



# LEGACY OF LEADERS



# CELEBRATING NEPAL'S CONSERVATION SUCCESSES (2006-2016)

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## CELEBRATING INSPIRATIONS IN CONSERVATION

The 23rd day of September 2006 was a black spot in Nepal's conservation history. 20 Conservation Heroes and four crew members lost their lives in a tragic helicopter accident in Kangchenjunga while etching a major conservation landmark – the handover of Kangchenjunga Conservation Area to the local communities by the government as Nepal's first community-managed conservation area.

What was left was a void, a loss of an era, of conservation thinkers and doers. As Conservation Heroes, they were leaders for a living planet, helping shape the broader conservation landscape while battling the numerous challenges surrounding it.

And yet, all was not lost. Their legacy lived on, serving as an inspiration for Nepal to build on the foundations of conservation impact that could withstand the test of time.

On this day, 23 September 2016, we revisit this legacy against the backdrop of an evolving conservation landscape –

Where iconic wildlife such as tigers and rhinos have grown in numbers together with habitats that have expanded over time;

Where conservation ownership is being built at all levels, from the national to the grassroots level, with standards being set in conservation excellence;

Where conservation is working beyond boundaries, and beyond conventional partnerships;

Where enabling policies, empowered institutions and supportive financing mechanisms are building sustainability into conservation programming;

Where it is no longer about a few but the many working together to make conservation successes possible.

‘Legacy of Leaders’ is a tribute to our Conservation Heroes, and a celebration of inspired conservation, looking back at a decade of successes and change, with roots planted firmly by them to take Nepal's conservation agenda forward, stronger and surer.

WWF Nepal is proud to be a partner of the government of Nepal, local communities and conservation organizations in helping contribute to a living conservation landscape towards building a future where people live in harmony with nature.

Anil Manandhar  
Country Representative, WWF Nepal





Mingma Norbu Sherpa  
WWF US



Dr. Chandra Prasad Gurung  
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Dr. Damodar Prasad Parajuli  
Ministry of Forests and  
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Sharad Rai  
Department of Forests



Narayan Poudel  
Department of National Parks  
and Wildlife Conservation

# CONSERVATION HEROES



Dawa Tshering  
Kangchenjunga Conservation  
Area Management Council



Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey  
Asian Rhino Specialist Group



Dr. Bijnan Acharya  
USAID, Nepal



Meena Rai  
Wife of Honorable Gopal Rai



Jennifer Lynn Headley  
WWF UK



Dr. Jillian Bowling Schaepler  
WWF UK



Yeshi Choden Lama  
WWF Nepal



Matthew Preece  
WWF US



Vijaya Kumar Shrestha  
Federation of Nepalese Chamber  
of Commerce & Industry



Guruwar Tandul  
Shree Airlines



Klim Kim  
Shree Airlines



Honorable Gopal Rai  
Ministry of Forests and  
Soil Conservation



Pauli Mustonen  
Embassy of Finland



Margaret Alexander  
USAID, Nepal



Hem Raj Bhandari  
Nepal Television



Sunil Singh  
Nepal Television



Valerie Slafronov  
Shree Airlines



Mingma Sherpa  
Shree Airlines



# A GIFT TO THE EARTH

Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) lies at the heart of the Sacred Himalayan Landscape – a rich tapestry of forests, rivers, high altitude lakes and glaciers. It is home to the snow leopard and red panda, and is a key link between the protected areas of the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China and India. Declared “A Gift to the Earth” by the people of Nepal to the global community, Kangchenjunga Conservation Area was handed over to the local communities by the government of Nepal on 22 September 2006 making it the first ever protected area to be managed by the local people in Nepal. Led by the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council, the conservation projects in KCA embedded community participation and stewardship, by building the capacity of local community groups and providing enabling conditions to manage the KCA in order to conserve its biodiversity while sustainably harvesting natural resources to support livelihoods.

# HEALTHY FORESTS

The project helped to establish 26 community forests spread over an area of over 72,000ha. By working with community forest users groups, the project built local capacity of more than 400 members of community forest users groups in sustainable forest management, and harvesting and processing of natural resources. Plant nurseries were established to raise seedlings for reforestation of degraded lands. Over 158,000 seedlings of trees, agro-forestry crops, fodder, and non-timber forest products were distributed to the local people for plantation in community forests and private lands. To further reduce pressure on forest resources, primarily for fuelwood, access was improved for local households to alternate energy sources such as solar, energy efficient cooking stoves and micro-hydro power.



## IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS

The NTFP-based green enterprise projects such as Chiraita (an essential oil), nettle and sea buckthorn provided the communities with sustainable sources of income generation linked to forest and rangeland conservation, thus placing an economic value on natural resource conservation. Community members from all livelihood fields—from farmers to entrepreneurs—are now benefitting along the market chains. Nature-based tourism revenues also place an economic value on conserving intact forested vistas and biodiversity, from snow leopards and red pandas, to birds and alpine meadows bedecked with a colorful tapestry of wild flowers. The project collectively benefitted local households to maximize benefits from these products, by building capacity to understand and deal with market forces and to manage the natural resources sustainably.

## INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

The project was successful in creating and strengthening institutions at the community level with a view to building sustainability into conservation programs of the future. Seven conservation area user committees, 26 community forest users groups, 42 user groups, 35 mothers' groups, four snow leopard conservation committees and 12 community-based anti-poaching units were formed, capacitated, and supported in the KCA for sustainable forest and rangeland resource management, species conservation and monitoring, and governance. By investing in local institutions, conservation programs and activities in KCA benefit from greater community acceptance and ownership and provide greater autonomy to local communities to take conservation decisions in the future.



## INCREASING SPECIES POPULATIONS

The snow leopard population in KCA increased from an estimated 18 (13-21) individuals in 2009 to 23 individuals (19-29) estimated in 2013. This 33% increase can be attributed to better protection by the network of community-based anti-poaching organizations that are able to patrol the vast KCA area efficiently. Surveys of blue sheep, the primary prey-base of snow leopards, have also shown an increase of 38%, from 1,167 individuals in 2007 to 1,613 individuals in 2015. Local communities have been at the forefront of the species monitoring and conservation works in KCA through community-based institutions such as the Snow Leopard Conservation Committee, community-based anti-poaching units, red panda conservation sub-committee and locally trained citizen scientists. The community-based livestock insurance scheme is another innovative approach that has helped to reduce human-snow leopard conflict and retaliatory killing as one of the biggest threats to snow leopards.

