facilitate the implementation of the objectives of the EFRC, these meetings are an opportunity to establish good coordination of actions taking place on its territory and to understand the development of the region.

The participants unanimously recognized the relevance of the EFRC, which is becoming increasingly important, particularly in the validation of the players' intervention strategies.

For the establishment of such coordination, the SEESO (Synergy Energy-Environment in the South West) project, funded mainly by the European Union under the Energy Facility, has brought a new breath in the management of the network, expecting more exchanges between actors, and more impacts on the whole, with regards to the establishment of a rational management of wood energy in the Atsimo Andrefana Region.



**Staffing**

Since the 1st of May 2009, the new Programme Coordinators have taken their position. They are:

- Tiana Ramahaleo, Conservation Science Programme Coordinator
- Voahirana Randriambola, Footprint Programme Coordinator
- Joseph Rakotolahy, Initiatives for Sustainability Programme Coordinator
- Fidy Ralison, Marine Programme Coordinator a.i.

Malika Virah-Sawmy completed this fine team since June 25, in the position of Terrestrial Programme Coordinator.

**Some stories of our projects**

**A strategic meeting for the implementation of marine reserves and for the creation of a Marine Protected Area.**

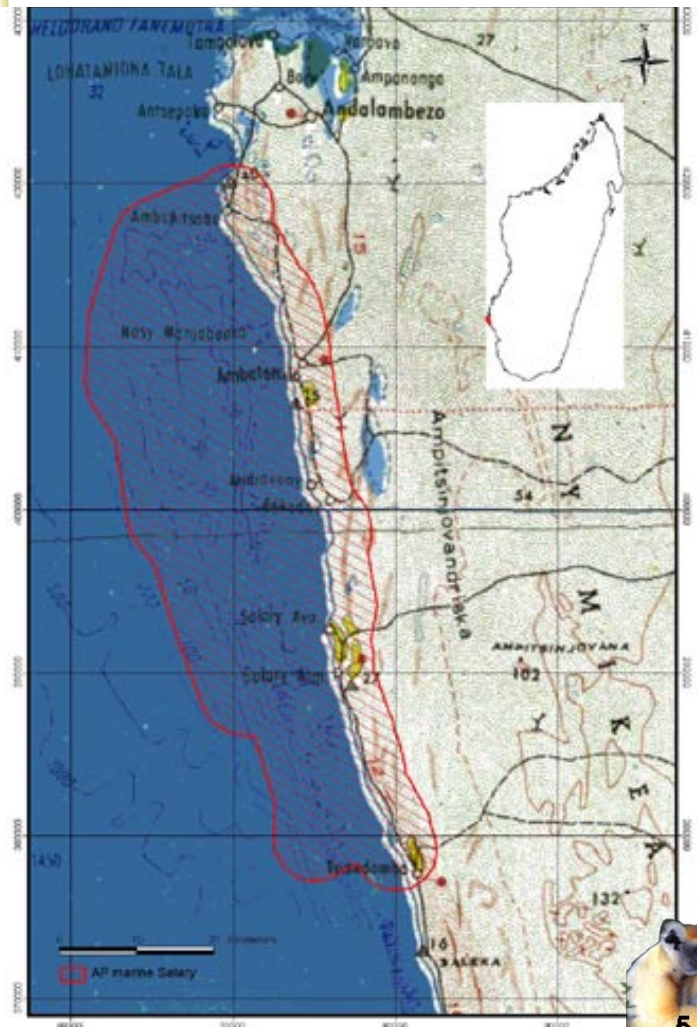
In the framework of the creation of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) and the implementation of fisheries reserves in the North Saly area, a communal regrouping workshop has been carried out in South Manombo in April 2009. This meeting was initiated by the rural town of South Manombo and was supported by the marine programme of WWF and the team of WCS.

Each entity was represented during this workshop, which lasted 2 days regrouping in all, about sixty participants.

This workshop had an active participation of the local communities and a considerable participation of women (about 25%). Their willingness to get involved in the creation of the MPA was demonstrated through this workshop. The non-conformity of certain fishing laws with the realities on the field was discussed between the fishers and the representative of the Regional Service of Fisheries and Fisheries products.

At the end of this meeting, a common vision was defined: "Rationally exploit the marine resources of today in order to ensure the survival of the future generations". A process that should be adopted for the implementation of the "dina" (local convention for the management of the fish reserves and the marine resources in general) has been established in a participative way. A map of the locality was set up for the whole area and a proposal on the management structure of the fish reserves has been adopted. It concerns the implementation of a unique management committee for the whole of the area and each village.

The results of this meeting have immediately been materialized through achievements on the field. A restitution of the workshop has been carried out in each village in order to share these results with the local communities. The first two steps of the process of implementation of the "dina" on the marine reserves have been carried out with success; these steps mostly consist in catalyzing the development of the draft of the "dina" by the villagers. Pre-zoning works have been carried out; it consists in spotting and demarcating the fishing areas and the proposed reserves and to collect the related information. These works have been carried out by our GIS department in collaboration with the local communities, and allowed us having a map of the concerted and geo-referenced location, which is an important tool for all future decision-makings.



