

DP 54

**REALITY OR RHETORIC?
ECOTOURISM AND
RURAL RECONSTRUCTION
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by Eddie Koch

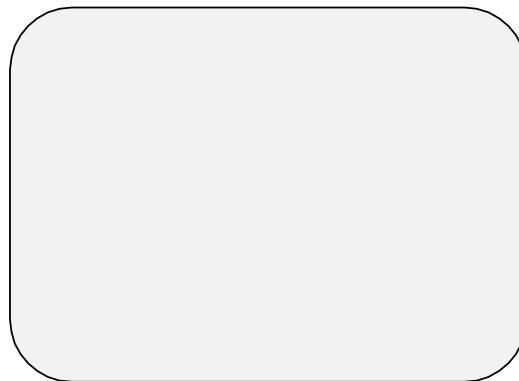
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PREFACE

Under its programme on Environment, Sustainable Development and Social Change, the Institute is currently focusing on the social dimensions of policies and initiatives for environmental protection. The purpose of the research is to analyse the implications for livelihood and conditions of life, especially of the low-income groups, of a wide variety of projects to rehabilitate degraded resources and protect wild animals and plant species in national parks and reserves. The majority of the research costs under the project are covered by a grant from the Biodiversity Unit of WWF-International. This paper forms part of the work being undertaken under this research project.

The paper first examines the international context and the economics of tourism in South Africa. It then turns to the historical evolution of wildlife conservation and the establishment of game parks and reserves. After a survey of popular attitudes towards conservation policies and programmes, the paper summarizes and evaluates recent efforts by various conservation agencies to overcome the legacy of apartheid, mainly by creating community-based game reserves and implementing other schemes designed to redistribute the profits of ecotourism to improve the livelihood of rural people. It then describes the approaches to conservation of different political parties and concludes with a number of policy recommendations designed to integrate conservation with community empowerment and control over resources and improvement of living standards of the rural poor.

Like the country's history, the conservation movement in South Africa has been associated with violence, forced relocation of people and deprivation of access to natural resources of the inhabitants of protected areas. Recently, attempts have been made to justify conservation in terms of its benefits to the people through generation of employment and incomes. Indeed, the tourist industry has a vast potential in South Africa. It already accounts for a significant proportion of employment and foreign exchange earnings. Many estimates show that returns to investment in game reserves exceed those in ranching or agriculture. However, typically the bulk of the benefits accrue to foreign and urban domestic enterprises and wealthy investors. Given the history of the conservation movement in South Africa, the people are deeply suspicious of any new efforts to create game parks and nature reserves.

The rapid political changes in the country culminating in elections based on universal suffrage have stimulated a wide variety of initiatives to ensure diffusion of the benefits of ecotourism to local communities. These initiatives have resulted in a rich variety of institutional arrangements such as land leasing between communal authorities and conservation agencies, contract parks administered jointly by elected community representatives and conservationists, and tribal and community based organizations participating in decision-making and in revenues from conservation schemes. While some of these schemes have yielded only token participation and benefits, others have resulted in significant flows of income and strengthening of community organizations.

The full potential of ecotourism in empowering local people and generating economic benefits can only be realized if these initiatives are accompanied by wide ranging reforms such as restoration of land rights to local communities; support for new forms of land tenure, including communal arrangements; strengthening and democratization of community organizations; construction of physical infrastructure; investment in technical and managerial skills of local people; and mandatory social impact assessments of all ecotourism schemes.

Eddie Koch, the author of this paper, is a South African journalist and a trustee of the Group for Environmental Monitoring, an organization promoting research and policy studies on environmental impact on the most disadvantaged sections of the South African society. At UNRISD, the project on the Social and Environmental Impact of National Parks and Protected Areas is co-ordinated by Krishna Ghimire.

August, 1994

Dharam Ghai
Director

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Several of my peers have expressed serious reservations about ecotourism's ability to improve the lives of rural people in South Africa. They are especially concerned that an influx of foreign visitors will undermine the cultures of indigenous people and make the destinies of rural settlements dependent on the fickleness of outside agencies. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate debate about these vital issues. Responsibility for its analysis and conclusions is, of course, entirely my own. The paper was written before South Africa's first non-racial elections in April 1994, but was edited following those elections. Many of the political institutions described in it are likely to change significantly.

Eddie Koch

**Map: South Africa: Homelands and National Parks and Game Reserves Mentioned
in Paper**

(Map not available in this version of the report)

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"People have practised a form of land use that has kept the region's five ecological zones intact for centuries. This is now becoming an important economic asset - but who benefits? Tourist development fails to materially benefit those most affected by conservation policy, the people most directly affected by land acquisitions... Lack of community control over this style of economic development results in the perception that it is for animals and rich tourists. Increasingly the new trend of state conservation bodies, along with private developers, instead of involving resident communities as a third and equal partner is alienating these owners of land from some control over the development of their resources and from real sustained benefits from ecotourism." (statement at the Land Conservation and Tourism Conference, which was attended by some 100 community organizations in the Maputaland region of Natal, September 1992).

INTRODUCTION

About 250 kilometres north of Durban, a port city on the coast of South Africa's troubled Natal province, lies a 12-kilometre stretch of beach dunes that separate a tranquil estuary from the crashing waves of the Indian Ocean. The undulating dunes, covered by one of the country's last remaining sand forests, stand sentinel over the rare ecosystem that survives in and around the lake located on their landward side.

The region's great natural beauty, and its rich biological diversity, have earned it the status of a site of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat, under the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty set up to protect the world's remaining wetlands. The estuary provides a sanctuary for flamingos, pelicans, crocodiles, the biggest population of hippo in South Africa, red duiker, the rare suni antelope and many species of migratory birds that breed in Asia, Europe and North Africa.

This small corner of the country, called St Lucia, has also become the site of a heated environmental debate, making it probably the most fiercely contested piece of land in South Africa today. The eddies of controversy that swirl around its sands relate to the problems, as well as the potential advantages, associated with efforts to use nature-based tourism as a tool for reconstructing parts of South Africa's rural economy during the period of transition from apartheid to majority rule.

The struggle began some three years ago when Richards Bay Minerals (RBM), a local subsidiary of the multinational mining corporation Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), announced it had plans to strip mine the dunes on the eastern shores of St Lucia for titanium and other heavy minerals. This corporation currently operates a large heavy metals mine and processing plant at Richards Bay, some 25 kilometres south of St Lucia. Its officials estimate that deposits of titanium and other heavy minerals in the dune sands on the eastern shores are worth some SAR 5 billion (about US\$ 1.42 billion). They argue that, by expanding into the St Lucia area, their mining activities will provide 160 new jobs to people living in the impoverished rural areas around the site and greatly enhance their quality of life. The company claims that it will be able to rehabilitate indigenous forests destroyed in the mining process and will thus cause no long-term environmental damage. According to a study conducted to assess the environmental impact of the

proposed project, the mine will not cause any significant short-term damage to the St Lucia wetlands or the species that live in and around them (CSIR, 1993a: vol. 3, ch. 5).

The Natal Parks Board, one of the many state-supported conservation agencies in South Africa, believes mining will pose a significant threat to the variety of plant and animal species that exist on the dunes and in the wetlands around St Lucia. The area's fairly pristine geography and biodiversity make it a prime site for ecotourism, which has the potential to provide more jobs than mining for a longer period of time without destroying the ecology of the dunes and the estuary. If the area were to be made one of the country's prime "eco-destinations", it could simultaneously increase the amount of conservation land in South Africa and provide hundreds of lifetime jobs for local people in tourist lodges and camps (CSIR, 1993a: vol.1, part 1, pp. 49-59; 103-102; 532-560).

The dunes are located inside an existing nature reserve, one of many game parks and conservation areas in the Maputaland district of northern Natal. The region, stretching northwards from St Lucia to South Africa's border with southern Mozambique, is unique in South Africa because it is made up of at least five interlinking ecozones. Local conservationists share a long-term plan to create a national park by joining the St Lucia reserve with other private and state-run reserves in the Maputaland area.

The debate between the mining corporation and conservationists over the future of St Lucia became the focus of one of the most heated environmental controversies ever in South Africa. Some 150 environmental and conservation organizations formed an alliance, called the Campaign to Save St Lucia, and mounted a determined campaign to prevent the dunes from being mined. They argued that nature-based tourism was a more sustainable form of development for the area. The organizations launched a petition which was signed by some 300,000 people, including Nelson Mandela and local celebrities. They cited the Ramsar Convention's stipulation that sites under its protection may not be mined (**The Star**, 17 August 1993; **The Star**, 9 November 1989).

In December 1993 their efforts were rewarded when a supreme court judge, appointed to head a panel set up to review the environment impact study, ruled that mining be banned. The review panel concluded that mining would cause irreparable damage to the ecology of St Lucia and that ecotourism was a more effective vehicle for improving the livelihoods of people who live in the surrounding rural areas.

The judge also recommended that South Africa's government establish a national heritage park at St Lucia because of its "rich history, ecological and biological diversity". He suggested that the Natal Parks Board administer the conservation zone and an ecotourism scheme, at least until a new board is set up to run the proposed heritage park. The mining corporation has agreed to abide by the opinion of the review panel and the African National Congress (ANC) has cautiously welcomed the ruling but urged the then white-dominated cabinet to leave final decisions to a new government (**The Weekly Mail and Guardian**, 17-22 December 1993).

The balance of forces in the conflict over St Lucia seems to have swung in favour of the proponents of ecotourism. In the process, the issues have shifted. St Lucia is no longer a symbol of struggle between South Africa's green movement and a powerful

multinational mining corporation. Instead, it has become emblematic of the challenges that face ecotourism if it is to live up to claims that it is an effective instrument for rural reconstruction in the new South Africa.

The protagonists in the environmental contest were primarily from white middle class constituencies, although a growing number of black students and professionals were exposed to the debate by extensive media coverage of the issue. However, caught in the middle was a more neglected constituency — the indigenous people whose ancestors owned the land being so hotly contested by groups of outsiders. So far there has been no in-depth study of the attitudes of these people towards the competing ecotourism and mining options regarding the use of their land. But they have manifested their feelings in some rather direct ways.

In early 1993, two white officials from the mining corporation were shot dead by gunmen from a community that lives in a forest not far from St Lucia. It appears the attackers were resisting attempts by the company to survey the forest in order to build a dam and pipeline to supply its mining operations at Richards Bay. The proposed works involve the removal of about 300 people from the forest and the banana plantations they have established in the area. Their violent reaction was linked to an internecine dispute between members of the Zulu nationalist movement, the Inkatha Freedom Party, which tends to support the mining option, and members of the ANC (**The Weekly Mail**, 19-25 March 1993). The conflict has been part of the low intensity civil war between supporters of these two groups in Natal that has killed up to 10,000 people in the last five years.

At least two groups of people, representing the original inhabitants who were forcibly removed in the apartheid years from the beach dunes on the eastern shores of St Lucia, have made claims to the disputed land. The traditional chief of one of these groups appears to favour mining while representatives of the rival group say they first want their land back before they decide how it is to be used (**The Sunday Times**, 19 September 1993).

The majority of black workers at the mining company's existing plant belong to the National Union of Mineworkers. This labour federation is part of the "tripartite alliance" with the ANC and the South African Communist Party. An important group of participants in the conflict over St Lucia, it does not support the corporation's plans to expand production into the dunes. However, it has also expressed serious reservations about the conservation lobby's failure to consult it during the anti-mining campaign. According to one of its shop stewards:

"We are sensitive to the growing environmental awareness in this country. But there is one question that our members at RBM are asking and that is, 'Why all of a sudden is there all this activity and protest to save animals when there was no reaction at the time when people faced removal? Is it because this time, there is a threat to the survival of a favourite holiday resort for whites? None of the environmental organizations have consulted us about the issue and some members are wondering if these groups think it is more important to save insects and animals while we have to sacrifice jobs and wages'" (**The Weekly Mail**, 17-23 November 1991).

In late 1993, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the government-subsidized organization responsible for conducting an extensive assessment of the impact of mining on the eastern shores of St Lucia, was forced by public and media pressure to conduct a belated investigation into the attitudes of these people. Researchers found there was a strong belief that the mining corporation had been playing a game of divide-and-rule with the former inhabitants of the proposed mining area. They recommended that the eastern shores be returned to the original owners before any decision could be taken as to how the land would be used (**Business Day**, 16 September 1993).

The judge's review panel, in turn, accepted that the dislocated communities be given compensation for the land they had lost and ruled that they should receive benefits from any ecotourism scheme initiated at St Lucia.

"If there is to be no restitution for what the original inhabitants lost because of apartheid, St Lucia will effectively be a special place only for the élite to enjoy... The Review Panel is strongly of the view that those who have been displaced should be part of the body which controls the future development and management of the National Heritage Park" (**The Weekly Mail and Guardian**, 17-22 December 1993).

In so ruling, the judge recognized a theme that runs like a thread through the politics and economics of ecotourism in South Africa — rural people are overwhelmingly hostile to game reserves and they often see nature conservationists as the cause of forced removals and instruments of oppression. St Lucia is thus a microcosm of the many conflicts and problems associated with efforts to implement programmes that combine conservation with rural development in South Africa. Its 12-kilometre stretch of beach dunes encapsulates, in stark relief, the key issues that will shape the ecotourism industry in this country.

Section I of this paper examines the economics of ecotourism in South Africa. It considers whether this type of enterprise has the power to stimulate economic growth while maintaining and protecting the natural beauty and diversity of the land. The section includes a critical evaluation of the views of some of the country's main proponents and practitioners of ecotourism.

Section II examines the effects of apartheid, forced removals and harsh policing methods on popular attitudes towards conservation and nature-based tourism. It presents the suggestions of various actors as to how problems arising from this historical pattern can be mitigated to enhance the potential of ecotourism.

A number of community-based ecotourism projects, designed to overcome this legacy, have been set up in various parts of the country. Section III provides an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses.

At St Lucia there is the danger that disagreements within communities over future forms of land use will become embroiled in conflicts between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha. Section IV of the paper shows how tensions within local communities can hamper the implementation of ecotourism projects. The ways in which development

programmes, even those with the best intentions, can enhance these divisions are examined. New approaches designed to prevent development programmes from provoking community conflicts are outlined.

The activities of the mining lobby at St Lucia are a clear example of how powerful economic interests frequently obstruct ecotourism programmes. In many parts of the country there are competing claims for these two forms of land use — mines that extract the earth's non-renewable resources and game parks that try to sustain nature's renewable assets. Section V analyses this conflict and suggests measures for stimulating ecotourism programmes in a political economy that has been shaped, historically, by the power of the mining industry.

Finally the paper summarizes the policies of the major conservation agencies, political parties and movements in South Africa with regard to conservation in general and, where these exist, with regard to ecotourism as a form of rural development. Section VI shows that planning for ecotourism at state level, as well as in the private sector, is highly fragmented and this prevents a co-ordinated approach to the industry. The section suggests that most political movements, in varying degrees, have paid insufficient attention to these issues and that considerable research and planning is needed before ecotourism can achieve its full potential.

I. SOUTH AFRICA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

A. The International Context

According to a South African government report, tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry. The report claims that international travel grew by 260 per cent between 1970 and 1990. In at least 17 countries, tourism accounts for more than half of all foreign exchange earnings and it is estimated that today one out of every 14 workers is employed in travel and related enterprises. This excludes those employed in industries created by "multiplier effects" of tourism projects (Ministry for Administration and Tourism, 1992:2). A 1969 study of Caribbean tourism estimated that every job in the tourism industry generated another 2.3 work opportunities in supporting industries. Multiplier figures for Kenya and Tunisia have been estimated as high as between five and six, although these are probably exaggerated (Brandon, 1993:33).