## IMPROVED COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

The project was able to establish a mechanism for transboundary collaboration and cooperation to discuss and tackle various cross-border threats and issues. Regular Nepal-China and Nepal-India meetings now happen with local and national-level participants. Another major development is the broader alliance of non-governmental conservation partners active in the region, which includes The Mountain Institute, the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development and International Union for Conservation of Nature with the KCA Management Council. This has helped create opportunities for program synergy as well as leverage funds from diverse sources for the sustainability of conservation projects in KCA.





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Nepal has pioneered successes in conservation through a multi-stakeholder approach. It is indeed a long journey, and the impacts created is a testimony of the fact that people and nature can coexist in harmony.

Nepal has demonstrated its commitment to conservation through appropriate enabling environments ranging from policy and legal instruments, institutional arrangements and collaboration both in-country and at the trans-boundary level. Conservation agencies have supported the government’s initiatives in introducing innovations, helping to enhance community awareness and strengthening conservation efforts at the grassroots level.

As our conservation endeavor progresses, we remain committed to our noble objectives and work with partner organizations in making conservation a national agenda.

Honorable Shankar Bhandari  
Minister of Forests and Soil Conservation  
Government of Nepal

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# THE ROAD TO TX2

Nepal's first National Baseline for Tigers was established based on the 2008-2009 study which estimated 121 (100-194) tigers in Nepal.

In 2010 in St. Petersburg, Russia, governments of the 13 tiger range countries including Nepal decided innovative conservation efforts were needed to reverse the declining wild tiger population. The most ambitious and visionary species conservation goal, TX2, was set: to double the number of wild tigers by 2022 – the next Chinese year of the tiger. With the National Tiger Recovery Plan (2010-2015), the government of Nepal pledged to implement several conservation actions to help increase the country's tiger population from an estimated 121 to over 250 adult tigers by the year 2022. In the same year, for high level policy guidance and coordination on tiger conservation, the National Tiger Conservation Committee (NTCC) was formed under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. WWF Nepal is also a member of the NTCC.

In 2013, Nepal recorded an encouraging 63% increase in wild tiger numbers in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) since the last survey conducted in 2009. An estimated 198 (163-235) tigers presently walk across Nepal's forests, and with an effective conservation machinery that works from the central to the grassroots level, the Himalayan nation has its eyes on the goal of doubling its wild tiger numbers.







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Nepal is a country endowed with rich natural capital, from the majesty of the Himalayas to the treasures of the Terai. The Government of Nepal is fully committed to take forward Nepal’s conservation agenda, while garnering support from all stakeholders involved to ensure that nature’s assets are protected.

The government has extended the protected area systems for the sustainable management of critical ecosystems and wildlife populations while adopting appropriate policies and institutional arrangements. Nepal’s successes in conservation over the years has helped the country make its mark in the global conservation map. This was possible by working together with our partners to achieve common conservation results.

We express our appreciation for the able support provided by conservation partners such as WWF Nepal. From one decade to the next, we hope to take forward the inspirations of Nepal’s Conservation Heroes – for forests, for wildlife, and for people.

Dr. KC Paudel  
Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation  
Government of Nepal

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## BACK TO THE FUTURE

The population of one-horned rhinoceros in Nepal increased by 48% between 2008 and 2015. The present rhino population stands at 645 – the highest number recorded in Nepal till date. This is an important feat in rhino conservation in a country that lost 37 rhinos to poaching in a single year.

Nepal has a government-backed Rhino Conservation Action Plan in place to safeguard the rhino. This has a number of aspects – translocations, anti-poaching measures, and broader community development and habitat protection – which are being supported by a range of partners and stakeholders including WWF Nepal.

Rhino translocations resumed in Nepal after 13 years in 2016 with five rhinos successfully moved from Chitwan National Park to Bardia National Park as part of a broader expedition to translocate 30 rhinos in total so as to create a second viable population of rhinos in the western complex of TAL to bring back rhino numbers to its historic level of 800+.







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## FOR A LIVING HIMALAYAS

As of 2009, an estimated 300-500 snow leopards roam Nepal's Himalayan region. Research and monitoring studies on the elusive cat have further developed over time with the first camera trapping of snow leopards in 2011 in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA). In 2013, as another maiden approach, a snow leopard was successfully collared with satellite-GPS technology. This snow leopard was tracked reaching an altitude of 5,858m – the highest documented so far for any species of cat around the globe. This collaring was followed by two more successful expeditions in 2015 and 2016 all in KCA; the 2016 expedition led to the collaring of a female snow leopard for the first time in Nepal.

The existing snow leopard conservation projects in Nepal include investments in science through snow leopard monitoring using camera traps and prey-base monitoring with the partnership of local citizen scientists and community-led Snow Leopard Conservation Committees, a population genetic study using fecal DNA, and a livestock insurance scheme built at reducing human-snow leopard conflict. The impetus is to build a viable population of the species in the three Himalaya complexes of Nepal while advocating for transboundary linkages with India and China.



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On the 10th anniversary of the tragic helicopter crash in Nepal, I reflect on the conservationists and friends WWF lost. A number of them were also my wife Tshering’s and my very close friends, so the tragedy was a personal one for both of us.

Their influence stretched much further abroad than Nepal, and I know the legacy they left behind, because I’m part of it. There are many leaders within WWF and the conservation movement today that have been inspired by what these men and women stood for and who continue their great work in sustainable development.

What I remember so fondly is their charismatic energy. It was infectious and inspired us all to do things we thought impossible. They had a natural ability to make people care and to bring individuals and groups of people together on whatever journey they were working towards.

Their friendship is greatly missed.

Dermot O’Gorman  
Chief Executive Officer  
WWF Australia

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# THE LIVING DINOSAUR

The 2013 gharial census showed a 53% growth in gharial crocodile population in Nepal compared to the estimate of 2008. As per this estimate, Nepal has 124 gharials compared to the 2008 estimate of 81 gharials.

In 2009, 14 gharials fitted with radio tags were released into the Rapti River by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in collaboration with WWF Nepal, to track the movement of this critically endangered species. The tracking helped assess the reptile's survival rate and the status of its preferred habitat in Nepal.

The government of Nepal has dedicated ex-situ and in-situ programs in place to safeguard the future of this critically endangered species.





# THE LESSER PANDA

Nepal is presently home to an estimate 1.9% (approximately 237 -1061 individuals) of the total global red panda population of less than 10,000 mature individuals. Nepal's Langtang National Park hosts 24.33% of the country's total red panda population. Mountain communities are at the forefront of the protection of this species with significant interventions in anti-poaching measures and habitat management.