## Communities of fishers in charge

The sustainable fishing project of WWF works with communities and various partners in the south of Toliara. The village committee is grouped and represented in communal committees who in turn should soon constitute a regional committee.

During the villagers' workshops and the communal workshops, the communication strategies in favor of the sustainable management of the natural resources, especially with the marine, have been identified and implemented. The system is already operational at the level of the villages and communes. Last year, the committees actively contributed in arresting tortoise poachers.

Recently, the committees and communities of Fanambosa supported each other to denounce foreigners who restricted the access to a whole coral reef, using as an excuse that the reef belongs to them. Security forces, which are part of the regional committees, seized the matter and it has now been taken to a regional level. The denounced usurpers abandoned all activities in the area.

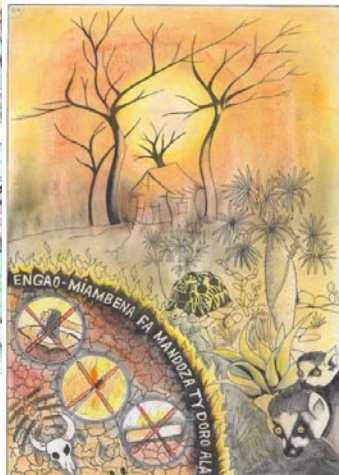


Whalebone - Tariboly

## Mahafaly Plateau: environmental education in favor of the natural resources

Change in behavior is a difficult process for adults. WWF projects implemented on the Mahafaly Plateau carry out actions every year which aim at preparing children to become responsible adults, aware of the importance of the sustainable use of the natural resources at their disposal.

In 2007, a poetry contest on the management of the natural resources of water was carried with the students of Ejeda and Itampolo Secondary Schools. The students were all very inspired, especially those from Itampolo who won the first three prizes.



In 2008, a contest for the designing of a poster on the healthy management of the bush fires had more than 200 participants coming from all over the Asimo Andrefana region.

The collected interesting posters, were exploited and used as visual aids in education and communication actions in the frame of the implementation of the Mahafaly Plateau Strategy against bush fires.

This year, the theme of environmental education is focused on reforestation. A talent contest was organized in many secondary schools and received the strong participation of the team of the Environmental Education Cultural Centre of the Atsimo Andrefana Regional Directorate of National Education. In order to get prepared for this contest, students searched for information on the forest resources and the reforestation policies and techniques and this reinforced their interest on the protection of the biodiversity. The selections and the award ceremony took place in the National Park of Tsimanampetsotse during the celebration of the Global Day of Environment on 5 June 2009. A team from Madagascar

National Parks organized a guided visit of the National Park, which is suggested to become World Heritage site in the future.

## Youths' engagement

Every year, the Vintsy Club members celebrate World Environment Day. As this year's theme was focused on citizen's sensitization, members of Vintsy Club organized sets of information for raising awareness in primary and secondary schools in their area.

In Majunga, students have discovered several themes on the environment through "Environment Week" organized in collaboration with the Alliance Française. Choosing a theme each day, Vintsy Clubs invited students in daily discussions after the screening of a series of film on the environment: the richness of biodiversity, renewable energy, climate change and, waste. The supervisors conducted "nature classes" for visitors who discovered the area and the "Cirque Rouge" with its rich geologies and histories.

Furthermore, Vintsy Clubs, commit themselves more and more to conservation and to develop their environmental activities by extending their partnership.

Members of the Vintsy Club "Mik'Olo ny Miaina" of the Veterinary Department (Faculty of Medicine Antananarivo), developed an extensive partnership with the Zoological and Botanical Park Tsimbazaza for deworming lemurs in the park.

Vintsy Club "Baobab" of Philibert Tsiranana High School, has been selected as preferred supplier and partner of the German-Malagasy Environment Programme to conduct a study on household energy consumption in the city of Majunga.

## Akon'i Onilahy (Echo from Onilahy)

That is the name of the radio programme produced by SOKAPILA, HOHEMIHA and WWF, supported by the Tany Meva Foundation, to strengthen the capacities of local associations and communities for joint management of the new protected area (NPA) Amoron'i Onilahy. The show is broadcast by six local radio stations, from May 2009, once a week, for 15 minutes

Video films are screened at the commune level of the NPA Amoron'i Onilahy. They complement the efforts of communities and local stakeholders' awareness and education on issues regarding bushfires and slash and burn.

Following a long participatory process with professional local producers (Ramsflare for movies and Sokapila for radio), focus groups were held, followed by recordings, to reflect the experiences and thoughts of local actors.



Attitudes and behaviours of the community and local actors are changing gradually towards the creation of NPA's, also towards destructive practices as well as initiatives for conservation and development (zoning, Natural Resources Transfer Management, participatory environmental monitoring, ecotourism, etc.).