Travel and tourism are said to have generated 5.9 per cent of the world's GNP in 1990, the equivalent of US\$ 1.1 trillion. Of this, it is estimated that US\$ 62.5 billion went to developing countries. Some writers claim that it is the only industry in the world that allows a net "North-South" flow of wealth from industrial countries to developing countries. However, these figures do not compute the negative impacts, such as cultural and environmental degradation, that can be caused by tourism. Nevertheless, it is a more stable source of foreign exchange than gold and other minerals, which are subject to fluctuating prices on the international markets and, unlike the export of cash crops or manufactured goods, the world's consumers of tourism pay their own travel costs. Besides, the industry is not subject to the protectionist barriers frequently erected by developed countries (Brandon, 1993:3, 31).

1. Packing a suitcase and a conscience

Ecotourism is fast becoming an important sector of the world travel industry. Research conducted by the World Travel Organization shows that 85 per cent of all German tourists want a holiday that is environmentally correct. Not far behind them are Dutch, French and English travellers. A Lou-Harris poll conducted in the United States reported that four out of every ten American travellers were interested in "life-enhancing" travel as opposed to tourists who were just "seeking the sun" (Brandon, 1993:4).

"Gone are the days when tourists were content only to pack a suitcase and head to the newest, shiniest, all-inclusive tropical resort. Now trendy travellers are bringing along more than just their luggage. These international tourists are packing a conscience as well as a keen desire to learn about and experience the exotic natural wonders of the world" (Joanna Ward, quoted in Toriello, 1993:6).

According to Brandon, the growth of ecotourism reflects an increasing concern with the environment and with cultural appreciation. "The media is filled with reports about deforestation and habitat destruction... Conservation groups, human rights organizations, universities and museums all offer international trips catering to ecotourists" (Brandon, 1993:4).

The number of Europeans arriving at Manaus in the Amazon Basin rose by 300 per cent between 1988 and 1989, causing one specialist to comment: "The words eco and nature are so easy to sell that the marketing of tours has begun before the infrastructure has been set up". Rwanda's gorillas are that country's main economic asset. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of tourists to this central African country grew 10-fold, making tourism its third most important source of foreign exchange. (This has, however, changed dramatically since the escalation of the civil war in that country. Recent reports note that conservation staff have been forced to flee and there are fears that some of the animals may have been injured). A study of game farming in Kenya showed that wildlife tourism was 50 times more lucrative, as a form of land use, than cattle grazing. It is estimated that a lion in that country is now worth US\$ 575,000 because of its potential to attract foreign visitors. In Peru, one free-flying macaw is said to generate up to US\$ 4,700 a year in tourist revenues (Brandon, 1993:4, 12-14, 48).

Proponents of ecotourism claim the lesson is self-evident — rich tourists from the northern hemisphere can provide a potent economic incentive for governments, entrepreneurs and local communities to conserve their wildlife and natural resources instead of exploiting them for short-term gain.

2. Leakages and other limitations

There are, however, serious problems associated with this kind of tourism. These frequently result in projects failing to deliver the promised gains. The most common factor that prevents ecotourism from redistributing wealth in rural backwaters is the leakage of profits out of the host country to developed countries as well as from the countryside to the cities. The World Bank estimates that 55 per cent of tourist spending in

developing countries eventually leaks back to developed countries. Some studies suggest that countries which lack substantial local ownership of services such as airlines, hotels and transportation companies may experience up to 90 per cent leakage of revenue generated by tourism (Brandon, 1993:32).

A study conducted in Fiji, one of the most developed tourist resorts in the Pacific, found that less than 25 per cent of revenue from tourism actually stayed on the island. The rest went to the multinational corporations which owned and controlled the industry (**Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly, Tourism Supplement**, Vol. 6, No. 11). A magazine report estimates that some 70 per cent of money spent by foreign tourists on a beach holiday in Kenya returns to developed countries. "The money goes to travel companies and for consumer goods to satisfy western tastes. Few developing countries can meet these sophisticated consumer demands internally" (**New Internationalist**, July 1993). Another study claims that only 10 per cent of tourism expenditure remains in Zimbabwe and more than two-thirds of spending by tourists in the country's protected areas leaves Zimbabwe as remittances to foreign investors. However, this figure has been disputed by a World Bank consultant, who estimates the level of leakages from Zimbabwe to be closer to one in every three dollars (David Kaufmann, personal communication, 1993).

"Leakages result from the continued need for imported skills, technologies and commodities to serve the tourism sector, including foreign equipment (e.g. hotel equipment and supplies) and increased oil imports for tourists' transportation. Additional earnings are leaked through the repatriation of profits from hotels, restaurants, car rental agencies etc. owned by foreign companies; expatriates involved in managing tourism activities; and imports of consumer goods (rafts, kerosene, film, medicines, food, beverages) and advertising and marketing efforts abroad" (Brandon, 1993:32).

The situation is worse in rural areas where local entrepreneurs and property owners lack the capital, skills and produce to provide supporting goods and services for local tourism ventures. For example, leakages out of the remote Annapurna region of Nepal to the country's urban regions are estimated at between 90 and 94 per cent.

"Often, it is easier to import expertise and products from urban areas and foreign countries to the remote ecotourism site than to develop expertise or products locally... Rural areas may have both higher economic leakages and lower 'multipliers' than urban areas. In most rural situations, the lack of rural enterprises translates into reduced ways for currency to stimulate local economies" (Brandon, 1993:32).

A related impediment to successful rural development through tourism is the failure to integrate ecotourism schemes into larger development plans. There is the example of a government that offered incentives for resorts to be built on a beach. Once the resorts were constructed, it built a coal-powered power station nearby which polluted the surrounding air and water. Other examples abound of ecotourism projects that receive state subsidies only to be underutilized because they are inadequately marketed or because there are no roads or other forms of transport into the region. Often, local

communities are not given the appropriate legal and constitutional powers to participate effectively in tourism and related economic activities.

Ecotourism, by its very nature, has limited linkages with other sectors of the rural economy and does not generate many additional local economic activities. Contrary to optimistic claims by some commentators, it is possible for ecotourism projects to operate in relative isolation from the surrounding local economy. Capital, consumer goods and services can easily be imported from the outside. There is no economic imperative to link up with local industries, and this is a major reason for tourism's failure to stimulate further growth in some countries (Healy, 1992).

"For tourism to promote regional development, however, requires the active involvement of the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres and such integration is lacking. At the local level, tourism is not regarded as a serious industry. At the national level, responsibility for tourism is scattered among various ministries and there is not an efficient decision-making system. This leads to reduced benefits from tourism and diminished services" (Speelman, 1991, cited in Brandon, 1993:52).

This lack of planning makes it easier for urban and foreign operators to export profits out of the rural areas. Many commentators note that the failure to integrate ecotourism into coherent regional development plans — and thereby enhance their contribution to local livelihoods — stems from an insensitivity on the part of government and private enterprise to the plight of the rural poor.

There is the danger that ecotourism has become a fad, with operators voicing the right rhetoric in order to attract funding and customers. Sometimes the term ecotourism is abused as a marketing tool by tour operators, leading to confusion on the part of consumers. According to Alfredo Toriello, co-ordinator of the Paseo Pantera and Mundo Maya programme in Central America, "I know of a case where a woman called up to ask about an ecotourism trip that had been advertised and when she was given the price responded by saying 'Well what's economical about that?'" (lecture given at Bellagio Conference, 1993).

In order to avoid similar confusion, the term, as it is used in this paper, can be explained by the definition provided by the Ecotourism Society. It uses the word to refer to cultural aims as well as nature-oriented tourism, defining ecotourism as "Purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people" Some writers use the term in a broader sense, to refer to efforts that are made to mitigate the effects that conventional or mass-based tourism have on the environment. These aspects are not examined in this paper.

Benefits that ecotourism can provide to local people

- *The generation of revenue for continued efforts to maintain the diversity of biological species in a particular area.*
- *The simultaneous generation of revenue that can be used for the benefit of people living in or around the conservation area.*
- *The encouragement of people's participation in the management of enterprises that use natural resources for the purpose of sustainable development.*
- *The provision of appropriate institutions and skills to facilitate this kind of "empowerment".*
- *The enhancement of appreciation and understanding by outsiders, tourists and conservation specialists, of local knowledge and culture as it applies to protection of the environment.*
- *The growth of awareness by members of local communities of the need for environmental protection and sustainable development and an acceptance by local people of techniques, imported by scientists and specialists, that can enhance this objective.*

B: The Economics of Ecotourism in South Africa

South Africa currently attracts about 0.2 per cent of the world's tourists and this relatively small share generates significant economic development. In 1992, 2.7 million foreign visitors travelled to South Africa. Of these, 2.1 million came from the African continent, mainly for business, shopping or work-related activities, while 559,913 came from overseas. In 1993, the figures increased to 3 million, with 2.4 million coming from Africa and 618,508 from other countries (Satour, 1993). Of the tourists who arrived from outside Africa, 28 per cent came from the United Kingdom, 42 per cent from the European mainland, 11 per cent from North America, 8 per cent from Asia and 10 per cent from Australia, the Middle East and South America. The tourist flow generally peaks in the summer months, between October and March, with a sharp dip in the winter months between May and June (Satour, 1991:27). In 1990, tourism was the fifth-highest foreign exchange earner in South Africa. Manufactured exports earned SAR 30 billion, gold earned SAR 18 billion, mining and quarries SAR 6.3 billion and agriculture SAR 2.7 billion (Conservation Corporation, undated:4). Foreign tourism in 1992 is estimated to have earned some SAR 2.5 billion (about US\$ 800 million) in foreign exchange and provided 300,000 people with jobs (i.e., approximately one out of every 14 actively employed people in South Africa). Other estimates claim that the value of earnings from foreign tourists in 1992 increased by about 26 per cent to SAR 3.4 billion (Hughes, 1994:5). Despite the political violence that has swept the country in the past few years, 1993 saw a 10 per cent increase over 1992 in the number of visitors from abroad, excluding Africa (Satour, 1993).

A government White Paper on tourism, released in 1992, states that "More than 90 percent of foreign tourists (excluding those from Africa) come to South Africa in the first instance to enjoy the country's scenery, flora and fauna. It adds, "In endeavours to stimulate and develop the South African economy, the government accepts that the tourism industry can make a vital contribution to long-term sustained economic growth. It also believes that tourism can be a major catalyst to 'kick start' the economy thus providing the much needed economic upswing" (Ministry for Administration and Tourism, 1992:2-3).

1. Cattle versus homo superbus

A variety of land-use studies conducted locally show that conservation projects aimed at attracting local and international tourists are capable of generating revenues far greater than would be earned if the specific land area under examination were to be used for farming. A study of the new Madikwe game reserve in Bophuthatswana, one of South Africa's nominally independent homelands (see map), estimates that only 80 jobs would be generated by cattle farming, compared with 1,200 jobs in six luxury lodges being planned for the reserve. Per capita income for labourers involved in cattle ranching would average SAR 3,000 (about US\$ 860) annually compared with SAR 7,200 (about US\$ 2,057) from the ecotourism project. The homeland government expects to earn SAR 4.8 million a year from Madikwe as against SAR 80,000 it would obtain from cattle ranching (**Financial Mail**, 20 September 1991). Commercial projects that involve some degree of wildlife conservation currently are one of the few growth areas in the South African economy.

Types of game and nature reserves in South Africa

(see map)

Some six per cent of South Africa's total land area is set aside by state agencies for wildlife protection. This amounts to about seven million hectares. Privately-owned game farms constitute an additional eight million hectares.

Broadly speaking, conservation areas can be categorized in the following ways according to local usage and terminology, which is not fully consistent with IUCN categories:

National Parks

- *These are protected areas, proclaimed by an act of parliament through the National Parks Act, that fall under the jurisdiction of the National Parks Board. They receive the highest level of conservation in the country. There are 16 national parks in South Africa. The largest is the Kruger National Park which covers 2.2 million hectares.*

Nature Conservation Areas

- *These are conservation areas that fall under the jurisdiction of conservation authorities set up by provincial authorities or homeland governments. They have been proclaimed through provincial or homeland legislation. There are more than 100 such areas across the country. Some of the conservation areas in the homelands are located on land owned under a communal form of tenure. Some of these, for example Mthethomusha in KaNgwane, offer opportunities for community involvement in the management of the areas.*

Regional Council and Municipal Reserves

- *These are small protected areas set up by urban municipalities or regional government councils. They constitute a small proportion of the total protected area in South Africa.*

Private Game and Nature Reserves

- *These exist on privately-owned land and have been proclaimed as protected areas through provincial legislation, usually at the initiative of a private landowner. This category includes private game reserves (some as large as 20,000 hectares) which provide up-market lodges and/or hunting safaris as well as small private game farms. There are 9,000 privately-owned game reserves and game farms in the country, occupying a total of approximately eight million hectares.*

Others

- *Areas such as forests and mountain catchments fall under the country's conservation legislation. The South African Defence Force owns land where conservation laws are enforced.*

Source: There is no single source on types of conservation areas in South Africa. The above classification is based on interviews in March 1994 with D. Grossman, ecologist and conservation consultant for the ANC, and with officials from various conservation agencies in South Africa.

These parks and reserves are not able to cater for the growing demand from local and overseas tourists for a holiday in the wilderness. The Kruger National Park estimates that it turns away four out of every five people who want to visit the park (Conservation Corporation, 1991). Exclusive resorts have been able to increase their revenue by 1,000 per cent over the last four years by picking up the backlog. The Bakubung Game Lodge, built on the boundary of the Pilanesberg National Park in Bophuthatswana, was built in under a year and immediately sold more than 80 per cent of its timeshare units. It has an occupancy rate of nearly 100 per cent all year round (**Weekly Mail**, 15-21 November 1991).

A variety of other projects are being started to fill the gap between supply and demand. Perhaps the most bizarre enterprise, with some appeal to ecotourists, is the SAR 830 million (US\$ 240 million) Lost City complex that borders on the Pilanesberg Game Reserve in the Bophuthatswana homeland. It comprises a 350-bed hotel (built in a style that resembles a cross between an Oriental palace and the iron-age ruins at Great Zimbabwe), casinos, a recreation centre with an imitation inland ocean and beach, and an artificial rain forest, complete with giant baobabs and some 1.6 million plants, trees, shrubs and ground covers (**The Weekly Mail**, 27 November-3 December 1992).

On the other end of the spectrum, white commercial farmers, hard hit by drought this decade, have increasingly turned to game farming to make a living. The National Game Organisation, a division of the South African Agricultural Organisation, reports that in 1990 there were already 9,000 game ranches in the country occupying some eight million hectares. In 1991, game farming generated a total of SAR 355 million (more than US\$ 100 million). Three-quarters of this came from safari hunting and the rest from tourist visits, game auctions and the sale of venison. According to the organization, there were 50,000 local hunters and 400 professional hunting guides in the country. In the same year, 4,000 hunters from abroad visited South Africa, bringing in some SAR 270 million (about US\$ 77 million).

The Natal Parks Board estimates that rural people gather natural products such as wood, herbs, thatch, meat, sand and weaving material worth SAR 2.5 million (about US\$ 710,000) every year from protected areas in that province. Its employees earned a total of SAR 37 million (about US\$ 10.6 million) in wages in 1992/93 (Hughes, 1994:3-6).