A community-based red panda monitoring mechanism was established in Langtang National Park in 2013 as an effort to draw attention to the conservation problems confronting this endangered species. This mechanism capacitated community-based organizations and local people in endangered red panda conservation through red panda monitoring thereby creating local stewardship in the conservation efforts for this species.



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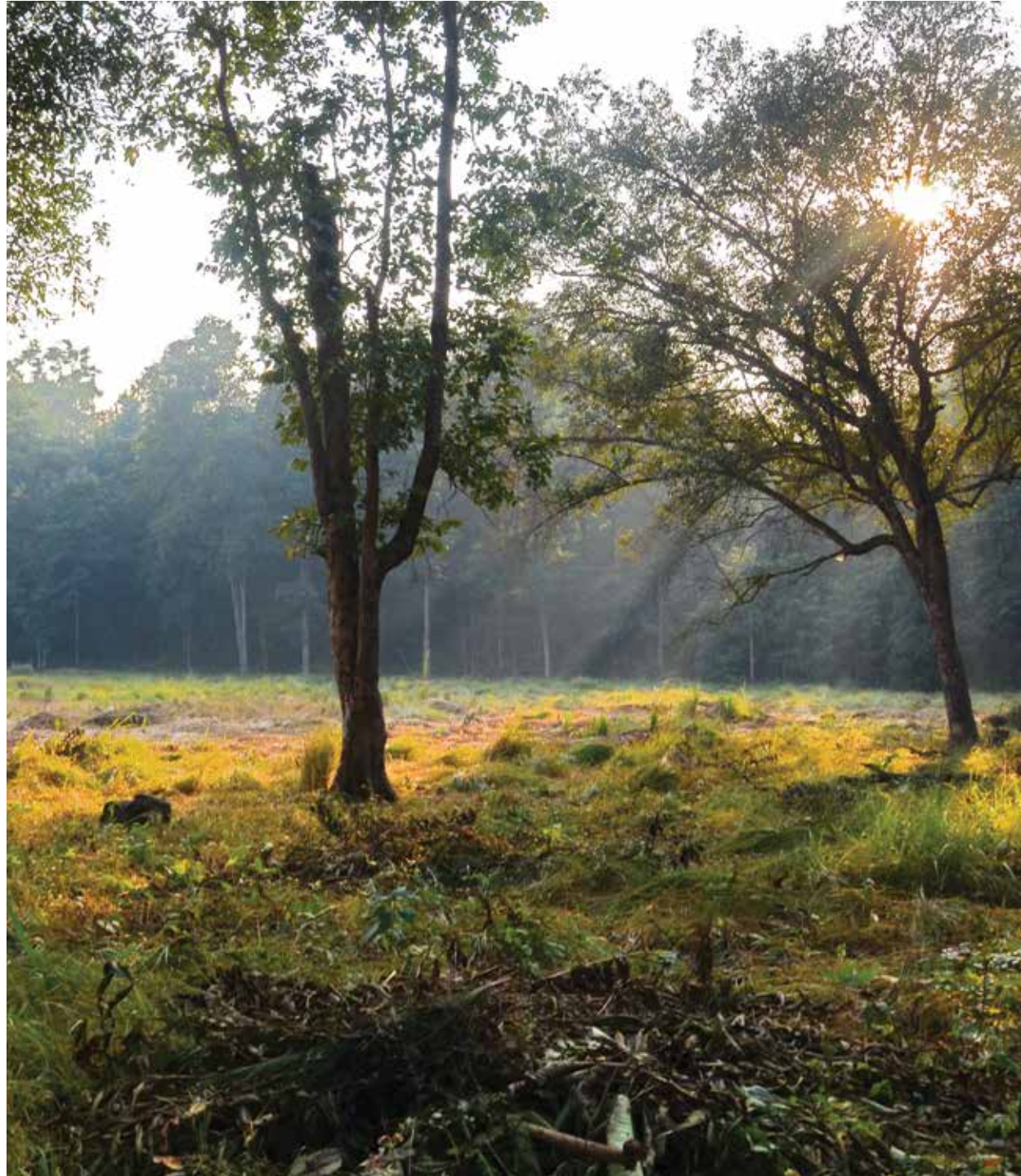
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# SAFER SPACES FOR WILDLIFE

The total size of protected areas in Nepal increased by 4% between 2008 and 2011. At present, Nepal's Protected Area system covers 23% of the country's landmass with an area of 34,185.6 sq. km. This is on account of the addition of Blackbuck Conservation Area, Api Nampa Conservation Area, Gaurishankar Conservation Area and Banke National Park, together with the extension of Parsa Wildlife Reserve. This increase is aimed at providing extended habitat for growing wildlife populations and their protection. Translocations have already been initiated for rhinos, black bucks and swamp deer in the western complex of the Terai Arc Landscape.

Nepal's forests today make up 44.74% of the total 141,718 sq km area of the Himalayan country, compared to the total forest cover of 39.6% recorded in 1998. Nepal's forest cover has, in effect, increased by 5%. Successful forest restoration and protection programs, including the country's far-reaching community forestry program, are the primary reasons behind this conservation impact.



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## NEW LANDSCAPES, NEW LINKAGES

Three new conservation landscapes were added to the existing Terai Arc and Sacred Himalayan landscapes in Nepal. The Kangchenjunga landscape is a transboundary landscape shared by Bhutan, China, India and Nepal, and comprises 14 protected areas home to globally significant plant species and many endangered flagship species such as the snow leopard and red panda. Likewise, the Kailash Sacred Landscape is shared by Nepal, India and China aimed at promoting transboundary biodiversity and cultural conservation, ecosystem management, sustainable development, and climate change adaptations. The Chitwan Annapurna Landscape facilitates a north-south linkage through a river-basin approach in the Gandaki River Basin with a rich cultural heritage and an assemblage of important species such as snow leopards and red pandas.



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# TOWARDS REDD READINESS

Nepal's first forest carbon project was initiated in the TAL so as to establish the current forest carbon stock at a sub-national level. The inventory was conducted in community forests, national forests and inside the national park areas through local resource persons and socio-economic enumerators. To complement the ground truthing work, WWF carried out a landscape level LiDAR-assisted forest biomass inventory in TAL in 2011 to measure deforestation and forest degradation, regrowth and maintenance of forests, and the resulting emissions and sequestration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the project districts. This initiation is a stepping stone to access forest carbon financing for forest conservation, sustainable management of forests and forest carbon stock enhancement, and provides key inputs to the National REDD Strategy of the government.