### *New branding for Madagascar National Parks*

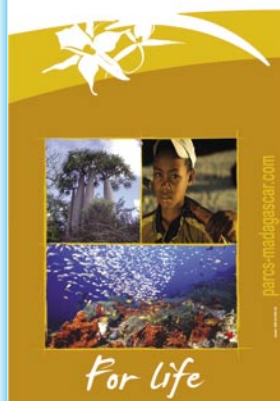
The Branding / Marketing project for Madagascar National Parks (former ANGAP), funded by the German Financial Cooperation KfW, ended late May 2009.

Under this project, the Association managing the network of Protected Areas of Madagascar has reinforced its image by adopting a new name which was launched as a label reference in the environmental field for national and international ecotourism.



However, Madagascar National Parks intends to use the past crisis to change over its new identity and its new label and create a strong corporate culture internally and transmitted externally to others: vis-à-vis the target audiences such as institutional, Science professionals in Ecotourism, and strengthen its expertise in the management of protected areas.

Several marketing and communication initiatives were planned and implemented, (some have been postponed because of the political crisis), impacting significantly on the ecotourism sector which is now at a standstill.



### *Coal makers structured in associations for a professional organization of the channel.*

Following an assessment of the coal makers, two associations of coal makers have been established by the SEESO project, in the pilot communities of the project for the implementation of the regulation and organization of the Fuelwood supplies.

In view of the concerns that were expressed by the coal makers during the structuring meeting, the implementation of the associations seems appropriate and promising, in order to improve their activities, their benefits and their future.

The associations will exploit demarcated production areas after a participative zoning exercise, which will imply a rationalization of the exploitation and will contribute in this way to the decrease of deforestation

The motivation of the charcoal makers who benefit from the associations resides in the preservation of their interests, since the exploitation of the resources is set aside to the members of the associations who live in the fokontany; through this, the illegal exploitations of migrants for instance, will be better controlled and prevented.

Alongside this, training in improved carbonization will be undertaken, which will reduce the exploitation of wood while contributing to the increase of their production in view of supplying the town of Toliara in wood charcoal on a regular and permanent basis.



## COMMUNIQUE

Environmental Governance: Need for aggressive transparent actions to curb illegal logging in and around Madagascar's Protected Areas and World Heritage Sites

The international community and conservation partners resident in Madagascar are very concerned by the escalation of illegal logging in and around protected areas. We recognize that this has been a long term problem spanning more than a decade. However, we believe the recent, dramatic escalation in illegal logging is directly linked to the irresponsible actions by mafia-like groups and governance challenges linked with a fragile institutional context that makes enforcement of existing laws and regulations difficult.

While we applaud the concrete actions initiated by Madagascar National Parks to curtail illegal logging in the World Heritage Sites of Masoala and Marojejy National Parks and their peripheral zones, we are concerned that this action plan has not yet reduced the impact of logging in the immediate term. It does not adequately ensure transparency and control at the different points within wood supply chains starting at harvest through to the point of export.

We are troubled that Madagascar's image, nationally and internationally, as a country committed to the protection of its unique biodiversity and natural resources is being irreparably damaged, resulting in reduced long term support to protected areas and making it difficult for Madagascar's people to benefit from its natural resource heritage.

We are also afraid this damage could spread around other Protected Areas and their peripheral zone. The increased illegal logging calls into question Madagascar's genuine commitment to a transparent wood control system that documents the legality of harvesting and sales. A significant amount of precious resources - hardwood, unique biodiversity and non-collected fees - are irreversibly lost from this uncontrolled timber harvesting. The Malagasy rural people only marginally benefit from this illegal trade of precious wood, as the international value of the exported wood is over 600 times the benefits to the collector. It is clear the current situation does not further the fight against poverty or the livelihoods of Madagascar's rural population.

Illegal trade of timber is growing in importance and concern at the global level. The United States and European Union are putting in place new strict laws and regulations to stop the importation of illegally harvested and traded wood products. We, the international community and conservation partners, encourage a still more proactive and aggressive response in addressing this increased harvesting of Madagascar's unique natural resources by implementing a legal transparent system of wood trade that effectively controls all points in the supply chain. Environmental governance can and must be improved through preventive actions at all levels, including pressure on international buyers coupled with incentives that support legal trade and respond to the needs and engagement of local communities. Moreover, it is essential that the Malagasy authorities, with the support of all stakeholders, improve support to protected areas in order to preserve the extraordinary biological riches of Madagascar.

May 2009

International Community and conservation partners resident in Madagascar:

- The French Embassy
- The German Embassy
- The Japanese Embassy
- The Norwegian Embassy
- The Swiss Embassy
- The USA Embassy
- KfW Entwicklungsbank
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- US Agency for International Development
- World Bank
- Conservation International
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Worldwide Fund for Nature