Although conservation agencies in South Africa have begun to quantify the economic value for local people of natural resources inside protected areas, there is not yet a data base extensive enough to evaluate the relative importance of these resources. Initial indicators are that in densely populated rural areas, access to such resources does not make a significant difference to people's livelihoods. In less congested areas, where local people are less dependent on the wage economy for their survival, this type of access probably assumes more importance in promoting social development.

"Commercial wildlife management and the attendant tourism development provide a land-use option that is not only profitable and sustainable but also has the capacity to heal the scars of the earlier degradation. With expectations of a redress of former political problems, the region is preparing for a growth in ecotourism. The existing state-run parks are stretched to capacity and private sector conservation-based developments

are emerging to cater to the game-viewing market" (Grossman et al., 1992:30-31).

A recent report by the Conservation Corporation concerning the debate over the planned mining of St Lucia's eastern shores states that Richards Bay Minerals would create fewer permanent jobs through mining than the 300 jobs that have already been created at the nearby 17,000-hectare Phinda Resource Reserve, through one tourist lodge alone, with a relatively small investment of SAR 80 million (about US\$ 26 million) (Conservation Corporation, undated). The organization claims that tourism has the potential to generate more revenue for the country than the mining industry if the number of visitors coming to the country from abroad doubles every 10 years.

Statistics from the South African Tourism Board show that the number of overseas visitors to South Africa increased twofold between 1972 and 1991 (Satour, 1991:19). Recognizing that ecotourism can be used to "kick start" the rural economy, the government has made available SAR 600 million (US\$ 171 million) through the Industrial Development Corporation at preferential interest rates for conservation ventures that will help meet the demand for various forms of wildlife tourism in South Africa (Ministry for Administration and Tourism, 1992:3).

South Africa currently has 5 to 6 per cent of its territory devoted to some form of conservation. This is less than the 10 per cent advocated by IUCN-The World Conservation Union. In 1993 the Minister of Tourism and Administration, Org Marais, announced that the government wanted to expand conservation areas by 800,000 hectares, primarily by stimulating ecotourism projects in the private sector. This, he said, was part of a strategy that aimed at making tourism the "number one industry" in South Africa by the year 2000 (**South African Press Association**, 5 February 1993).

Nelson Mandela said that his African National Congress would increase the amount of land set aside for conservation to 10 per cent, in line with IUCN guidelines, on coming to power (BBC Fair Game, 1991). The proliferation of wildlife ventures on white-owned farming land has been mirrored, on a smaller scale, in some of the communally-owned areas in black homelands. A number of community-based reserves have been established in the homelands of KaNgwane, KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana on land owned by local communities. The objective of these projects, described in more detail in section III, is to make conservation more relevant to the lives of ordinary rural people.

The idea of "farming with wild animals" — making a livelihood by providing safari concessions and wildlife tours to outside visitors — appears to be gaining ground in some areas. In Bophuthatswana, for example, at least one community, encouraged by the economic success of that homeland's Pilanesberg Game Reserve, has already set in motion plans to create its own natural resource area.

Most of these programmes recognize that providing local communities with access to thatch grass, herbs, venison and other resources in the game parks helps to promote good relations but does very little, in the South African context, to alleviate rural poverty. The Bophuthatswana National Parks Board estimates that if its staff killed all the game in the Pilanesberg Game Reserve and distributed the meat to people living around

the park, there would be enough to give each family one meal (**New Ground**, 1991/92, No. 6:9).

Apart from government subsidies, generation of income from conservation projects relies almost exclusively on what one conservationist calls "homo sapiens superbus" (Anderson, 1992:10). In other words, with very few exceptions, in order to make a profit conservation programmes rely primarily on tourism — including "non consumptive" trips for game viewing as well as "consumptive" safaris for hunters.

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) has recently established a SAR 10 million (US\$ 2.9 million) fund, with a grant from the Ministry of Finance, designed to promote community development projects, especially small communally-run ecotourism schemes.

"The importance of wildlife and game reserves has only recently featured more prominently in regional economic planning. Nature reserves already make a sizeable contribution to the regional economy through wildlife viewing, the sale of endangered species like rhino, and game culling. From both the supply and demand perspective, there are opportunities for expanding the industry and increasing ecotourism's net contribution to the economy and to the well-being of rural communities" (DBSA official, cited in **The Weekly Mail**, 21-27 May 1993).

The South African Tourism Board has produced a policy document suggesting that government funding for wildlife lodges should only be granted to entrepreneurs and projects which ensure that there is some form of community participation in the venture. It argues that

"Uplifting our people is the biggest challenge facing the tourism industry of this country. If tourism fails to contribute to meaningful socio-economic improvement, we have lost the challenge. By employing the principles of community participation, ecotourism can provide tangible benefits to the disadvantaged, particularly in rural areas where it is most needed. The ultimate goal of ecotourism development is for it to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of our people, particularly those living in and around areas of particular ecological and cultural value, both through direct gain and economic spin-off" (**The Weekly Mail**, 21-27 May 1993).

So far, government funding made available at preferential rates for ecotourism development has been provided on the basis of the economic viability of the project rather than wider social objectives. The Tourism Board plans to lobby the parastatal Industrial Development Corporation, as well as other finance institutions, to ensure that all applications for wildlife programmes adhere to the principle of community participation, in addition to the traditional criteria of financial viability, before funding is approved. This marks a dramatic policy shift for the Board, a state body traditionally part of a white establishment that has shown little concern about the need for rural development. According to the director of a local firm of environmental consultants,

"Up till now South African business has concentrated on the global competitive advantage it has in non-renewable resources such as the country's mineral wealth. Attention is at last being paid to the renewable resources such as wildlife in which we also have a global competitive advantage" (**Financial Mail**, 20 September 1991).

2. Assault rifles and faulty statistics

The first, and probably most serious, obstacle to successful ecotourism projects is the violence that wracks South Africa. In the first nine months of 1993, political strife claimed 2,131 lives. The average from June through August was more than 12 bodies a day. ANC leader Nelson Mandela has called his country "the most violent society in the world today". Most of the bombings, AK-47 rifle attacks and stabbings take place in segregated black ghettos, far from the tourists' favourite haunts. But there have been some attacks on overseas visitors. In mid-1993, a visiting American student was murdered by supporters of the Pan Africanist Congress in a Cape Town township. At about the same time, a bus carrying tourists from Johannesburg to Cape Town was attacked by gunmen and riddled with AK-47 bullets. Luckily nobody was killed. Political strife has been accompanied by a soaring crime rate and tourists have become prime targets for violent muggings in parts of Johannesburg.

Satur (the South African Tourism Board) notes that plans to double the number of ecotourists will be frustrated as long as the violence continues. However, the replacement of the country's white-dominated government by a government of national unity following the elections in April 1994 is likely to encourage an upward trend in the number of visitors to South Africa leading to growth in ecotourism (**Business Day**, 4 October 1993).

The scope of this paper does not extend to the many complex causes of political violence in South Africa. However, it is axiomatic that political reform and economic growth in South Africa are intrinsically connected — the one cannot proceed without the other. Ecotourism is potentially a benign form of development. It relies on co-operation, negotiated agreements, solutions to local sources of friction and an atmosphere of peace. If the factors that inhibit this industry can be addressed, ecotourism will be given a chance to play a part in reducing the social and economic disparities that fuel much of the violence in South Africa today, especially at local and regional levels.

There are, however, indications that the euphoria surrounding some of the scenarios presented by tourism practitioners is not matched by their actual performance. The problem of leakages has not been properly researched in South Africa. But the amount of revenue that flows out of the country to multinational operators and agents is probably not as great in South Africa as it is in other countries of east and southern Africa. This is due, primarily, to the fact that South Africa operates a competitive national airline and the hotel industry is owned predominantly by local companies (Kaufmann, undated: 10). Ecotourism enterprises are run either by state-backed conservation agencies or by locally-owned companies. A minority of these are committed, at least in theory, to the idea of ploughing a significant share of profits back into the local economy. But these agencies do not always live up to the potential reflected in statistics.

Although the up-market private lodges are economically successful, most other projects are not self-sustaining and rely on state subsidies to keep their facilities running. International tourism is highly competitive and susceptible to fluctuations in demand. It requires heavy investments in marketing activities which, along with initial capital outlays for infrastructure (game fences, lodges, vehicles, etc.) for non-consumptive safaris, can involve costs not always reflected in the statistics quoted by ecotourism practitioners.

The Pilanesberg National Park, generally regarded as one of the most successful ecotourism ventures in South Africa, has only just reached the stage where it can start generating a profit. After more than 10 years in existence, the park continues to rely on funding for both development and operational costs. A recent study estimates that Pilanesberg made a loss of some SAR 5 million (about US\$ 1.43 million) in the 1989/90 and 1990/91 financial years. Total investment in the park by the homeland government, since its inception, is estimated at more than SAR 78 million (about US\$ 23 million) (Davies, 1993).

Statistics published by the Natal Parks Board show that conservation in that province is also heavily subsidized. Its ecotourism programmes run at a break-even level or generate only a few hundred thousand rand in profits. Overall the parks in Natal cost millions of rand more to run than they generate in revenue (Parris, 1993:5). Overheads involved in running national parks — which contain tar roads, a wide variety of accommodation and recreation, and charge user fees to give access to a broad cross-section of the population — are much higher than small private game reserves which operate a single luxury lodge and a few four-by-four vehicles and maintain just a few gravel roads (Joubert interview, January 1994).

If community-based conservation projects are to achieve their objectives, they must ensure that they are not dependent on recurrent and external funding. Consultants note that economic sustainability requires examination of all costs and benefits, both direct and indirect, of a project's activities, including those that fall outside the monetary economy, such as clean water (Mountain, 1992:4). A critical analysis of Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE programmes, for example, notes that these projects work well only in small communities where membership of the project is clearly defined and tensions within the community are limited. "These conditions are difficult to replicate in other areas without attempting to change existing community relations and perceptions. This emphasizes the need for an adaptive approach rather than a focus on a blueprint approach" (Murombedzi, 1993:25).

The exact combination of ingredients for successful community-based ecotourism will vary from place to place and is a subject that needs to be carefully scrutinized in feasibility studies for such schemes. Initial indications are that projects which lack the following are likely to struggle: arid lands (where conservation is more likely to offer more benefits than subsistence farming), large mammals, effective marketing, ability to offer hunting concessions, appeal to foreign tourists and hunters, up-market lodges and facilities, and a relatively small area without large overheads for maintenance and management. Many of South Africa's protected areas are located in arid areas where unsuitable soils, low rainfall, as well as malaria and tsetse fly limited human

settlement. This increases the potential of ecotourism as a form of land use in communal lands adjacent to game parks in these areas.

According to one conservationist: "Only a minority of conservation areas in South Africa can be regarded as financially viable. They rely largely on an annual allocation of funds from respective governments. Therefore, when a significant percentage of revenue is allocated to tribal neighbours it amounts to these people receiving an indirect handout from the government. In effect the areas are being rented by the state" (Anderson, 1992:7). This reflects the situation in most southern African countries where there is "a general disparity between profitable, well-managed private-sector tour companies enjoying the fruits of the under-funded management efforts of government agencies" (Kaufmann, undated:11). One conservationist has estimated that protected areas in South Africa attracted tourist expenditure in the vicinity of some SAR 3 billion in 1992, while the national parks captured less than 10 per cent of this revenue. The rest, it is assumed, went to private game parks, hotel chains, car hire companies, local airlines, etc. (Hughes, 1994:5).

Statistics compiled by some operators also tend to inflate the potential performance of ecotourism-driven development. A recent report by the Conservation Corporation, for example, estimates that if 1,750,000 visitors come to South Africa by the year 2000 ("and given the support of a new government, this is a conservative figure"), this will mean the direct creation of an additional 40,000 to 80,000 jobs. The report adds that, with a multiplier effect of 10, this would indirectly support an additional 400,000 to 800,000 people, mainly in rural areas. But multiplier effects, especially those in underdeveloped rural areas, are frequently exaggerated. They are difficult to calculate with any accuracy and recent research shows that, unless there are well-developed strategies to create linkages with other sectors of the rural economy, real job multipliers relating to ecotourism are likely to remain negligible.

The Conservation Corporation believes ecotourism is an industry which creates small business opportunities in the areas of laundry services, vegetable production, transportation, mechanics, medical and educational services, handicrafts, carpentry, construction and the supply of building materials. "The service industry is labour intensive with a wide range of skills required thus presenting opportunities for training and multi-skilling of the people from the local economies" (Conservation Corporation, undated:4). Later in the paper we examine some of the strategies devised by the Corporation to promote these kinds of spin-off effects in the rural areas surrounding two of its most successful ecotourism projects. However, there are initial indications that community benefits are overstated by tour operators, probably to attract political and financial support for ecotourism, while efforts on the ground to promote effective improvements in the local economy are neglected.

During a visit to the Conservation Corporation's Phinda Resource Reserve in Maputaland in 1992, for example, one researcher found that "spin-off" activities in the surrounding rural communities lagged behind mainstream tourism activities of the lodge. A local entrepreneur was allowed to milk palms in the reserve to make a local palm wine in exchange for 30 per cent of the profits going to a community trust set up by Phinda's management. Bush clearing was linked to a charcoal industry that employed 30 to 40 people under the supervision of a local entrepreneur. But the neighbouring community is

extremely poor, made up of some 22,000 subsistence farmers and migrants, and, at least by late 1992, the project had not made significant improvements in their livelihoods. Poaching in the reserve was on the increase at the time and management was obliged to arm its game guards (Cock, 1992). These observations were based on a short visit at a time when the project had been operating for about one year. It is, of course, likely that linkages with the local rural economy have since expanded.

Unlike cattle farming or agriculture, ecotourism can involve a long turn-around time between initial investment and the production of tangible benefits. In situations where rural communities depend on maize and other types of farming for their day-to-day survival, people simply cannot afford to wait a couple of years before they start reaping benefits from ecotourism. This is the case in many parts of South Africa where land scarcity along with the recent drought, which persists in some areas, forces people to seek new lands for farming and grazing.

All too often, operators make a decision to initiate ecotourism projects on the basis of their own feasibility studies without first consulting with all sectors of the affected community and discussing the range of land-use options available to them. Recent history is replete with examples of popular resistance to tourism because conservationists and tour entrepreneurs have been insensitive to this issue. Efforts to pull local communities into some form of participation in the project are frequently strategies in damage control, incidental rather than integral attempts at promoting genuine rural development.

II. THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID

A. A Brief Journey into History

Conservation in South Africa has a reputation for being implemented with scientific and technical rigour. Amongst the urban middle classes, the protection of game parks has generally been considered a righteous cause unsullied by involvement in the country's turbulent political conflicts. This belief, however, is based on a romanticized history of wildlife protection. In reality, argues historian Jane Carruthers, protectionist attitudes and actions have always been deeply embedded in the country's political economy. Far from being politically neutral, the practices of conservationists have always been highly politicized and contested (Carruthers, undated(a):1-2).