Nepal is one of the first countries to receive REDD+ funds from the FCPF to achieve REDD+ readiness and has now completed the preparation of the final REDD+ readiness document including the development of this sub-national baseline reference level.



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# CONSERVING THE FRAGILE CHURIA

With the formal accreditation of WWF as the project implementation agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), WWF Nepal initiated a maiden project in the entire WWF Network, ‘Sustainable Land Management in the Churia Range, Nepal’ to address the issues related to land degradation and climate change vulnerability in the Churia range. The Churia range is a fragile ecosystem covering about 13% of the total land area of Nepal.

The project supports the President’s Churia Conservation Program and has empowered local communities to build resilience to climate change through improved sustainable agriculture and forest management practices of the Churia range.

It has also supported the development and implementation of Nepal’s National Land Use Policy, and identified sensitive areas for restoration and conservation.



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# THE ZERO POACHING STANDARD

On May 2 2016, for the first time in the country's history, Nepal marked two consecutive years since the last one-horned rhinoceros was poached on 2 May 2014 thanks to the coordinated efforts of the government, enforcement agencies including park authorities, Nepal Army and Nepal Police, conservation partners such as WWF Nepal and local communities. This also marked the fourth time since 2011 that Nepal achieved 365 days of zero poaching of rhinos. Pursuing its zero poaching agenda, Nepal also hosted its first symposium, Toward Zero Poaching in Asia, in February 2015, with representatives from more than 13 Asian countries attending the event and a wider consensus built on the adoption of a Zero Poaching Toolkit to guide a country's anti-poaching operations. At the same platform, Chitwan National Park was accredited as a Conservation Assured Tiger Standard (CA|TS) approved site, demonstrating its excellence in tiger conservation and protection. CA|TS was developed by the Global Tiger Forum, WWF, IUCN and WCPA and consists of 17 standards by which all tiger sites can be managed and measured. Chitwan National Park has also been included in the IUCN Green List of Protected Areas which aims to recognize successful conservation endeavors by providing benchmark standards for equitable governance and effective management of protected areas.







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We still remember 23rd September 2006, with reverence and sorrow. It was a day when the whole conservation family was deeply affected by the tragic helicopter accident in Kangchenjunga. Not only through the loss of WWF-UK's Director of Conservation, Jill Bowling, and the WWF-UK Co-ordinator for the Himalayas and SE Asia, Jennifer Headley, but also other colleagues and friends from Nepal, US and Finland.

Today, ten years after that fateful day, we can celebrate the lives of those who perished, and remember the contributions they made, and see the resilience and recovery of those in WWF Nepal who continued the conservation work, in both the Terai Arc and the Sacred Himalayan landscapes. All this has been achieved during times of great political and geological turbulence, with WWF Nepal at the forefront of engagement and action throughout the country, working with the government and civil society.

As we recall what has been achieved, building on the foundations laid by those that were lost, we are proud to be your colleagues, and appreciate your whole-hearted commitment to helping people and nature thrive in the beautiful country of Nepal.

Glyn Davies  
Executive Director, Global Programmes  
WWF UK

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## CONTROLLING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Nepal is known as a transit point for illegal wildlife trade. In a bid to tighten grips on the trade, the Nepal Police through a historic move, established a separate pillar focusing solely on environmental crimes. Given the significant commitment of the Nepal Police, the results have been profound. Between 2008 and 2016, more than 1,700 wildlife poachers were arrested together with seizures of 38 tiger skins, more than 200kg of tiger bones, 20 rhino horns, and 365 locally made guns. Additional achievements were the arrest of Raj Kumar Praja, an infamous rhino poacher who is believed to have killed more than 22 rhinos, and the imprisonment of the first complete chain of criminals involved in trading and poaching of one-horned rhinos. Furthermore, in January 2013, the Central Investigation Bureau successfully confiscated the largest amount, in both size and monetary value, of over 1,500kg of Shahtoosh (wool from the Tibetan Antelope which is listed as a Protected Species under Nepal's National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973).



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## INSTITUTIONALIZING WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL

Institutional mechanisms are in place in Nepal to strengthen coordination efforts to curb wildlife crimes from the local to the national and regional levels, while also building sustainability in wildlife crime control operations. The Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Central Investigation Bureau at the district and local levels are nation's key institutions that are at the forefront in curbing wildlife crimes.

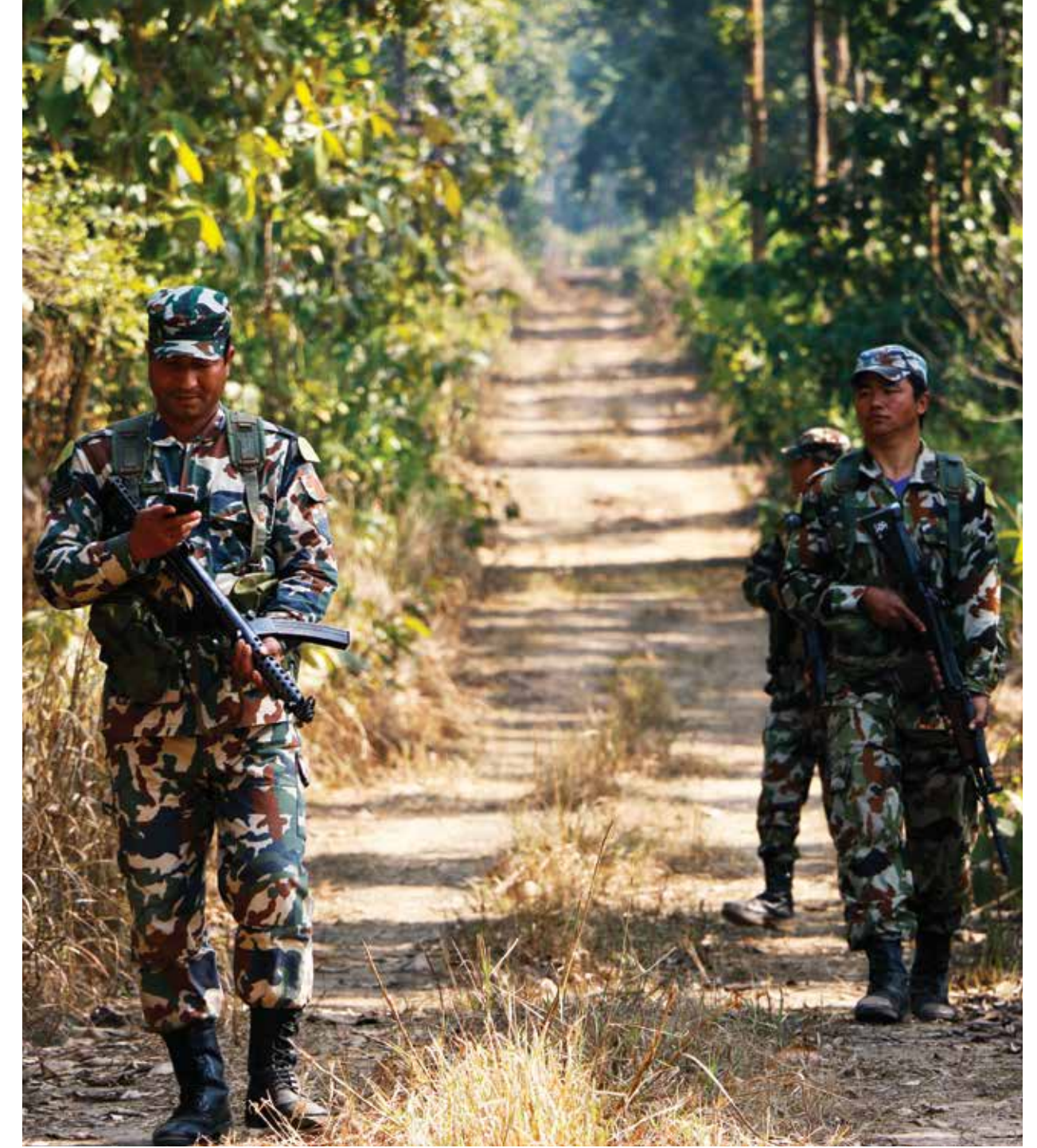
Illegal wildlife trade threatens many iconic species across the world, and South Asia, home to a diverse network of natural ecosystems and varied biodiversity, is especially vulnerable to such threats. With a view to building a regional response in wildlife crime control, the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network was established in 2011. The network comprises eight member countries from South Asia with its secretariat in Nepal.



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## TECHNOLOGIES IN ANTI-POACHING

For any effective anti-poaching response, stronger boots on the ground is an imperative. In order to complement traditional patrolling methods, Nepal has introduced new technologies and techniques in anti-poaching. Nepal pioneered the use of Real-time SMART Patrols in all tiger-bearing protected areas of TAL. This new patrol technique developed by the Nepal Army makes use of an android-based platform on mobile devices through which patrol teams record and update patrolling and locational data in real-time. Likewise, unmanned aerial vehicles have been successfully tested in Chitwan National Park and Bardia National Park. This 'eye in the sky' is an effective deterrent for poachers allowing greater access in protected areas and for monitoring of wildlife habitat. The latest addition to anti-poaching teams is the sniffer dog squad in Chitwan National Park. Currently trained as nature's best friend and a poacher's worst enemy, the sniffer dogs will be important assets in keeping illegal wildlife trade at bay.



© Simrika Sharma/WWF Nepal



# COMMUNITIES IN CONSERVATION

Community ownership and stewardship in conservation is manifested by the growing community forestry program that enables local people to manage forests sustainably. More than 200,000ha of forests are being sustainably managed by community forest users groups who work with established Forest Operation Plans to guide the management and use of forest resources. Local communities have also been at the helm of forest restoration programs with over 36,000ha of forest areas restored, a striking example of which is Khata Corridor, once a degraded forest and today a functional corridor for wildlife such as tigers and rhinos to move freely between Nepal and India.

With the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal as a key partner, WWF Nepal's support to the government's community forestry program centres on building local capacity in community-led sustainable forest management and good governance. It is complemented by initiatives that provide alternate means of livelihoods and alternate energy solutions such as biogas so as to reduce pressure on natural resources by the rural poor who are highly dependent on such resources.







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I have visited Nepal many times and every time I have been impressed with the way the local people interact with nature around them. Finland could actually learn a lot from the way the locals live in harmony with wildlife. All around the world people try to avoid conflicts with wildlife but here in Nepal they have actually succeeded in it. Rhinos are a great example of how people and animals can get along.

I have got to experience firsthand the welcoming and friendly nature of the local communities. It carries a message that the locals really appreciate the work of WWF. In the villages I have witnessed how WWF cooperates with the locals. Local people are the best experts of their environment. Working with the knowledge they have is the most effective way to accomplish good results when it comes to conservation of nature.

I have also been impressed with the enthusiasm that the people have for volunteering. For example, many young Nepalese have joined anti-poaching patrols. Their cooperation in anti-poaching work has brought great achievements. Nepal can truly serve as an example of seamless cooperation between local people and authorities, WWF and other NGOs.

Liisa Rohweder  
Chief Executive Officer  
WWF Finland

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## BUILDING ALTERNATIVES

Local level micro-finance institutions (MFIs) are at the heart of alternate livelihoods programs designed to reduce pressure of local communities on natural resources while providing conservation incentives. A total of 275 MFIs presently manage a revolving fund of above USD 1.3 million to finance income generation activities and alternate energy solutions such as biogas to benefit local households. Community-based enterprises such as marmelos juice and mentha are helping consolidate community-level benefits from conservation.

Beginning 2013, the ecotourism drive in the conservation landscapes has gained momentum with 11 homestays presently being supported in the Terai Arc Landscape alone. From the first homestay in Dalla village in Khata, Bardia, the consolidated homestay program is today yielding substantial community incomes. This success harnesses the potential of providing conservation incentives to local communities to build further ground in promoting harmony between people and nature.



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# TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

WWF Nepal launched the Sustainable Communities Initiative in Amaltari in the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park and in Thulo Syafru in the buffer zone of Langtang National Park in 2014 as an innovative approach to motivate community stewardship in conservation. This approach uses a package of interventions including conservation, governance, alternative energy, livelihoods and education for one select community to ensure focused efforts and resource allocation over a period of time for greater impact.

Tangible results can already be seen in Amaltari where a thriving homestay program is engaging 22 households that has fetched incomes of over USD 150,000 since its inception in 2013, community-based enterprises such as fisheries, spices and local handicrafts are providing alternate incomes, and a health clinic has been established benefitting more than 4,000 local people. An endowment fund has also been created which finances the operations of the community-based anti-poaching unit primarily comprising youth in the village, and a scholarship fund has been established to support the children of families affected by human-wildlife conflict. This initiative has over the years provided further impetus to community-led conservation in Amaltari where the local people are sustainably managing over 600ha of their community forests.



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## THE FUTURE, NOW.