1. Collaboration in killing

The colonization of South Africa after its "discovery" by Portuguese explorers in the sixteenth century was accompanied by the decimation of its indigenous wildlife, especially game animals. The population of most species is likely to have fluctuated around the limits of the land's ecological carrying capacity in the pre-colonial period. Indigenous populations depended on the country's wild fauna and flora and the geographical distribution of species frequently determined the pattern of pre-colonial migrations. Embryonic states developed by the country's indigenous inhabitants in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries relied heavily on trading networks based on animal products, especially ivory. But technological restraints, even though firearms became available through barter with white settlers, limited the extent to which African hunting affected the populations of wildlife species. There is some evidence to show a "wise-use" ethic among indigenous societies, such as the reservation of scarce species products for royalty and totems that instilled respect for certain species of wildlife (Carruthers, undated(b):2). For example the Batswana people, who inhabited the western parts of the Transvaal in pre-colonial times, maintained a "highly sophisticated conservation ethic" because "their survival was dependent on their living in total harmony with their wildlife resources" (Suping and Collinson, 1992:1).

The breakdown of customary systems of resource management under colonialism is a primary reason for the current popular hostility to game reserves created by Western conservationists. A number of authors have suggested that this knowledge is indispensable for efforts to revive the traditional respect for conservation that existed in many parts of the country (Ghai, 1992:14).

During the colonial period, with the gradual expansion of permanent white settlement from the Cape to the Transvaal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a steady decline in wildlife populations. The independent Boer republics, set up in the hinterland of South Africa when Dutch settlers migrated from the Cape Colony after it was annexed by Britain in the early eighteenth century, relied on hunting for subsistence and trade. African states, which were developing at the same time, made extensive use of wildlife resources and a complex pattern of conflict and co-operation in this form of economic endeavour developed between the two societies. In the Schoemansdal district of the northern Transvaal, for example, Boer and African polities prospered from a joint trade in animal products (Carruthers, undated(b):2). The decline in wildlife species accelerated with the discovery of diamonds in the Cape and then gold in the Transvaal in the late 1800s as well as the massive influx of European settlers.

"From 1800 to 1950, most of the region was gradually given over to the extensive ranching of cattle, sheep and goats to the exclusion of most large wild herbivores. Individual animal species responded differently to these changes. Some, such as impala (*Aepyceros melampus*), which thrive under 'degraded' conditions, actually benefited, whereas the numbers and distribution of sensitive species such as Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*), Sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*) and tsessebe (*Damaliscus lunatus*), were severely reduced" (Grossman et al., 1992:1).

2. Skukuza: "He who sweeps things away"

During the early part of the twentieth century, colonial governments in various parts of the country began proclaiming game reserves, mainly on marginal agricultural land. They also accorded "royal game" status to certain threatened species in a belated effort to halt their decline.

The Pongola Game Reserve, established in July 1889 by the government of the Transvaal Republic to prevent the *snelle uitroeijing* (rapid extermination) of game, was one of the first to be proclaimed in South Africa. The reserve's new warden promptly expelled all Africans living in the area and forbade them to return. These provocative

actions were cited by the British government as a reason for its decision to annex Maputaland in the late nineteenth century (Carruthers, undated(a):5-6).

At the same time, Africans were subjected to a range of harsh and discriminatory legal restrictions. They were not eligible for hunting licences (issued only to white settlers), they had no legal access to firearms, they were not allowed to kill wildlife that damaged their crops, and their right to own packs of hunting dogs was severely curtailed. Curbs on fishing were imposed in parts of the country, depriving people of an important source of protein. Violence frequently erupted over access to game. For example, in 1912 a son of Chief Lentswe, the Kgatla ruler in Bechuanaland, overpowered and threatened to shoot a policeman who had apprehended him for killing an impala in the Rustenberg Game Reserve. Later that year a police patrol in the reserve fired on a group of poachers from Lentswe's territory, killing one of them and provoking a diplomatic incident (Carruthers, 1989:193).

Many of these restrictions were part of the ruling classes' efforts to create a cheap labour force for the mines and other industries that mushroomed after the discovery of gold. As one colonial official remarked in 1903, "The destruction of game by natives... enables a large number of natives to live by this means who would otherwise have to maintain themselves by labour" (Carruthers, undated(b):2). Thus, wildlife protection was one of the many mechanisms used to create a black proletariat during the Transvaal's industrial revolution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The creation of the Kruger National Park, currently the flagship of South Africa's conservation programme, involved severe hardship for the Tsonga communities who lived in and around the park. After the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the century, the new British administration acquired the Sabi Game Reserve that had also been established by the Boer Republic on a strip of land between the Sabi and Crocodile rivers in the eastern Transvaal. In 1904 a new reserve was established to the north, called the Singwitsi Game Reserve, between the Great Letaba and Olifants Rivers. These two reserves were to become the basis of the Kruger National Park.

It is estimated that about 3,000 people lived in the Sabi Reserve in 1902. The first warden, James Stevenson-Hamilton, adopted a harsh policy from the start and evicted large numbers from the area. When he was given the task of managing the reserve in 1902, Stevenson-Hamilton confessed that "It had been impressed on me that the first difficulty would probably be with the natives, since these and the game could not be expected to exist together, and I had already decided in my own mind that... the Reserve would have to be cleared of all human inhabitants" (cited in Archer and Fig, 1992:6).

These policies earned him the Tsonga name "Skukuza" (he who sweeps away or he who turns everything upside down), which the colonial authorities proudly adopted as the name for the first rest camp in the park. Members of the local community voiced what was to become a common refrain in South Africa's conservation record, "The government wants to drive [us] away from the Lowveld [the eastern Transvaal area where the park was established] so as to include these parts in the game reserve" (Carruthers, undated(b):3).

Popular histories of the Kruger Park claim that the first game rangers succeeded in removing all Tsonga people from the reserve. In fact, probably due to a combination of African resistance and white expedience, local people were allowed to remain in the Sabi Reserve. "The colonial authorities had only taken a year to appreciate that the extensive Transvaal reserves could not be run like a European deer reserve. Africans could assist the protectionist endeavour by providing both labour and funding and thereby ensure the success of the re-stocking programme".

The 3,000 residents of Sabi were forced to pay rent, in cash or labour, and were allowed to keep cattle and cultivate fields inside the reserve. A system of prison labour was used to supplement the reserve's black labour force. Illegal migrants from Mozambique, who passed through Sabi en route to the gold fields of the Witwatersrand, were either arrested or voluntarily reported themselves as trespassers. They were given a two-week prison sentence and worked in labour gangs, mainly building roads in the reserve. When their sentences ended, they were given "passes" which entitled them to seek employment in the Transvaal.

Punishment for poaching was discriminatory. For example, in 1909, a black hunter who killed a duiker in the Sabi Reserve received a month's imprisonment with hard labour and no option of a fine. In the same year a group of three whites who had killed four reedbuck, two duiker, a steenbok and a korhaan were sentenced to a fine of five pounds or seven days' imprisonment. Communities suspected of poaching were also sometimes expelled from the reserve area (Carruthers, undated(b):3-4, footnote 52 and Carruthers, 1989:198).

In 1926, with the passing of the National Parks Act, the Singwitsi and Sabi Reserves were merged into the Kruger National Park. To prepare for this, a fairly large area was carved out of the Sabi Reserve's western boundary, in the Acornhoek district, and turned into a segregated "native" reserve for the African inhabitants. The borders of the park remained substantially unaltered from 1926 to 1969. The Tsonga-speaking Makuleke community in the northern area of the park was then relocated — in one of the many forced removals that took place during the era of grand apartheid — to the Ntlaveni area of what is now Gazankulu, the homeland for Tsonga people (Carruthers, undated(b):5).

Removals, forced labour and poll taxes, all features of South Africa's conquest at the hands of white settlers, were not restricted to the Kruger Park. From the western border of the country — where indigenous San people were removed to make way for the Kalahari Gemsbok Park in the 1930s — to the eastern shores of South Africa, forced removals were part and parcel of wildlife protection programmes. Mr H.J. van Graan, Secretary of the Department of Native Affairs in the 1930s, had resisted earlier efforts to remove the Makuleke people from the Kruger Park. He seems to have had a degree of acumen rare amongst government officials at the time. "I foresee in this gain of today", he said, "the future germ of destruction of the whole park" (Carruthers, undated(b):5).

It is worth noting that some strands of the current debates around ecotourism in South Africa have their origins in earlier periods of conservation. After the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the Transvaal's powerful mining companies lobbied heavily for their prospecting operations to be exempt from restrictions on entry to the

Sabi Reserve. They complained that game reserves were being treated as "sentimental objects" by the government and needed to be reduced in size.

The link between conservation and tourism was realized in the 1920s with the creation of the Kruger Park. Until then small revenues earned from hunting fees and trophies were the only assets generated. Now, the proponents of the park argued, frequently in opposition to complaints from the mining companies, visits by people using motor cars and trains would bring in large amounts and the park would add considerably to the economic development of the Lowveld. "Overseas visitors were considered to be most desirable, it being calculated that if ten thousand Americans visited each year the revenue to the park would be in the region of one million pounds, 'a sum which should appeal to all South Africans,' according to Paul Selby, an American mining engineer stationed in Johannesburg and a keen conservationist" (Carruthers, 1989:195, 213).

B. Popular Attitudes towards Conservation in South Africa

A BBC documentary on the politics of conservation in South Africa, broadcast in 1992, began with a scene of youths from the township of Matsulu, located at the southern fence of the Kruger National Park, singing and dancing in the gravel road that separates their homes from the reserve. "Weep Kruger, you shall weep," they sang. The angry youths had gone out into the streets to protest about "Kruger" — a place where they saw animals being able to roam in freedom while people who ventured over the fence to collect firewood or poach game were arrested. They associated game parks with forced removals, clamps on freedom of movement and paramilitary game rangers (**Weekly Mail**, 15-21 November 1991). Similar sentiments are expressed throughout South Africa.

1. Stolen poles and separatist movements

The Centre for Community Organisation Research and Development (CORD), an organization that promotes rural development programmes in Natal, estimates that one out of every three people in the Kosi Bay region of Maputaland have been moved at least once in their lifetime and most of these relocations have been linked to conservation programmes.

"Relocation out of areas proclaimed under conservation legislation has undermined the survival of those moved to areas which deprive them of access to the natural resources they rely on for their livelihood. If new conservation and tourism schemes are implemented this figure is likely to increase to 60 per cent of the population" (CORD, 1989:1).

Most removals in the area stemmed from the creation of the Ndumu Game Reserve in 1924, the Tomb Elephant Park in 1983 and from the Kosi Bay Nature Reserve, which was proclaimed in 1988. A chief in the Tomb Tribal Authority, the local government body that rules over villages in the Kosi Bay district, expressed the frustration of his people when he said, "*KwaNyamazane* (the places of the animals) have already taken the Ndumu Game Reserve, the forests and now the Tomb Elephant Reserve. What are we going to do? End up in an *isibaya* (cattle *kraal*) in the middle, starving to death?" (AFRA, 1990:5).

About 40 kilometres east of Kosi Bay, the KwaZulu Bureau for Natural Resources (KBNR) is trying to persuade about 300 families to leave the Mbangweni corridor between the Tomb Elephant Park and the Ndumu Game Reserve so that the two conservation areas can be consolidated. The park authorities have begun to erect a game fence along the tar road that runs south of the corridor. The problem, for them, is that the holes dug by their work teams get filled up and the fence poles tend to disappear overnight — another example of the silent forms of struggle being waged by rural communities whose livelihoods are adversely affected by conservation programmes (Interview with pole thief, anonymity requested, July 1992).

2. Game reserves and militarization

There is also evidence of extensive military activity in game reserves near Maputaland's sensitive border with Mozambique. An investigation by **The Weekly Mail** newspaper, conducted in 1991, revealed that the KwaZulu conservation authorities operated a "secret services" division whose job was to spy on ivory and rhino horn smugglers, as well as local political activists. Many of the officers who ran this unit were highly trained soldiers who had fought in Rhodesia's élite counter-insurgency brigades during that country's war of independence.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has admitted that it is training self defence units in a small KwaZulu game reserve. Official government investigators, including the Goldstone Commission, have implicated some of Inkatha's paramilitary units in hit squad activities and political murders.

Game reserves in this part of Natal contain some rare species of game, birds and trees. In strict ecological terms many of the KBNR's reserves are success stories. However, military activity in and around the parks leads to widespread resentment and helps to fuel the antagonisms that exist between the local residents and the bureau's rangers. This leads to a popular notion that tourist facilities in the game reserves provide a cover for clandestine military activities and invite local forms of repression. (**The Weekly Mail**, 15-21 November 1991).

The KBNR has recently shifted policy and insists that indigenous people in Maputaland will not be moved without their consent and compensation. The conservation agency is also making efforts to set up community-based schemes, and to ensure that local villagers become shareholders in projects set up by private entrepreneurs in some parts of Maputaland. But resentment from past practices still simmers and has led to the creation of at least two separatist movements in the region which aim to take Maputaland out of the KwaZulu homeland. These earlier experiences have caused a rejection by many local people of conservation as implemented by official agencies. A number of commentators have noted, however, that people in such areas are keen to explore alternative and more people-friendly approaches to conservation. Thus, there appears to be some sympathy for plans by the conservation agency, as well as independent community organizations, to set up participatory forms of ecotourism. "It is a good thing that they (the KBNR) want to do but not the way they are going about it," says community leader Zwelinjane Gumedede. "It is not going to benefit the people but is only for the big shots to come on holiday" (**The Weekly Mail**, 17-23 November 1989).

3. A fish out of water

At St Lucia, that heavily contested corner of South Africa described above, there is a commonly held perception that conservation programmes have been carried out at the expense of its indigenous inhabitants. Two large communities were removed, between 1950 and 1970, from the dunes that RBM wants to mine. Another 3,400 people were evicted in the late 1970s from an area north of the dunes so that the SADF could build a missile testing site, a facility which was recently handed over to the Natal Parks Board so that it can be converted into a game reserve. All three groups claim to be the indigenous owners of the land and its resources, including the titanium and other heavy minerals that have made the area so lucrative, and they have all made claims to the state for restoration of their title.

The people from the dunes of St Lucia, whose communities were dumped in the many overcrowded settlements in the KwaZulu homeland that ring the town, experienced severe stress and disruption of their traditional land-use methods. Increased overcrowding in the area in recent years has aggravated the effects of removals. "Things are even worse now. There is a shortage of land here and the chief says he can no longer afford to give people (from St Lucia) more land. We are being forced to move yet again," said an old man who once lived on the eastern shores of the estuary. "*Uma ukhipa inhlanzi emanzini ayifi na?* — When you take a fish out of water, does it not die?"

Most of these displaced people believe that their misfortune stems from the anger of their ancestors, who were left behind when government trucks picked them up and moved them out of the area. For many years people coped with their collective stress by sneaking into the game reserve and visiting their old homes and parents' graves where they practised ancient ceremonies designed to appease their ancestors. Some of them still perform another ritual to deal with this problem — they climb the fence of the reserve, walk to the dunes where they collect sand from the traditional graves and take the dust back to their new village to scatter it to the winds that blow across their homesteads (**The Weekly Mail**, 4-12 April 1993).

4. Barricades in the bush

In the Transkei homeland, a nominally independent state for the country's Xhosa-speaking people, people from a community located next to a small nature reserve complained about the management of the local tourist lodge in a novel way. Their protest started with a wage dispute by the reserve's 150 workers, who locked members of the management team into one of its rustic chalets. Impromptu barricades were set up at the reserve's gates and fires were started inside the park as residents from the nearby village were bussed in to support the workers. They also demanded that land and homes they had lost because of the reserve's expansion be returned to them. (**Sunday Times Metro**, 23 August 1992).

The KaNgwane homeland for Swazi people has a progressive track record when it comes to conservation. It has set up the Mthethomusha game reserve, widely regarded as an example of how game reserves can be used to benefit rural communities (see below). In 1991, the chief of a village near Numbi, one of the entrances to the Kruger

Park, requested the KaNgwane Parks Corporation to establish another communal game reserve on his "tribe's" land. "We usually had to try and persuade people about the value of conservation so when we got the request we jumped in boots and all," said the corporation's senior ranger for the Lowveld (Arrie van Wyk interview, November 1992). But the conservationists were shocked when the Numbi residents called a mass meeting and declared that the chief had no right to hand over their farming land for use by animals. "The community was at the very first time of the erecting of the fence against the game reserve. The chief and the parks people agreed themselves without the community. We insist that crop farming has been helping us since our birth and now the parks people say they can help us with game farming," read a note from "the people" of the village to the KaNgwane Parks Corporation. It pointed out that Numbi was the only area for farming and that the wild animals should therefore be taken to Kruger park where they would be safe. Residents threatened to burn the tents that had been set up inside the designated park area and pull down the fence that had been erected around it (letter from Numbi Civic Association to KaNgwane Parks Corporation, August 1991).

These kinds of struggles, frequently informal and hidden from public attention, have generally been neglected by politicians and a mass media more interested in other burning issues that afflict South Africa today. The extent and regularity with which they occur is easier to comprehend when it is realized that rural people are heavily dependent on access to natural resources found in areas that have been designated for conservation.

C. Suggested Solutions: The National Level

1. Land, law and reform

One obvious way to heal the wounds inflicted by apartheid is land reform. The ANC and the former white-led government were divided over ways of dealing with this problem. While the former government addressed the issue by establishing a Commission for Land Allocation with discretionary powers to restore titles expropriated during the apartheid years, the new government is setting up a land court to hear land claims from dispossessed communities. Unless an effective mechanism for dealing with the legacies of forced removals and dispossession is found, the historical hostility of rural people towards conservation and other ecotourism projects has little chance of being reversed.

The recently negotiated constitution for South Africa strengthens both individual and collective environmental rights and may thus improve the performance of conservation and ecotourism projects. Environmental organizations have pointed out that, under South Africa's system of Roman Dutch law, individuals do not normally have the *locus standi* that enables them to bring legal proceedings against agencies that adversely affect their environment and natural resources (White, 1992:247). A powerful lobby is developing to seek changes in legislation in line with the constitutional changes, which would enable individuals to use the law as a way of influencing how their natural resources are utilized.

This kind of legal reform could also strengthen local communities' negotiations with conservation agencies about the establishment and management of ecotourism

projects. It could enhance the prospect for creating binding contracts that would regulate relationships between various groupings affected by, and involved in, ecotourism schemes.

Many organizations, including the ANC and the National Party, accept that a new constitution should make provision for an environmental ombudsman (Sachs, 1991:9). Such an institution could be used to restrain conservation authorities and tourism entrepreneurs from unilateral initiatives, and encourage local communities to participate in the process of planning and managing such projects. This, along with changes in the mechanisms to finance ecotourism schemes suggested by Satour, would help mobilize popular support for these participatory forms of rural development.

The idea that communities should be granted increased constitutional and legal rights to use their natural resources in ways that enhance their livelihood is also gaining ground. According to an ANC discussion document on environmental policy,

"In the first place we have to establish the legal integrity of our common patrimony, the land we call South Africa. All restrictions of ownership and occupation of land based on race, gender or ethnicity have to be ended. We need to become sons and daughters of the same soil, not of this or that homeland or bantustan or group area. Our country must achieve its true spatial dimension. Our enjoyment and responsibility for it must be untrammelled by apartheid signs, groups areas, or racial ghettos of any kind. This should be an express constitutional principal: South Africa belongs to all who live in it..."

"The question of resources and control of renewable and non-renewable resources should also be given a constitutional foundation. Similarly the principle of special protection for nature parks, green zones, mountains and beaches should be expressly affirmed, as well as for flora and fauna. Attention also will have to be paid to the whole question of what is meant by ownership, and in particular, to the responsibilities that go with ownership. It would be disastrous if the constitution enshrined, directly or indirectly, concepts of absolute ownership entitling the titleholder to use or abuse the land in any way which he or she saw fit. We need to establish the constitutional foundation for concurrent interests in land going beyond the currently recognized categories, and also to provide a secure foundation for respect for the public interest in relation, for example, to development projects" (Sachs, 1991: 10).

The Zimbabwe experience has shown that broad legislative and constitutional reforms are necessary to create a supportive national context in which community-based ecotourism schemes, based on the conservation of wildlife, can be sustained. During colonial times, wildlife in white-ruled Rhodesia was legally defined as the property of the state. The 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act maintained this status for wild game but permitted landowners to make commercial use of wildlife species within the constraints of sound conservation practice. Aimed mainly at white ranch owners, the law allowed individuals to become the "appropriate authority" for wildlife management. This allowed private operators to develop safari trips and other embryonic forms of ecotourism in rural

areas where white settlers owned land in freehold, but it had a more limited effect in "tribal areas" where land was held and managed along communal lines.

However, conservation and development officials have been able to use a provision in the law which allows the government to grant "appropriate authority" status to district councils that demonstrate an ability to manage their wildlife resources effectively. This allows the local councils to lease hunting concessions to commercial safari companies as well as to manage and distribute revenue generated in this way.

"The appropriate authority system still has some flaws. In particular, as the legislation stands, appropriate authority status cannot be conferred on lower administrative units at ward or village level. Nevertheless, it involves a genuine transfer of responsibility for wildlife to district councils, and in theory at least, to the wards and villages they are elected to represent. This has cleared the way for rural communities to begin to exercise some control over the management and use of their wildlife, and the distribution of the benefits it generates" (The CAMPFIRE Association, 1990).

2. Communal tenure

Land redistribution, constitutional rights and legal reforms of this nature would, undoubtedly, make conservation and nature-based tourism more relevant to the needs of depressed rural communities in South Africa. Some lobby groups argue that such measures need to be accompanied by changes in land-tenure systems in order to make rural development projects more effective. The white-dominated government, backed by some homeland administrations, had implemented land reform that abolished segregationist provisions but increased the amount of land held in private ownership. The thinking behind this was the neo-classical property rights notion that, for maximum economic growth to be achieved, land should go to the most efficient users. "From this standpoint, communal tenures lead to inefficient allocation of resources: since property rights are not clearly defined, costs and rewards need not come home to the landowner, and contracts are not legal or able to be enforced" (Cross, 1992:2).

Until recently, the state, mainstream development organizations, finance institutions, and the business community in South Africa favoured private ownership and the development of an emerging class of black capitalist farmers as the best way to promote rural development. These organizations have exerted many forms of pressure to apply this principle as part of any redistributive land reform. However, strong arguments in favour of communal arrangements are emerging. Such arrangements would involve, according to Cross, "indigenous or folk tenure systems ... [where land is] ... usually held and farmed by individual households with community oversight of access and transfer".

Cross argues that communal tenure generally ensures greater support from the community and gives a greater sense of control to rural people. Indigenous tenure systems evolve and develop in response to local conditions and are, therefore, able to respond to local needs more effectively than imported systems of ownership. "Communal arrangements allow other involved right-holders, such as women and young people, to retain their stake in land use and transfer where private tenure gives a male owner

absolute control" Such systems, contrary to conventional legal wisdom, can be registered in the South African land records system. And, argues Cross, they are usually more ecologically effective and lend themselves more to sustainable utilization, even in heavily crowded situations.

"It is a demonstrable fact that private African-owned land in South Africa has always been more crowded than land under communal institutions. The ethic of landholding among black people in South Africa exerts very powerful pressure on private landholders to accommodate the landless. In contrast, areas with communal institutions have been able to reduce the number of new entrants accommodated by invoking the prior interest of the people already on the land to sustain refusals" (Cross, 1992:5, 13, 14).

Cross describes how these systems have developed an informal land market and regulated the use and abuse of the land's resources. Such regulations are often administered by local grassroots organizations and networks that operate below the level of formal organizations. Ecotourism projects that aim to promote community support and participation clearly need to identify these networks and work with them from the start if "top-down" and patronizing approaches to development are to be avoided.

Land redistribution, constitutional changes, adaptation of financing mechanisms and tenure reform are changes that could be implemented at the level of national policy. Their combined effect would be to promote effective negotiation between local communities and ecotourism entrepreneurs who come into the area from the outside. These negotiations could then produce legally enforceable contracts to govern the relationships between the various stakeholders involved in tourism-based development schemes. This would help to create resource management arrangements in which organizations representative of community groups are able to play a major role. Mechanisms and procedures for resolving disputes would be established. Instead of burning barricades in the bush, and locking game reserve officials into their luxury chalets, people would be more willing to sit around a table, or a campfire, to resolve their differences.

III. CONSERVATION AND TOURISM-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Conflicts between parks and people, between game reserves and their neighbours, between animals and communities, commonly occur in most parts of the world where national parks, wildlife reserves and other types of protected areas are at the forefront of efforts to protect biodiversity. It has now become fashionable if not mandatory for conservation movements to claim they are implementing community-based programmes, or, to use a term coined by the World Bank and World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) consultants, Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), to solve these problems. In the early 1980s, The World Conservation Union (IUCN) began expressing concern about the clash of interests between game reserves and local people. The organization's 1980 World Conservation Strategy stressed the importance of linking protected area management with the economic activities of local communities. Professional conservationists at the 1982 World Congress on

National Parks in Bali agreed that their work should be community-friendly and that it should promote development. To this end, the Congress called for increased support for communities through education programmes, revenue-sharing schemes, participation in the management of reserves, and the creation of appropriate development schemes near protected areas. Similarly, the World Bank's 1986 policy on wildlands recognized that the protection of natural areas had to be integrated into regional economic planning. And in 1985, the World Wide Fund For Nature launched its Wildlife and Human Needs Programme, consisting of some 20 projects in developing countries that aimed at combining conservation and development.

According to Brandon and Wells,

"These projects attempt to ensure the conservation of biological diversity by reconciling the management of protected areas with the social and economic needs of local people. The smaller ICDPs include biosphere reserves, multiple-use areas, and a variety of initiatives on the boundaries of protected areas, including buffer zones. Larger projects include the implementation of land use plans with protected area components, as well as large-scale development projects with links to nearby protected areas".

However, the authors found that, almost without exception, these projects manifest a significant gap between theory and practice (Brandon and Wells, 1992:ix, 63-64).

A. CAMPFIRE and Other Acronyms

In southern Africa, these international approaches were mirrored by the emergence of Zimbabwe's pioneering CAMPFIRE programmes — indigenous experiments which combine conservation with community development. These followed from lessons learned in the 1960s when several researchers in Zimbabwe realized that the survival of wildlife, especially the species outside protected areas, depended entirely on the goodwill of local communities. Programmes generally allowed financial benefits, mainly profits from safari hunting trips, to trickle back into the communities. These schemes were, however, designed with conservation objectives uppermost in the minds of the planners, and they failed to promote effective indigenous participation in wildlife management.

CAMPFIRE programmes, on the other hand, are said to have popularized the concept that wildlife belongs to, or is owned by, the communities on whose land the species exist. The projects devolve stewardship or proprietary control over natural resources to local community councils or organizations.

The CAMPFIRE approach has had a long development period with the opportunity to adapt and modify its programmes according to experience and local realities. The acronym — Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources — was coined by Zimbabwe's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management during the late 1970s, when it began to develop a more coherent approach to land planning, rural development and conservation. The principles behind

CAMPFIRE began to be seriously implemented by the Department, in co-operation with a number of non-governmental organizations, in the late 1980s.

In essence, CAMPFIRE attempts to harness the economic value of wildlife, which derives primarily from recreation and tourism, for the benefit of rural people. Some CAMPFIRE programmes have demonstrated to rural communities that conservation of wild animals and their management in ecotourism programmes can be, especially on marginal lands, more beneficial than cattle farming. The CAMPFIRE Association notes that sport hunters are prepared to pay daily hunting rates and animal trophy fees far in excess of the simple meat and product values of many species such as elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo and many antelopes. These revenues can be gained through a low, and therefore sustainable, hunting quota. The association claims that aesthetic or "non-consumptive" uses of wildlife, such as game drives and photo safaris, can also create substantial incomes with minimal stress on the environment, if they are carefully controlled.

A 1991 report claims that CAMPFIRE "is a holistic rural development programme that aims to improve people's livelihoods by developing their capacity to manage their indigenous resources better. This process requires that people educate themselves to understand resource management more fully and that they set up appropriate formal and informal institutional mechanisms (e.g. resource committees, marketing mechanisms and practices, financial systems, businesses) to support this management" (Child and Petersen, 1991:7-51). The CAMPFIRE programmes thus purport to bring three main benefits: they improve the livelihoods of rural people; they impart a sense of self-management and self-reliance; and they provide an incentive for rural communities to protect wildlife.

"The need is to evolve institutions at the lowest possible level - that of the ward or the village - that create a moral, if not legal, 'ownership' and so encourage socially just management of the resource and distribution of the benefits... If individuals or communities simply become passive bystanders in a process that eventually disgorges benefits to them, CAMPFIRE would merely substitute one form of dependency for another. CAMPFIRE projects rely on the ability of rural communities to articulate their own needs, and to take full responsibility for all aspects of wildlife management" (Child and Petersen, 1991:7-51).

CAMPFIRE programmes are currently centred primarily around communal management of wildlife resources, but there are plans to expand the model to include management of other types of rural resources, such as forests and lakes.

Critics of CAMPFIRE point out that some projects fail to facilitate genuine community participation because they are still seen as externally imposed models. A recent assessment of CAMPFIRE by Murombedzi notes that a number of projects have failed to promote effective community participation in wildlife management because local village and ward committees "have tended to be utilized as convenient mobilization and implementation units of centrally conceived programmes and plans, rather than as participatory institutions for local development planning and

implementation." The study argues that decision-making institutions created by CAMPFIRE frequently underestimate both divisions within local communities, and conflicts between various strata over the use of wildlife resources. "In such situations, it becomes important for institutions to develop that have the capacity to regulate the interests of the various strata". The author stresses the need to include a range of indigenous and traditional organizational networks in the planning process instead of relying on formal "committee"-type institutions. Interest groups outside the community involved in CAMPFIRE projects, such as tour operators, the organizers of safari hunts and various government agencies, also tend to exercise more power than ordinary people and their organizations in the multiple-party arrangements that govern wildlife management schemes. Furthermore, there are indications that CAMPFIRE projects which cannot provide trophy hunting and rely instead on photo-safaris fail to generate any significant revenues from foreign visitors (Murombedzi, 1993:20-25). Various suggestions made in the present paper are designed to mitigate conflict within communities and change the balance of power between ordinary people and outside agencies involved in ecotourism projects in South Africa.

B. South Africa

The CAMPFIRE approach has achieved some credibility and popularity amongst professional conservationists, as well as rural development planners, in South Africa. A number of projects have been initiated in different parts of the country which attempt to apply CAMPFIRE principles to South African conditions. These programmes are becoming an important form of ecotourism offered to foreign and local visitors to the country's wildlife areas. However, there is a growing awareness that South African conditions are very different from those in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. Settlements in, or around, conservation areas are frequently heavily populated and do not lend themselves to the relatively simple participatory mechanisms devised by CAMPFIRE programmes. Some settlements that border on game reserves are, in fact, located in peri-urban rather than rural areas where it is far more difficult to establish "proprietorship" or "ownership" by a relatively cohesive community over a given set of natural resources. In this context of congestion and scarcity, it becomes far more difficult to use resources from a game reserve to generate enough revenue to come anywhere near alleviating poverty and generating effective development. While the principles of CAMPFIRE are being emulated in South Africa, some conservationists have warned that a simple importation of these programmes could create unrealistic expectations among people affected by conservation programmes, thereby compounding the historical hostility that is directed at game reserves in the country.