When young people are engaged in conservation, the results from the same can transcend generations yielding sustainable impacts over time. Community-based anti-poaching units (CBAPUs) is one such platform that has provided youth the opportunity to participate in biodiversity conservation. With more than 400 CBAPUs functional in Nepal's conservation landscapes, young people are voluntarily signing up to this community-led anti-poaching program to keep guard over their forests. In the buffer zone of Parsa Wildlife Reserve, WWF Nepal helped establish the first all-women CBAPU with over 20 members which is effectively protecting community forests from poaching and illegal logging.

To harness local level intellect with the opportunities of modern science, more than 100 citizen scientists have been developed and engaged in key wildlife monitoring work involving tigers, rhinos and snow leopards.

WWF Nepal's The Generation Green campaign is another innovative approach to encourage young people's engagement in conservation and sustainably development with over 55,000 members already established together with a cross section of it that has been mentored with the aim of building Nepal's future leaders. The campaign aims to build a generation of 500,000 young members who are committed towards conservation and sustainable development in Nepal.



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# INVESTING IN CONSERVATION EDUCATION

On the occasion of World Environment Day 2016, in a landmark decision, the government of Nepal announced the institutionalization of eco clubs in all public schools in the country. This announcement is a feather in the cap of WWF Nepal and its partner, SENSE Nepal, who have been strong advocates of giving children an early start to conservation education and engagement.

WWF Nepal established its first eco club in 1995; over time, the numbers have grown exponentially with over 500 eco clubs supported by WWF Nepal till date. Through the eco clubs, children and young people gain a broader understanding of conservation issues and, in turn, build community awareness on environment conservation.

In honor of the conservation heroes who lost their lives in the tragic helicopter accident of 23 September 2006, WWF established the Memorial Scholarship Fund to assist students in higher education for pursuing careers in conservation. A total of 55 students have received scholarships so far. They have gone on to establish the Himalayan Scholars alumni whose members work on a voluntary basis to build further conservation awareness amongst youth.



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# TOWARDS INTEGRATED WATER SOLUTIONS

11 Integrated Resource Management Committees (IRMCs) were established in Indrawati and Dudhkoshi sub basins under the Koshi River Basin Management program to build institutional mechanisms for the implementation of integrated water resource management (IWRM) projects at the local level. Such locally led institutions have gained a wider exposure of the IWRM principles and led local level interventions such as spring source conservation, conservation ponds and famers' schools to promote wise use of water in the backdrop of climate change impacts. Over 6000 households have benefitted from the IWRM projects through interventions aimed at improving access and availability of water for irrigation and drinking. The IRMCs have also over time built their capacity to leverage external funds amounting to over USD 400,000 for complementing existing project activities thereby adding sustainability to project outcomes.





## PIONEERING CARBON FINANCING

WWF Nepal completed its first Gold Standard Biogas Verification Emission Reduction (VER) project in the Terai Arc Landscape in 2015. 7,500 biogas plants were constructed from 2007-2011 as a successful completion of the first phase of the project. The initiation of the project's second phase (2013-2020), with a target of installing 20,000 biogas units, has helped provide biogas to an additional 7,500 households till date. The first vantage of carbon credits generated from 2007-2014 generated €2 million. This is being channeled back to the local communities for building additional biogas units as well as funding community development programs.

Biogas as an alternate energy source is helping replace household demand for firewood particularly in the Terai. This is reducing pressure on forest resources and contributing to the health of local communities through a smoke-free and cleaner energy alternative.



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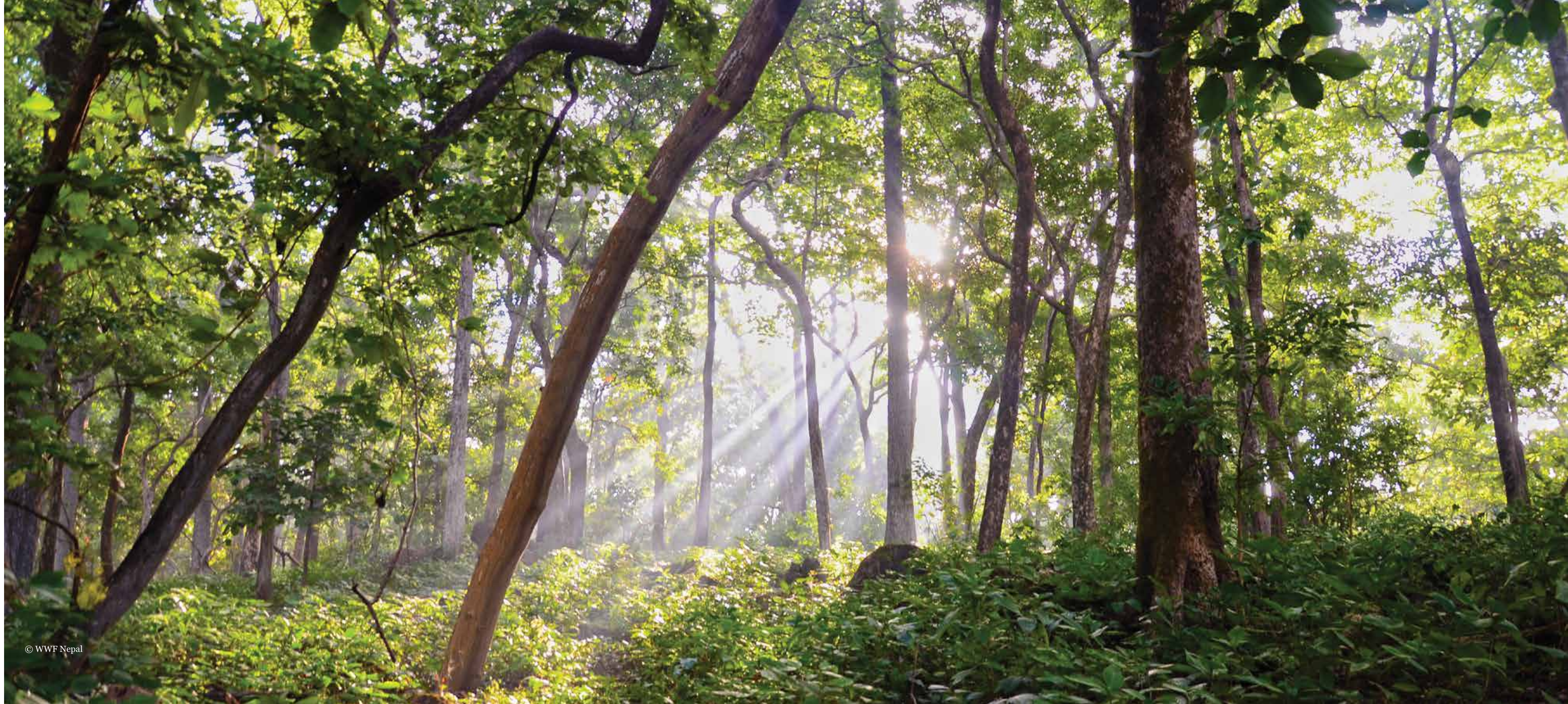


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# TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION FINANCING

Nepal made new headway in the REDD+ readiness process with the approval of its Emission Reductions Project Idea Note (ER-PIN) at the Carbon Fund's Ninth Meeting (CF9) organized by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility under the World Bank in April 2014 in Brussels, Belgium. This opens new horizons in REDD+ readiness for Nepal with the potential to bring additional resources of up to USD 70 million for the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) through the Government of Nepal targeted at an estimated volume of up to 14 million tonnes of emission reductions (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) over a five-year period from 2015 to 2020. The government also formally launched the Emission Reduction Program Document development process in August 2016 as a follow-on activity to the approval of the ER-PIN.





## A NEW CONSERVATION CONSTITUENCY

The Decent Work, Healthy Environment (DWHE) project opened up avenues for partnership with a new sectoral partner – national trade union centres. Aimed at capacitating forest-based workers in trade unions and educating them on biodiversity conservation, this project encompassed a new constituency in sustainable forest management. Over 9,000 forest-based trade union workers benefitted from the project through an assortment of interventions centered on building awareness and capacity on sustainable forest management, conservation leadership and good governance; providing opportunities for trade union members in addressing encroachment issues, forest degradation and deforestation while managing forests; and promoting green jobs and small-scale green enterprises.



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Conservation of natural resources and their sustainable transformations to serve people’s needs has been one of the long term global development agenda for Finland. Natural resource conservation provides a large number of provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural ecosystem services that stabilize climate, protect species, and provide food and shelter to local communities and life to this planet. As Finland’s conservation partners, WWF Finland and WWF Nepal play a crucial role in providing opportunity for the wider community to become involved in viewing, sharing, learning, conserving and utilizing their resources.

WWF Nepal has been demonstrating a wide range of positive results and multiplier effects associated with community-based conservation through different conservation-centered projects in Nepal. While doing so, we lost one of our conservation heroes, HE Mr. Pauli Mustonen, a high profile Finnish conservationist and Ambassador of Finland to Nepal in 2006. All this gives us more strength to advance and scale up the conservation effort and collective action in local communities to regional and planetary scales. We wish to stand behind Nepal and WWF in halting the global loss of biodiversity, reaching and maintaining a favorable conservation status for species and habitat types, safeguarding the functioning of ecosystems and ensuring the good state of natural resources.

HE Mr. Jorma Suvanto  
Ambassador of Finland to Nepal

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## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FOR A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

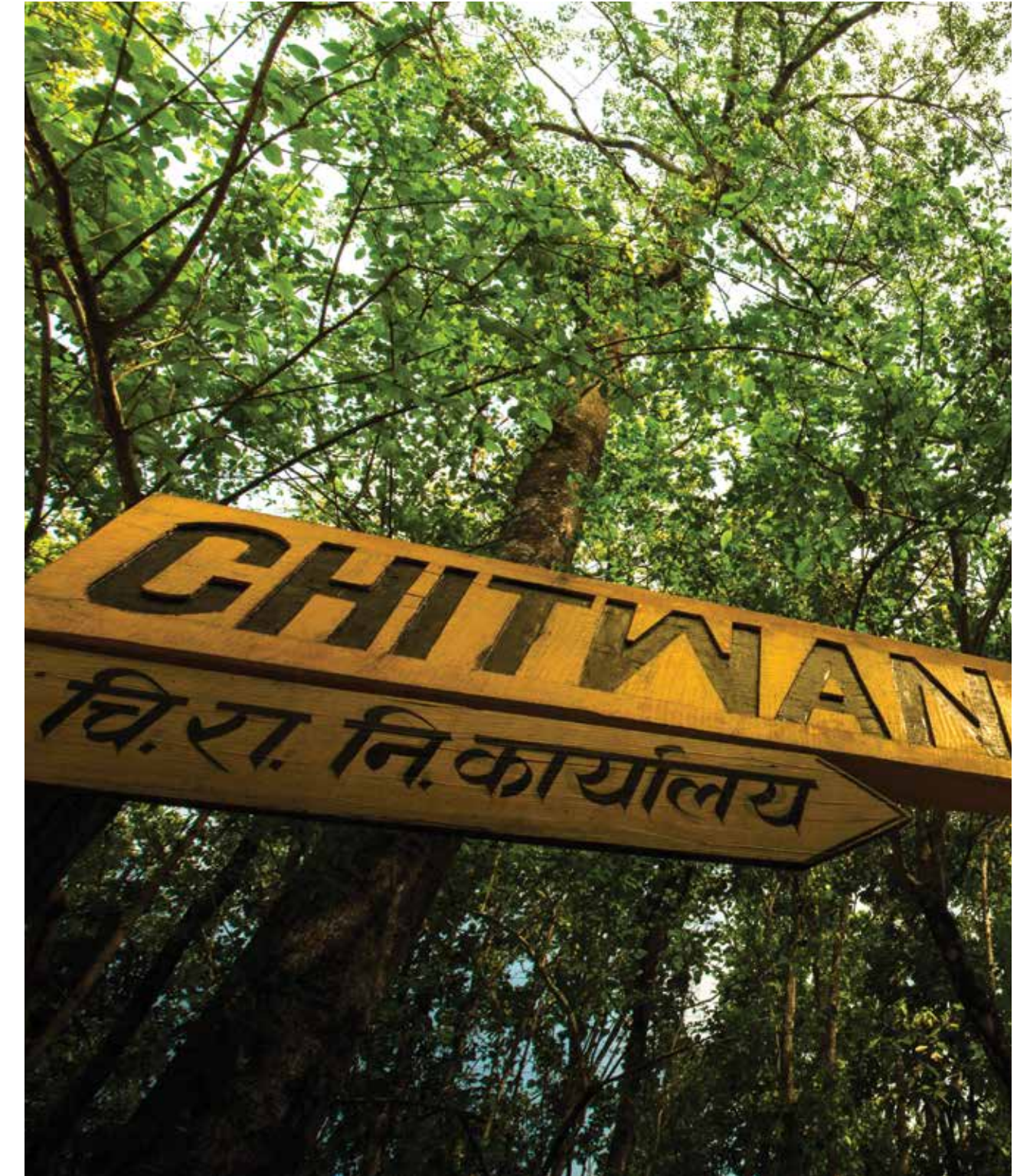
The maiden Population Health and Environment Project was launched in 2011 aimed at integrating sexual and reproductive health with natural resource conservation to improve the livelihood of communities in the Terai Arc Landscape. With a focus on healthy communities for a healthy environment, the project was successful in establishing community clinics in four project sites in TAL that provided over 100,000 sexual and reproductive health related services for women and youth. As key outputs, the project contributed to a 75.6% increase in births attended by skilled personnel in Dang district alone, raised awareness of 90% beneficiaries regarding family planning methods and post and pre-natal care, and mobilized more than 3,000 young people to actively be involved in biodiversity conservation and sexual and reproductive health issues.