Surveys conducted in KwaZulu, Bophuthatswana and KaNgwane indicate that in some of these areas the number of people, and their needs, are so great that natural resources are simply not capable of providing sustained and meaningful development to a significant proportion of the population.

"Unlike Zimbabwe, where substantial wildlife populations have enabled the development of their CAMPFIRE programme based on resource allocation, the resource base in most tribal areas in South Africa is

severely depleted. We do, however, have wildlife populations in conservation areas which can provide the founder populations to develop projects similar to CAMPFIRE in our tribal areas" (Anderson, 1992:10).

1. Mthethomusha: The new way of doing things

Perhaps the best known "CAMPFIRE" project in South Africa is the Mthethomusha Reserve, a small "tribally owned" park located on the southern border of the Kruger Park, in the KaNgwane homeland. There was initial resistance in 1984 when the KaNgwane Parks Corporation first raised the idea of starting a tribal resource area on land owned by the isiSwati-speaking Mphakeni people. The local chief and his councillors initially feared that the community would lose its grazing land but were won over to the alternative idea of ecotourism/conservation when KPC officials pointed out that the area was mountainous and lacked enough water for year-round grazing. The promise of new jobs in the project also helped convince the tribal leaders and they gave their consent, naming the new project Mthethomusha ("the new law or the new way of doing things").

Some 200 jobs were created, most of them taken by people from the nearby villages. Sixty per cent of income from an up-market lodge in the game park goes to the tribal authority, which remains the owner of the land. The parks authority also works closely with the local association of traditional healers, allowing this influential group controlled trips into the area for collecting herbs and roots. Local contractors were used, wherever possible, to build the reserve's lodge, which is now managed by a large hotel chain (**New Ground**, 1991/92 No.6:16).

A "trust company" has been established as the main institution for administering the project. It includes representatives from the tribal authority and the conservation agency. Decisions on how to use revenue are made primarily by the tribal authority. So far this has been spent mainly on classrooms and crèches. Until recently, there appears to have been no effective participation by people elected to civic and other "democratic" organizations from the three main villages around the reserve. However KaNgwane's parks authority, prompted by criticism that it has ignored the voice of constituencies that are not represented in the old tribal structures, is looking at ways of broadening popular participation in the Mthethomusha project as well as other community-based projects in the homeland (Arrie van Wyk, personal communication, November 1992).

2. From casinos to CDOs

An early attempt to initiate a CAMPFIRE scheme in South Africa was the Pilanesberg National Park, located in the Bophuthatswana homeland about 700 kilometres to the west of KaNgwane. The small park, some 58,000 hectares in size, is surrounded by some of South Africa's most luxurious hotels and casinos, including the Lost City, Sun City and Marula Lodge. It derives a substantial portion of its revenue from up-market tourists who come to this part of South Africa to combine the high-life of casino gambling with an ecotourist venture into the wild. Pilanesberg also offers safari outings to foreign as well as local hunters and has introduced an

innovative and lucrative scheme which allows them to shoot the endangered white rhino, with a tranquillizer dart, and then be photographed standing next to their sleeping trophy.

The Pilanesberg park was opened in 1979 amidst controversy, as it involved apartheid-style removals. The reserve is located in one of the more repressive homelands run, until recently, by the government of Lucas Mangope. A study conducted in 1984 found that the creation of the Pilanesberg reserve caused serious problems for the original inhabitants and people living in settlements around the park. According to the study, the reserve's original inhabitants lost access to grazing land for cattle. Researchers uncovered allegations of corruption in the tribal authority and tardiness in providing compensation for the loss of land.

"People perceived the tribal authority as using the establishment of the park as a means of extending its domination and exploitation of villagers. The villagers' perception that this was condoned by the Bophuthatswana government was reinforced by a number of issues that arose in relation to the presence of the Sun City hotel complex on the border of the park. These related to the rustling/impounding of cattle entering Sun City property, unfair remuneration of Sun City employees and the Bophuthatswana government's action during a labour dispute (at Sun City)... [These] issues were all perceived to be linked within the context of the wider political economy resulting in a negative perception of the park" (Duthie, undated:3).

From the start, the Pilanesberg park was seen as a prime example of progressive rhetoric being used to describe what remained, in essence, a repressive form of economic development. Nevertheless, the parks board in the homeland has an enlightened management which, partly under the pressure generated by negative publicity, has recently initiated serious efforts to make the reserve benefit the communities that live on its borders. For example, it has encouraged community development organizations (CDOs) in the settlements around Pilanesberg. These independent institutions, with representatives nominated by the tribal authority and an equal number chosen from among ordinary residents, take key decisions about management and the use of revenue derived from the park. This initiative, a little more than a year old, is seen as an effective way of reconciling the need for popular participation with traditional structures of local government.

The Bophuthatswana National Parks Board is establishing reserves in other parts of the homeland, where it has the advantage of trying out the "progressive" techniques developed at Pilanesberg without the negative factors that affected its initial attempt at community-based conservation. Recent research indicates that the Parks Board's new policies have also succeeded in overcoming local hostility towards the Pilanesberg park. A survey based on a sample of 400 people from the surrounding communities, found that the majority would not like to see the park deproclaimed and the land redistributed to the people (Davies, 1993:iv).

3. Contract parks

A recent initiative in South Africa is the "contract park" in the remote Richtersveld region of the north-western Cape. This model had its genesis in a land struggle during the late 1980s between the indigenous inhabitants of the area and the (South African) National Parks Board, which wanted to declare the area a nature reserve and remove the pastoralists living there.

The Richtersveld region is unique in South Africa in that it combines mountain and desert conditions. The area's biodiversity has long been acknowledged by conservationists. The area hosts small mammals and reptiles but is most famous for its *!khureb* or *halfmensboom* (*Pachypodium namaquanum*) which can grow to two metres and has a half-human appearance. It hosts more than 1,000 endemic species of succulent plants. One of the Namaqualanders, famous for their wit and a colourful dialect of Afrikaans, had the following to say when he heard the pastoralists were to be deported in the interests of conservation: "*Hulle gee om vir die halfmens, maar wat van die volmens?* (They care about the half person but what about the whole person?)" (Archer and Fig, 1992:5).

Backed by human rights groups in Cape Town as well as a number of sympathetic academics, the local communities refused to move and began to formulate an alternative plan that involved popular involvement in the running of the proposed park. They negotiated the right to remain in the area, to continue grazing their stock, and to receive royalties and jobs from the park. They persuaded the National Parks Board to give them a say in the management of the park as well as the right to review the agreement in its entirety after a period of 30 years (Fig, 1992:119). This breakthrough led to a series of reforms by the National Parks Board.

4. Rhetoric and reality in Maputaland

Conservation authorities in KwaZulu, responsible for administering a number of reserves in the Zulu homeland — including at least four located in Maputaland to the north of St Lucia — claim to have a community-friendly approach to conservation. In 1989, KwaZulu's Chief Minister, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, said his homeland "has clearly understood that people must be the cornerstone of any conservation effort and that unless conservation is made relevant to ordinary people, it has no hope of gaining their support" (AFRA, 1990:9).

The conservation agency, KBNR, in line with this policy, allows people into the reserves to collect reeds for use in building houses while fish are harvested in the Kosi Bay estuary by a small group of fishermen using a centuries-old *kraal* fishing system. The bureau's policy is to give the local tribal authorities 25 per cent of all revenue derived from gate takings so that these can be used for "social upliftment" projects. Its official newsletter claims that

"All conservation efforts are doomed to fail if there are not tangible benefits for the people involved. This is especially true in a Third World situation such as ours. We believe that our policy of sharing will continue into the future because it was developed with the people in mind" (*Isigijimi*, No. 1, 1992:4).

The reserves in Maputaland - Kosi Bay, the Tomb Elephant Park and the Ndumu Game Reserve - have received negative publicity because of a significant gap, at least in the past, between their rhetoric and practice. We have already noted the effects that removals from the Kosi Bay and Tomb areas have had on popular attitudes toward conservation in the region. However, the management of the KBNR has recently attempted to implement some of its stated principles more effectively. The Bureau promotes private sector investment in its reserves to mobilize funds for the development of lodges and tourist camps. These are to be run in partnership with local communities with a renewed emphasis on providing benefits for local people from revenues generated in this way.

5. Purros: Turning poachers into game rangers

The Purros project in Namibia falls outside the boundaries of South Africa but it has had considerable impact on local thinking about ways to make conservation more relevant to the lives of rural people. In the 1980s, when the area became accessible to owners of four-by-four vehicles, tourism had a negative impact on the semi-nomadic Himba and Herero communities. Initially, local people reacted angrily when photographed by foreigners who often did not ask for permission. Then tourists began offering tobacco, sweets, scraps of food and sugar in return for the favour. Such payments induced some families to camp near the road, along with their stock, so as to be first in line. This undermined their essential semi-nomadic grazing practices. "Social disruption also resulted as families who received nothing from tourists became resentful of those who did; the sharing ethic that tied families into relationships of mutual reciprocity rapidly started unravelling under the onslaught of tourism" (Jacobsohn, 1992:218).

To overcome this problem, local conservationists, working in consultation with community leaders, decided in 1989 to contract a local tour operator who would fly visitors into the area and pay the community SAR 5.00 (about US\$ 1.50) for each visiting tourist. A craft market was set up and a "pool" of workers for conservation-related jobs established. Men were chosen by their communities to be trained as game guards and then employed to look out for poachers who hunted elephant, black rhino and other large game in the Kaokoveld. Says one of the planners, "An immediate problem facing us at Purros was that no institution existed to receive and distribute cash on behalf of the community. The people had to create a suitable body and the first Purros Conservation Committee was chosen". Women were included in this committee as they were seen to have the most important responsibilities when it comes to arrangements for their families' subsistence.

By late 1990, after the project had been running for some three years, the tourist levy, craft market and employment scheme generated more than SAR 25,000 (more than US\$ 8,000) for the people of Purros - as well as some enduring quotes about the way tourism can be turned to real development: "It is as if we are farming wild animals. But instead of getting meat and skins from them, we get the money that the tourists pay to see them. That is why we must look after our wildlife," said one of the family heads after receiving his levy. Another lineage head reported his own son for poaching a zebra. "Let him be charged in court. I will pay my son's fine by selling

a beast from my herd. My family agreed that we would not kill our wildlife and Himba people do not go back on their word".

There is a vast difference between the old tourists who thought they were benefiting the people of Purros by handing out old packets of biscuits to women dressed in calfskins and the new generation of ecotourists. "Tourism is now on a more dignified footing at Purros. Local people feel they have some control over how tourism takes place and they therefore meet tourists as hosts and equals" (Jacobsohn, 1992:220-221).

6. White businessmen and black entrepreneurs

A number of South Africa's exclusive private reserves, which cater to foreign tourists willing to pay up to SAR 1,000 (about US\$ 300) a night for their bush experience, have begun to devise ways of making their businesses contribute to the social improvement of black neighbours. The Conservation Corporation, which runs the Londolozi Lodge in the eastern Transvaal and the Phinda Lodge in Maputaland, is a leading exponent of this approach. Workers are paid above standard wages and management has expressed a willingness to negotiate salaries and conditions of employment with their black workers, unlike most employers in the rural areas of South Africa. Another key component of what has become known as the "Londolozi strategy" is to create business opportunities, financial backing and skills-training for local black entrepreneurs around the lodges. The Londolozi reserve, for example, has contracted a local taxi operator to provide transport from its airstrip to the lodge. Management of the Phinda reserve has employed a community relations officer and plans to stimulate a charcoal industry for entrepreneurs from the surrounding communities. The Corporation has set up a Rural Investment Fund to raise capital for, and promote, major infrastructural projects in the depressed areas around its reserves. These include new roads, a water reticulation project, entertainment centres and a SAR 6 million (about US\$ 1.7 million) airport for the Gazankulu homeland. By early 1993 this fund had also negotiated a donation of SAR 100,000 (about US\$ 28,000) for small businessmen in the areas surrounding Phinda. Funds raised through the trust are used to subsidize the building of schools and clinics.

"Within the context of the current socio-political environment in South Africa, we are firmly committed to acting as a catalyst for responsible development - not only through investment in the luxury end of the eco-tourist market. Our major drive this year, through the Rural Investment Fund, is to encourage the development of business peripheral to luxury lodges and to assist the development of infrastructure in the adjacent communities. We believe that only through achieving socio-economic development and growth will our eco-tourism industry be ensured of legitimacy in the new order of South Africa. Our approach is, we believe, the only means of ensuring that our wilderness areas remain economically viable" (**Conservation Corporation News**, No. 3, April 1993:2).

Indications of a gap between these claims and actual performance have been referred to earlier in this paper. It is worth noting that the Conservation Corporation

was able to raise almost SAR 80 million (about US\$ 23 million) in equity funding, largely from overseas sources, at a time when most South African businessmen were struggling against sanctions and political violence to obtain overseas investment. Most of the foreign investors were clearly attracted by the corporation's high-profile social responsibility stance. However, in years to come, the corporation will no doubt be judged on its success in implementing its claims about community development that have allowed it to harness these resources.

Other luxury reserves are following the example set by the Conservation Corporation. The Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, located not far from Londolozi, is another example of how sound ecological management can mean big business. Its primary objective is "maintenance and improvement of the current species and habitat diversity, thus optimizing the commercial returns through visual gain and minimizing the detrimental impact of the environment" (Sabi Sands Press Release, 1992). The reserve sells local crafts to visitors and supplies bursary schemes for training black rangers. Its management has started a feasibility study for the Sabi Sabi Pfunani Project that aims to set up "linkages" between the reserve and neighbouring communities and to obtain funding for local development schemes (Hearn, 1992).

7. Pulling down some fences

The Kruger National Park's management has also recently embarked on an effort to improve the image of the reserve in surrounding communities. During the drought of the 1980s, which was the worst this century in southern Africa and still affects this part of the country, water was provided by the park management to villages in parts of the KaNgwane homeland. Black artisans from neighbouring villages are encouraged to manufacture and sell crafts and curios to Kruger's visitors, and tourist shops inside the park are encouraged to stock their shelves with local products. According to senior park officials, there are fairly advanced plans to build small business estates in some of the large townships near the park and recycling projects have been started in Namakgale, a black township near Phalaborwa on the western border of Kruger, which provide revenue and jobs for the residents. Park officials train residents of surrounding villages to plant communal gardens, with trees supplied from a nursery inside the park, for village wood lots. Herbal gardens have been initiated by park officials in some villages so that traditional healers can harvest roots and plants needed for indigenous medicines. Subsidized day trips for local school children are organized and "ecoclubs", designed to show the benefits of conservation, have been created in neighbouring schools with the help of headmasters and teachers (The Weekly Mail, 30 October-5 November 1992). The park's management has recently decided to create popular forums in each of the homeland areas surrounding Kruger. These involve efforts to promote participation by tribal authorities, political organizations and civic organizations in negotiations on issues ranging from land claims to investment of park revenue in development projects (Chris Marais, personal communication, March 1994).