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## ADVOCACY FOR SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

A major push by conservationists over the past few years is promoting a sustainable infrastructure development agenda whereby development initiatives do not occur at the cost of the environment. As a major milestone, a proposed railway project that would have otherwise cut into prime wildlife habitat in Chitwan National Park was realigned owing to successful advocacy and lobbying with the government. Nepal's first underpass for wildlife was successfully constructed at the Barandabhar Corridor as part of the government's road expansion plans to ensure that wildlife is not affected. Likewise, WWF Nepal was recently awarded preliminary bid assessment to recommend detailed specification and tentative models for the construction of underpasses and overpasses for wildlife in Nepal's East-West Highway that is presently undergoing an upgrade. In February 2016, WWF Nepal marked an important partnership with the private sector by signing a memorandum of understanding with the Confederation of Nepalese Industries to create a guideline for biodiversity-friendly linear infrastructure and to promote environment-friendly infrastructure practices in Nepal.



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## DIVERSIFYING FUNDING MODELS

WWF received \$39.7 million in funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the Hariyo Ban Program, making it the biggest single bilateral award that WWF has ever received for a single country. The program has produced significant achievements over the years in biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and payments for ecosystem services.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) accredited WWF US as a GEF Project Agency in November 2013. This status gives WWF the ability to work directly with the GEF's member countries to design and implement GEF programs and projects. On behalf of WWF US, WWF Nepal is implementing a maiden project to arrest land degradation from human activities in the Churia Range and to reduce vulnerability to climate change through improved sustainable land and forest management practices.

The World Bank is helping Nepal access funds to further its REDD+ and sustainable green infrastructure programs. World Bank funds have been key towards developing Nepal's Emission Reduction Program Document in order to access results-based payments for REDD+ in the future, and to ensure that future infrastructure development priorities of the government such as the expansion of the east-west highway are guided by environment-friendly standards.



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“Nepal hosts some of the world’s most spectacular natural areas and wildlife, and USAID has been a longtime supporter of the country’s conservation efforts. When I consider the achievements of the last decade in tiger and rhino conservation, combating wildlife trafficking, developing sustainable financing mechanisms, and establishing new conservation landscapes, I am hopeful for the future. If those twenty-four conservation heroes were here today, they would be as proud of the work of USAID and conservation communities in Nepal as I am.

We suffered a great loss in 2006, but the passion and vision of the conservation leaders, including our colleagues Margaret Alexander and Bijnan Acharya, are evident in the great work we have accomplished during the last decade. I look forward to what we can achieve together in the future.

Peter A. Malnak  
Mission Director  
USAID/Nepal

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## ENABLING POLICIES

In order to ensure that conservation programming is guided by an enabling policy environment which underlines national commitment to key conservation results and impact, WWF Nepal has advocated for and supported the government in establishing important national policy instruments. Landscape level strategies for the Terai Arc Landscape, Sacred Himalayan Landscape and Chitwan Annapurna Landscape have been endorsed by the government together with species conservation action plans for tigers, rhinos and snow leopards. The endorsement by the government of the Climate Change Policy and National Land Use Policy and the development of the National REDD Strategy and Payment for Ecosystem Services Policy are significant achievements on the conservation policies front.

Following the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015, WWF Nepal and the Hariyo Ban Program partnered with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment to undertake a rapid environmental assessment of the earthquake, which identified both direct environmental impacts, and environmental risks from recovery and reconstruction activities. The rapid environmental assessment report outlined opportunities for many different sectors to ensure that building back is not only 'better and safer' but also greener, adopting environmentally responsible practices that promote healthy ecosystems for disaster risk reduction and natural resources for resilient development.



© James Morgan/WWF-US

## SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

In June 2010, Nepal and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding on environment and biodiversity conservation. This was a historic moment for both the countries as the governments joined hands for the first time to promote cooperation in the field of biodiversity conservation, management of forest resources and protection of wildlife. Likewise, Nepal and India signed a resolution to join hands to conserve biodiversity including tigers, and strengthen ecological security in the trans-boundary region. The resolution stresses on bilateral and regional co-operation including establishing a joint monitoring mechanism for interaction and intelligence sharing with special focus on the protected areas of the Terai Arc Landscape in both Nepal and India.

Trans-boundary cooperation with India and China is key to the conservation of iconic species such as tigers, rhinos and snow leopards, and coordinated efforts to curb poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

WWF Nepal is also engaged in knowledge transfers with Bhutan, Namibia and Cambodia with the aim of facilitating inter-country learning on various conservation approaches and standards.



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Not so long ago, people predicted WWF Nepal would not survive the helicopter crash and the loss of a magnificent assemblage of talent and visionaries and friends. Yet today the program and its team stand as one of the finest in the entirety of WWF’s global network. Our colleagues have continued bringing to life the dreams of those whom we lost on that fateful day.

They’ve worked with the government and communities in bringing forests back to life, and restoring landscapes where springs have begun to flow again, and pug marks of tigers can be found where they haven’t been seen for years. Poaching across the world has devastated populations of some of our most beloved species yet Nepal has achieved zero poaching of rhinos and set an example for the world to follow

Nepal has produced such sparkling results in the face of seeming insurmountable challenges - navigating myriad changes in their political system and in the face of vast pressures from a growing population. Our program and our partners have given the world hope, and done so in landscapes that move one’s soul.

I salute our colleagues in WWF Nepal. I continue to be inspired by their vision, their resilience and their stubborn devotion to helping communities flourish by conserving the planet upon which we all depend.

Carter Roberts  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
WWF US

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