C. Evaluation and Suggestions¹

Brandon and Wells, in their comparative study, note that "eliciting authentic participation in projects is difficult and time-consuming in developed countries and even more so in developing countries". Few of the programmes they reviewed in different parts of the world had effectively promoted "participation in decision-making, problem identification, project design and implementation, and project monitoring and evaluation". Many of the organizations and institutions set up to achieve these goals are still young and require more time to operate effectively. Most are still dependent on outside agencies for some form of support, either financial or for the provision of skills. Yet there are encouraging signs, say the authors, of some popular enthusiasm for local participation in resource management (Wells and Brandon, 1992:43, 63-64).

1. Tribal authorities and civic organizations

Residents of settlements adjoining parks frequently complain that tribal authorities do not represent all sectors within the community. In Maputaland, residents have alleged that local authorities are often corrupt and that profits from game reserves are spent on expensive motor cars rather than schools and crèches. A youth from the village of Mzinti in KaNgwane, where a small tribal resource reserve has been started by the KPC, complained that the local chief used money from the reserve to build a new tribal office. "The money was used to build a place where people have to go and pay their fines". In addition the chief is said to have located the office next to his market, thus attracting people to his stalls and making money out of the process (Interview, November 1992). Members of youth groups and civic organizations active in the villages surrounding Mthethomusha complained that the local chief was unwilling to accept their views (GEM, 1993). In the Gazankulu homeland they said, "The government recruited chiefs and used them against the people. Many are not acceptable to the community. The community has different layers, different age groups and views and these are not taken into account" (GEM, 1993b).

However, there appears to be widespread acceptance, even amongst left-wing civic organizations, that traditional authorities, such as these chiefs, are an integral part of local government in most of South Africa's rural areas and cannot be dispensed with. Pilanesberg and Mthethomusha have attracted a fair amount of local co-operation, primarily because the chiefs there have some degree of support and credibility. Where chiefs are seen as being imposed from the outside, as in Maputaland and some areas of Gazankulu, working with tribal local authorities is a much less effective means of harnessing popular support for ecotourism. Some of the literature on CAMPFIRE points out that traditional authorities in Zimbabwe are often more democratic than post-independence village development committees (Murombedzi, 1993).

Planners involved in Bophuthatswana's community development organization have noted that chiefs can often be won over to a more democratic decision-making process if they understand the strategic importance of promoting wider participation in ecotourism schemes. A delegate to a recent conference on popular participation in conservation programmes made the following observation: "Be sensitive to the headman. Make him understand that the committee does not threaten his position, and

should make his job easier. It should be a positive thing for the community. The committee should be seen as a support for the chief. Don't alienate the chief by fighting with him if his first reaction is sceptical". Another delegate added, "Representative and workable committees are needed. Parks are now realizing that they can't just work through the *indunas* (chiefs) (GEM, 1993b).

A number of conservation agencies have accepted the need to work with "democratic" organizations as well as tribal authorities. They have begun to look at ways of implementing models similar to the Bophuthatswana CDO or the Richtersveld management committee. It has been pointed out that the CDO for Pilanesberg is not an elected body even though a serious effort was made to ensure that it represents a wide cross-section of the local community. Nevertheless, it is a fairly stable institution primarily because it has the support of the local chief and operates in a homogeneous community. Efforts to create similar structures in regions where there are hostile local authorities as well as more severe ethnic and social tensions will pose a number of challenges (GEM, 1993).

While conservationists in South Africa are increasingly willing to work with grassroots organizations, they frequently find these to be fragile and unstable. In cases of conflict between civic organizations and tribal authorities, conservation agencies face the dilemma of having to choose between them. "We don't want to offend one by talking to the other," said one official about this predicament (GEM, 1993b). Some conservation agencies argue that civic organizations eligible for participation in the running of a conservation area must be elected and be able to demonstrate that they have a mandate to talk for the constituency they claim to represent.

Access to thatching, meat, herbs and other resources inside the conservation areas can be important for local people's subsistence. However, in heavily congested settlements, these resources make little difference to the livelihoods of most people. They are sometimes seen as "handouts" from above rather than as a form of development capable of working a real transformation in the rural economy. Similarly, when a conservation agency paid a proportion of entrance fees to local communities the reaction, expressed by a member of the Pilanesberg CDO, was that the parks board had given token money as a 'present' to the community but that "...people have not been informed of where the money comes from, or how the amount was decided on." The creation of a community development organization with rights to decide on how to distribute and invest the money is a possible solution to this problem (GEM, 1993b).

2. Education and indigenous knowledge

A fairly common perception in settlements surrounding game reserves is that the parks do not employ enough local people. Conservationists stress that there is a limit to the number of people who can be absorbed into these projects, and that community-based conservation schemes should not be seen as a magical panacea that can solve high unemployment rates in rural areas. Many community groups make the point that, instead of handing out meat and other resources, wildlife products should be sold and the proceeds put into a fund to enable bursaries for local youth to study conservation and other skills needed for parks management (GEM, 1993).

Residents frequently complain that conservationists use "book knowledge" for the management of resources and ignore the store of local knowledge. There have been strong recommendations that local approaches to conservation be studied and applied, wherever possible, in the management of reserves and their resources.

Another frequent criticism is that there is not enough communication between the agency managing a game reserve and members of the community. Even where education programmes exist, as in most community-based programmes, it is still common to find people in the community who know little about the aims and objectives of the reserve. "What is this thing called a park?" is a common question raised in the Richtersveld. The need to increase and expand education and recreation activities associated with ecotourism schemes is reinforced by these perceptions (GEM, 1993).

IV. DEVELOPMENT AND DIVISION

There is a growing awareness in South Africa that efforts to promote community participation in development projects can give rise to new forms of conflict and fragmentation. Events in Maputaland, where the setting up of community-based game reserves has promoted secessionist organizations, is an example. Conflict in the St Lucia area is another indication of the potential violence that surrounds development programmes in South Africa's highly charged political atmosphere.

An even more extreme case occurred in Phola Park, a large shanty-town settlement some 40 kilometres east of Johannesburg. There, a non-governmental organization called Planact set up what it believed was a democratic development committee to plan and implement a scheme for upgrading the informal settlement. Members of the committee were elected and reported back to the community at mass meetings called specially for this purpose. The organization provided funds for the site-and-service scheme that would have enabled families to build brick homes with basic services. The funds were to be administered by the development committee. Phola Park was seen as a model of participatory development. Yet on the day implementation of the scheme was to begin, gun-wielding men attacked members of the development committee in the shack that served as their office, killing one of them. Others were forced out of the township and their names, along with those of officials from Planact, were marked on a death list. Despite their best intentions, the planners and the local community leaders had failed to reach the most marginalized groups in the settlement and incorporate them in their planning.

These groups consisted of illegal Mozambican immigrants, criminal gangs and migrant workers who wanted a temporary place to stay in the urban areas so that they could remit most of their earnings to their homes in the rural areas. They relied on the illegal and informal nature of the settlement to sustain the lifestyle they had developed. Police stations, street lights, site and service rents were inimical to their interests as their very way of life involved the creation of clandestine networks hidden from the view of policemen, officials and civic leaders. This alliance of interest

groups expressed their opposition only at the last moment, and then in the most direct and violent way (Baskin, 1993a).

A committee set up by the Goldstone Commission, a body of judges and lawyers established to probe the causes of political violence in South Africa, has noted a basic paradox that underlies many development schemes in the country.

"Socio-economic development must be undertaken concurrently with the elimination of the triggers of violence and the reimposition of law and order. We acknowledge that it will frequently be very difficult to undertake development in the area because of the violence and that such development itself might in fact initially aggravate the level of conflict within the community" (Goldstone Commission, 1992:61).

An official who worked with Planact believes the starting point for all development officials is to understand that the word "community" is a misnomer. The term masks the harsh and sometimes unpleasant reality that most settlements are made up of fragmented and deeply divided factions. Instead of assuming an in-built inertia towards consensus, planners should assume their programmes will affect stratified factions within poor "communities" in different ways and will thus draw varied and conflicting responses from these groups. Before any development programme is even conceptualized, a detailed survey of the different stakeholder groups in each community should be conducted with particular attention to how their interests are likely to be affected by the development process.

An outreach programme aimed at bringing in the different interests is therefore necessary, with the role of the civic organization changing from one of representing the community to that of facilitating and mediating community interests and conflicts. "It is precisely because many interest groupings find it impossible or inappropriate to organize themselves formally or to engage in open debate that they are forced to use random violence to stop a development perceived to be threatening," says Baskin. By defining the different interest groups beforehand and involving them early in the process, creative ways can be found to accommodate them. But this requires the organization actively seeking out such groupings and gaining their confidence (Baskin, 1993a:6).

Some ecotourism planners have suggested that environmental impact studies should be mandatory before any scheme is given official approval and financial backing, and that these studies should include an assessment of the project's social impacts. Project proposals based on the results of such studies should be made available to the public for review, and strategies devised to ensure proper dissemination and open-ended discussion with a wide range of community groupings. "There should be a governmental and public review process and a method of denying development requests and mandating mitigation of impacts" (Ashton and Ashton, undated:52).

Another important lesson from the Phola Park experience is that development programmes should have a set of short-term objectives that can be easily met while the longer term process of building deep and effective community participation is in

progress. These short-term goals should be designed to show that the project is capable of meeting some urgent needs while a sound social base and participatory institutions for bigger and more ambitious aspects of the programme are being built.

"There can be no development without a community organization. This doesn't come easily and there has to be a concentrated programme to build up and facilitate. Talking to one or two elders is not community building. Then there is no such thing as long-term development without short-term progress. People have to be able to see that they are starting to benefit from the project" (Baskin, 1993a:11).

V. MINING AND OTHER VESTED INTERESTS

The Worldwatch Institute in Washington estimates that 4 out of every 10 game reserves in the world face a threat, in one way or another, from mining. The industry has rendered vast areas unusable because of sinkholes, toxic dumps, damage from open cast mining and the effects of wind and rain carrying mine wastes into rivers. "Yet in most discussions on threats to the global environment, mining is conspicuous only by its absence", states a Worldwatch report. There are no statistics about the extent of damage that has been inflicted on land that is, or could have been, used for conservation and tourism in South Africa. However, the following examples show that South Africa's powerful mining industry has frequently acted as an obstacle to less extractive forms of land use. And, at least until recent times, conservation and ecotourism have most frequently been the losers.

In the 1980s a series of public protests foiled plans to open parts of the Kruger National Park for coal mining. Less successful was a campaign to prevent the mining subsidiary of Sanlam, one of South Africa's biggest insurance companies, from strip mining the Chapman's Peak near Cape Town for kaolin. The process could have resulted in some 350,000 litres of effluent being disgorged daily into a wetland site on the seaward side of the scenic mountain. Although the Minister of Mineral Affairs at the time allowed the mining operation to go ahead, the public outcry ensured that rigid controls were imposed on the waste management of the plant (**The Weekly Mail**, 19-25 March 1993).

A. Uranium, Arsenic and Other Cocktails

More recently, high radioactivity levels were discovered at yards containing mining waste and scrap in Phalaborwa, on the western border of Kruger Park. The existence of the contaminated material came to light only after a British steelworks refused to accept stainless steel pipes it had bought from a South African recycling firm because their levels of radioactivity were beyond safety limits. The Council for Nuclear Safety in Pretoria was forced to close the scrapyards in Phalaborwa where the material — contaminated pipes and parts from mines where radioactive uranium is produced as a by-product — had been stored. More than 60 per cent of the plant is affected by small spots of radioactivity many thousands of times higher than the accepted safe level of 0.4 Becquerels per square centimetre. The Council, charged

with maintaining health and safety standards in all nuclear-related industries, now acknowledges that at least 20 mines in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State provinces generate radioactive by-products. Most of the contamination is caused by radium, a product of decaying uranium, that concentrates inside the piping used by the mines. In the Phalaborwa case, the radioactive waste came from copper mines in the area (**Sunday Times**, 26 September 1993, **The Star**, 30 September 1993 and 8 October 1993).

It is not yet known whether soil and groundwater in the Kruger Park has been contaminated - although the incident is a dramatic indication of the threats which many mining operations pose to nearby game reserves. The copper mining industry in Phalaborwa has, in fact, long been a source of irritation to the management of the Kruger Park, as well as to a number of private game reserves in the vicinity, as airborne pollution and effluent from the industry have contaminated soil and rivers that feed the reserves.

A more bizarre incident in the Barberton district of the eastern Transvaal demonstrates the damage that irresponsible mining activities can cause to fragile ecosystems. In 1990, a toxic dump of mining waste containing large amounts of cadmium and arsenic was left on the mountainside by the Anglo American Corporation's prospecting division. One night, during a heavy thunderstorm, the dump was washed down the slope into a dam in the Boondocks Nature Reserve. Within a day its waters became biologically dead. All fish species, including hundreds of rare Mozambique eels which migrate from the Indian Ocean into the rivers of the eastern Transvaal, were killed. The corporation's scientists first tried to dismiss the problem as a natural phenomenon caused by "a large volume of detritus (leaves, branches, etc.) flowing into the dam". They explained that, on decomposing, it generates methane gas and causes a lack of oxygen leading to fish mortalities. Some weeks after the disaster, the reserve was granted a conservation award by the State president. In one of the many ironies characteristic of South African society, the keynote speaker was a director of Anglo American. The company has since accepted blame and, in a move that heralds a more responsible environmental approach by the industry (if only because of the vast costs they face in terms of litigation and negative publicity), it has spent more than SAR 2 million (about US\$ 57,000) to move the dump (**The Daily Mail**, 21 June 1990).

Mining has been the backbone of the South African economy for more than a decade. Since the opening of deep level mines on the Witwatersrand in the 1880s, the mining industry has wrought a deep transformation in South African society. Some of the founding features of apartheid have their origins in mining's period of primitive accumulation: migrant labour, pass laws, single sex compounds, and stringent policing of workers' lives. It has always been a violent industry, which is why mineworkers' folklore is filled with songs and images of war. Mining is still the most dangerous occupation in the country, killing more than 300 workers a year and injuring many hundreds more in underground accidents, despite a more responsible approach to health and safety on the part of the bigger corporations in the last decade. It is a form of development that has left its scars on the physical landscape of the country as well as on the health of its workforce.

B. The Minerals Act

We have seen how, during the struggles within South Africa's ruling class at the time of the consolidation of the Kruger Park in the 1920s, the mining industry expressed its opposition to nature conservation, viewing it as a "sentimental form of land use. Now, the dramatic situation at St Lucia is just a symptom of the wider pattern of conflict between mining and ecotourism that has long punctuated the political economy of natural resource use in South Africa.

The power of the mining industry is deeply embedded in the mind-set as well as the apparatuses of the state. When asked on television to explain why he favoured mining over the ecotourism option at St Lucia, Minister of Mineral Affairs George Bartlett said simply, "South Africa is a mining country. Mining is what this country has always done and always will do" (**The Sunday Times**, 19 September 1993). And he has the power to fulfil his own prophecy through the New Minerals Act of 1991. This act gives the minister the right to grant consent to an application for permission to mine where the state holds the right to any minerals. The law further states that private companies or individuals who have mineral rights to land may also obtain the right to mine. In addition to this, South African property law gives priority to mineral rights over private ownership. The owner of Boondoks Game Reserve, for example, was not entitled by law to prevent or obstruct Anglo American from prospecting or mining on his land because they held the mineral rights to it.

The Zululand Environmental Alliance, one of the organizations involved in the campaign to save St Lucia, points out that the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs has absolute power to decide whether, and how, state land and its minerals can be mined.

"Whether or not the mine is in the most sensitive environmental areas, or whether the St Lucia mining environment impact assessment recommends that no mining should go ahead, or whether every single person in South Africa is against the mining of the internationally designated St Lucia Wetland, or whether the government is morally bound to the international community to the contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention, or whether there are any other reasons for not allowing the mining to take place, the Minister may still grant his consent. This is what the law is and it is different from what the law ought to be. The lack of protection of the rights of the individual to his natural environment is glaringly obvious" (ZEAL, 1993:24-26).

The result is a common perception in rural communities of a double standard at play. Wildlife can be sacrificed when mining companies want to use conservation land but animals become sacred when ordinary people want to use the land for agriculture or cattle farming.

Statistics suggest that the tourism industry has the potential to overtake mining as a major engine of wealth. However, for this to happen, the mining industry needs to be subjected to greater controls and many of the legal and constitutional powers that

have allowed it to degrade huge tracts of land in South Africa - some of them potential sites for ecotourism projects - should be reviewed so that alternative forms of land use can compete on an equal footing with the industry.

VI. WHITE LIES AND POLITICAL PAPERS

The major political parties in South Africa have each paid some, if insufficient, attention to ecotourism as a tool for reconstruction of parts of the country's rural economy.

A. The African National Congress

The ANC, the party which now dominates the new government following the country's first non-racial elections, has indicated that it will expand the number of conservation areas in the country to meet the IUCN's guideline that 10 per cent of national territory be set aside for the protection of wildlife and other biological species. We have already examined the organization's constitutional proposals that propose to enhance the willingness and ability of rural communities to participate in community-driven ecotourism schemes. Stan Sangweni, a member of the ANC's economics desk, argues in a policy paper that increased pressures on land for human settlement and agriculture will limit the amount available

"for wildlife conservation and its use for major economic activities like tourism... Yet in many ecological zones in South Africa, wildlife management and conservation offers the only ideal balance between human activity through tourism and environmental conservation. Besides, wildlife is a heritage we need to preserve for posterity. There is a need, therefore, to establish an optimal balance between devoting such lands to wildlife and meeting the requirements for human settlement and sustenance".

In meeting this challenge, the ANC plans to provide assistance to communities for the management of their wildlife resources "particularly in rural areas where wildlife utilization on a sustainable basis represents a significant and viable land-use option". Its discussion paper says the organization will undertake research to devise "incentives for the encouragement of domestic tourism" and ways to "localise the ownership and management of the tourist industry" (Sangweni, 1990:14, 16).

B. The Former Government

The recent elections have led to the creation of a coalition government in which the white-led National Party, South Africa's former ruler, has formed a partnership with the ruling ANC. We have seen how the former government officially adopted a policy, outlined in its White Paper of 1992, that promoted ecotourism and increased community control over such projects. This policy was endorsed by some of the main organs of the state: Satour (South African Tourism Board), state-run finance organizations such as the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the Industrial

Development Corporation, as well as major conservation agencies such as the National Parks Board, the Natal Parks Board and Cape Nature Conservation.

On the surface it would appear that the ANC is in agreement, at least at the level of official policy, with the former government and its official organs on the issues relating to conservation and ecotourism. However, a robust debate and some tension broke out in mid-1993 between the ANC's Land and Agricultural Policy Centre and the government's National Parks Board over the question of mixing cattle with game in the Kruger National Park. A bilateral consultation between the two parties resulted in the creation of an ongoing forum to continue the debate. The two parties also agreed to follow-up discussions and each appointed official delegations to liaise on these vital issues.²

C. Inkatha and the Black Homelands

The conservative Zulu nationalist group, Inkatha, argues that neither the former government nor the ANC have allowed for sufficient devolution of powers to regional government. This party is effectively equated with the government of KwaZulu, basically a one-party state ruled by Inkatha president Mangosuthu Buthelezi. While there are serious political differences between Inkatha and the ANC, which fuel a low-intensity civil war between the parties, there is apparent agreement at the policy level with regard to conservation and ecotourism. Policies outlined by Buthelezi and the KwaZulu conservation authorities, as well as practical experience from some of this agency's recent efforts at genuine community-based conservation, show apparent agreement on issues relating to ecotourism.

The Bophuthatswana homeland government is another major party. Its conservation wing, the Bophuthatswana National Parks Board, has devised one of the more progressive models for successful community involvement in the management of game reserves. This provides grounds to believe that consensus will emerge around policies and strategies to promote ecotourism in the future South Africa.

D. Fragmentation and Duplication

Despite this convergence in approaches, a large degree of fragmentation continues to affect efforts towards a co-ordinated approach to conservation and ecotourism in South Africa. The former government's White Paper complains of this, noting that responsibilities for the industry are currently dispersed among at least 10 government agencies: the Industrial Development Corporation, the Ministry for Administration and Tourism, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Environmental Affairs, The South African Tourism Board, The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, and each of the country's four provincial authorities. (Ministry for Administration and Tourism, 1992:8-10)

In addition, there are at least 15 conservation agencies in South Africa: the National Parks Board; the Natal Parks Board; conservation authorities for the 10 "independent" or "national" states set up under apartheid — Bophuthatswana, Ciskei,

Transkei, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Qwa Qwa and Venda; and conservation departments for the "white" provinces of the Transvaal, Orange Free State and the Cape (Anderson, 1992:1). Conservation and ecotourism have not escaped the process of balkanization that has afflicted so many other aspects of South African life. This is likely to be a major factor contributing to the industry's inability to prevent revenue from leaking out of rural areas.

E. Zombies and Other Aberrations

This fragmentation has serious effects on biodiversity. While there is a large and growing network of conservation areas in the country, they tend to be small and isolated from each other. Efforts to create larger reserves across entire ecosystems have frequently been bedevilled by a lack of co-operation and co-ordination between different agencies. The Maputaland area is a case in point. It forms one unique and coherent chain of very rich ecosystems, yet is divided for purposes of conservation between the KwaZulu Bureau for Natural Resources, the Natal Parks Board and the private sector. The Kruger National Park provides another example. It has game reserves run by the Gazankulu and KaNgwane on its western and southern borders respectively, as well as a chain of privately owned reserves, including Londolozi and Sabi Sabi, to the west. Each of these is run according to different managerial styles and, until recently, they were separated from each other by game fences.

"Many of the reserves have become enclaves within transformed landscapes, subject to the constraints of island biogeography. Expedience (rather than biodiversity) and ecological or landscape processes dictated the siting of reserve boundaries. Thus, for example, roads, dams, other infrastructure and agricultural practices have disrupted processes such as migration, episodic insect eruptions, competition, predator-prey interactions and, ultimately, natural selection" (Grossman et al., 1992:1).

Salmon Joubert, executive director of the Kruger National Park, notes that more than 90 per cent of the reserve's wildebeest and zebra populations were lost when a fence was built between Kruger and privately-owned reserves at Timbavati and Sabi Sabi, disrupting the animals' traditional migration routes (Joubert, private communication). Some conservationists have suggested that a "zombie syndrome" afflicts certain species who are unable to reproduce effectively under such conditions. However, this has been hotly disputed by some scientists.

F. A New Approach to Ecotourism in South Africa?

More seriously, for the ecotourism sector, fragmentation has negative social and economic consequences. Brandon notes that a common difficulty in promoting ecotourism in Third World countries is the lack of integration between national and local initiatives.

"While countries may be quick to promote ecotourism as a source of regional economic growth, promotion is often emphasized at the expense of planning. In many cases, a lack of integration of local level

plans with national level policy has led to greatly reduced potential for ecotourism" (Brandon, 1993:51).

A common complaint by rural people affected by community-based conservation is that there is a confusing lack of standardized approaches to the implementation of projects. This has led to suggestions that a future government should draft broad national policy which would require each conservation agency to follow standard procedures that would, at the same time, allow for regional variation and diversity. Clearly, a rationalization in the number of agencies charged with responsibilities for ecotourism and conservation is also necessary. This would help to reunify fragmented ecological zones and prevent potential benefits from being reduced and dispersed.

The Kruger Park and the private sector are leading the way in this respect. Fences between the private reserves and the park have been taken down. Liaison bodies have been set up to deal with common resource management issues while each reserve is able to maintain its different style and approach to ecotourism. Thus, the private lodges continue with their up-market safari drives and hunting expeditions, while the Kruger Park provides a more modest set of facilities catering for tourists with a wider range of incomes. Kruger's management has also begun discussions with the Gazankulu conservation authorities and the KaNgwane Parks Corporation about eventually linking the Manyeleti and Mthethomusha reserves more closely to the Kruger Park (**The Weekly Mail**, 30 October-5 November 1992).

Conservation agencies have begun discussing the need for a more co-ordinated approach to their work and the possibility of institutional reform to overcome the artificial divisions created by apartheid. However, some of the most interesting efforts at community involvement in tourism have taken place in the independent or semi-independent homelands. This indicates that local and regional agencies charged with responsibility for economic development in relatively backward rural areas are more likely to respond to the challenge with innovative initiatives. New institutional arrangements should not stifle the creativity that has stemmed from this situation.

According to the director of the KwaZulu Bureau for Natural Resources, "This suggests that the concept of federalized conservation and management as opposed to unitary control in one or two monolithic bodies may be a better option in the 'new' South Africa." He believes the answer might lie with existing conservation bodies enjoying a degree of regional autonomy under a centrally placed, policy-making, "umbrella type" organization. This would respond to the increased need for sensitivity and experience in dealing with the cultural and environmental variations in the country.

However, some authors believe that rationalization could prove difficult to achieve. "Winner-take-all concepts are likely to be vigorously resisted, beginning perhaps with the first hint of group structures to protect the interests of professional conservation staff in the future" (**Isigijimi**, No. 1, 1992:3).

The National Parks Board has noted the need for a finer categorization of different types of game reserves in South Africa. It wants to maintain the concept of

national parks as areas large enough to host exceptional biological and physical diversity in an integrated ecosystem that is granted the "highest form of government protection". It suggests that certain areas have a national and aesthetic set of values which will have to be balanced against the needs of local communities when it comes to devising policy and protectionist measures (National Parks Board, 1992:6). Jeremy Anderson, director of the KaNgwane Parks Corporation, envisages a "patchwork quilt" scenario in which national parks, resource reserves, community run projects, privately-owned lodges, joint-partnership schemes, safari hunting companies and even mixed resource areas can co-exist, having their own local management structures governed by a central agency and set of principles (private communication, November 1992).

CONCLUSIONS

The sand dunes of St Lucia have become a symbol of victory for South Africa's environmental movement. The review panel ensured this when it concluded that mining should be banned and the area declared a national heritage park because of its "rich history, ecological and biological diversity".

But the dunes are more than just a green emblem. The panel's report marks the end of an era in which industrialists have had a free hand to do as they wished with the environment in the name of economic progress. And it emphasizes that development has to take place in tandem with social justice. The ruling breaks a mind-set that has dominated the country's political economy since the turn of the century, an attitude encapsulated in the Mineral Affairs Minister's statement that "mining is what this country has always done and always will do". The review panel's opinion that nature-based tourism will be a more effective vehicle than mining for improving the livelihoods of people who live in the St Lucia area will reverberate in other areas of the country where conservationists compete with mining companies over how their country's landscape should be treated. However, ecotourism's potential to solve the problems of South Africa's rural poor should not be exaggerated. Nor should the serious obstacles be ignored if ecotourism is to improve the livelihoods of people in selected rural areas.

This paper has suggested a number of policies that may help to ensure this. They include the need for land reform and the restoration of title, wherever feasible, to indigenous owners, so that rural people can participate effectively in decisions about whether their land is to be used for ecotourism schemes.

Legal and constitutional reforms designed to reinforce a feeling amongst local people that they are the proprietors, the guardians if not the owners, of the natural resources that exist on their land are also suggested. Support for forms of land tenure, including communal arrangements, that lend themselves more to sustainable use and can be less environmentally damaging than individual ownership, is likely to facilitate this process.

The creation of new democratic institutions operating alongside the traditional tribal authorities, which will maximize people's participation in local development

projects, is a popular demand in South Africa. But it is also vital that so-called "mass democratic organizations" recognize the need to demonstrate that they have real support and an effective mandate from the groups they represent if they are to help make ecotourism projects achieve their full potential.

It has become abundantly clear that skills training and support for community organizations to enhance the ability of their members to participate in ecotourism and natural resource management schemes is a priority for the tourism industry and the state. This should be based on an understanding that "communities" are, in reality, agglomerations of diverse and fractious groupings which experience development in different, and often contradictory, ways.

Mandatory environmental and economic impact assessments for all ecotourism schemes should also include in-depth social impact assessments. They should facilitate a governmental and public review process as well as a method of denying development requests and mandating mitigation of impacts.

A standardized approach to the implementation of ecotourism projects and rationalization of the many different state, and parastatal, bodies currently involved in their administration will be a major task facing South Africa's new government. This reorganization should be undertaken with the objective of limiting the leakage of revenue derived from ecotourism and associated activities out of the area and maximizing the amounts available to stimulate local development.

The rural poor of South Africa need real reconstruction not rhetoric. There is a need to guard against romantic notions that ecotourism is a magical panacea for poverty. A massive effort is needed to redistribute the benefits and revenues generated by the tourism industry in order for it to be used as an effective tool for community development.

ENDNOTES

1. Much of the information for this section is taken from proceedings of a conference organized by the Group for Environmental Monitoring in May 1993 for delegates from settlements around community-based game reserves to compare and assess their experiences. GEM is a non-governmental organization which conducts research aimed at allowing civic, trade union and community groups to make effective decisions and actions about environmental issues that affect their day-to-day lives.

2. The following is taken from notes on the meeting between an ANC-led delegation and a delegation from the National Parks Board, Skukuza 13 to 14, August 1993 (unpublished). It lists the areas of agreement that were reached by the contending parties:

- "National parks are an integral part of national development...
- There is a need for further integration of communities into the activities of the Parks Board.
- Education is needed to promote an environmental ethic and to expand economic and social opportunities in the community. Appropriate forms of education should be directed at all levels of society.
- There are land claims which affect parks and need to be dealt with sensitively and within a national framework.
- There is a need for national policy change to help keep parks sustainable.
- The process of transformation of parks should contribute positively to the interests of a broader society, should be transparent and should empower local communities.
- There is insufficient understanding amongst local people of the role and objectives of national parks. The National Parks Board needs to take steps to inform them about its activities...
- Protected nature conservation areas should be part of a broader land-use planning and environmental management system. Protected areas and resources need to be more relevant and accessible to all South Africans, especially to neighbouring communities.
- The Kruger National Park is only one of the role players in the regional economy. It is recognized that South Africa has one of the best protected area networks in Africa and the world and that it is an important element in the development of the new South Africa...
- There is appreciation of the willingness of the National Parks Board to integrate into regional resource management and engage with local communities.
- In the context of utilization of traditional knowledge, the issue of intellectual property rights needs further consideration..."

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFRA	Association for Rural Advancement
ANC	African National Congress
BPNB	Bophuthatswana National Parks Board
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CDO	Community Development Organisation
CORD	Centre for Community Organisation Research and Development
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
GEM	Group for Environmental Monitoring
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Projects
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
KPC	KaNgwane Parks Corporation
KBNR	KwaZulu Bureau for Natural Resources
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPB	Natal Parks Board
RBM	Richards Bay Minerals
RTZ	Rio Tinto Zinc
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAR	South African Rand (herein, US\$ 1 = SAR 3.5; the rate fluctuates)
Satour	South African Tourism Board
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WWF	World Wide Fund For Nature
ZEAL	Zululand Environmental Alliance

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