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The African Lion and Environmental Research Trust (ALERT) is dedicated to the facilitation and promotion of sound conservation and management plans, by means of a responsible development approach, for the African lion (*Panthera leo*), recognizing their potential to provide substantial social, cultural, ecological and economic benefits.

For millennia the lion has been a potent symbol for thousands of cultures throughout the world; a symbol of courage, of authority and of wisdom.

But this, the most iconic creature that has ever lived on our planet is in danger of losing its place as the King of Beasts.

Only with our collective pride there is still time to save the lion, to ensure the future of “the fiercest and most magnanimous of the four footed beasts” (Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary of the English Language, 1755).

The African lion: *an ambassador promoting action to the benefit of all Africa’s people and wildlife.*



Across the boundless savannahs of Africa to the depths of her darkest forests; in the precious waters of her lakes and on the slopes of her dramatic mountains, Africa's wild heritage is under threat.

From the most iconic of species, the African lion, to the humble grasses of Africa's great plains, the animals and plants of the continent are facing an ever-increasing fight for survival. Wildlife populations are tumbling across every habitat as the footprint of humanity spreads across Africa's fragile eco-systems.

As habitats are over-utilized or destroyed the natural processes that offer vital resources to sustain Africa's human and wildlife communities are being lost. Simply putting a halt to social and economic development to save what is left of Africa's wild areas is neither desirable nor possible.

What we need is responsible development. To look into the future and deliver the progress needed in a way that is compatible with life support systems, ecosystems and natural services. Decision making should not be a trade off between economic development and environmental planning. This is a false choice. Decisions have to take into account both – conservation can be at the centre of how our economies and our countries work.

This change in thinking will not happen overnight. Even if we were to start today to integrate a more holistic management of Africa's resources into policy making it will already be too late for many species.

Faced with this huge challenge it is up to our generation to take action now. We can immediately initiate a variety of programs to protect what is left as well as determine the means to restore areas to their former glory when protection of those areas is possible. If we fail today to take the opportunity offered to us to unite and face these challenges together we will be the most vilified generation to ever live on this continent.

Andrew Conolly
Chairman and Founder of ALERT



In most cases the challenges facing Africa's wildlife and its people are too great, too complex, and require too many resources, for any one organization to address.

We believe that the challenges facing Africa can best be met by uniting community and policy makers with conservation leaders, researchers and business leaders in order to make the best decisions for Africa's people, its environment and its wildlife. Such a union will ensure that both present and future generations are able to enjoy the benefits of Africa's environmental services by integrating the protection of those natural processes with economic and social development.

Decision making is not a trade off between economic development and environmental planning. Decisions have to take into account both – conservation must be at the centre of how our economies and our countries work.

By acting collectively the stakeholders of Africa can combine expertise, knowledge and funding to generate real, long-lasting, cost efficient and responsible solutions that are reflected in policy from national governments all the way through the structure of society to the actions of the individual.

Local solutions... Responsible development promotes the implementation of locally conceived solutions that benefit from the experience and knowledge of schemes that have been successfully implemented elsewhere.

Cooperative solutions... Responsible development promotes the evaluation of locally conceived conservation solutions in the context of relationships within the local system as well as with the wider system within which the local system functions.

Relevant solutions... Responsible development promotes community involvement in all aspects of conservation from design and implementation to ongoing reviews of the success of the program – an element often given little heed.

Long term solutions... Responsible development seeks to appreciate the need for long term solutions in a short-term world.



Responsible

[ri-spon-suh-buhl] adj: answerable or accountable, as for something within one's power, control, or management

Development

[di-vel-uhp-muhnt] noun: the act or process of developing; growth; progress

Integrating national economic planning; sectorial planning, energy systems, transportation and agricultural systems by taking into account what we are doing to our environment.

We must match our need for economic development with our need to protect nature's ecological systems because, in the long-run, they underpin a more sustainable way of life.

Conserving a wild Africa through responsible development by uniting; the communities of Africa, corporate leaders, academics, policy makers and NGOs

While Africa has always undergone changes and extinctions, such changes are occurring at an

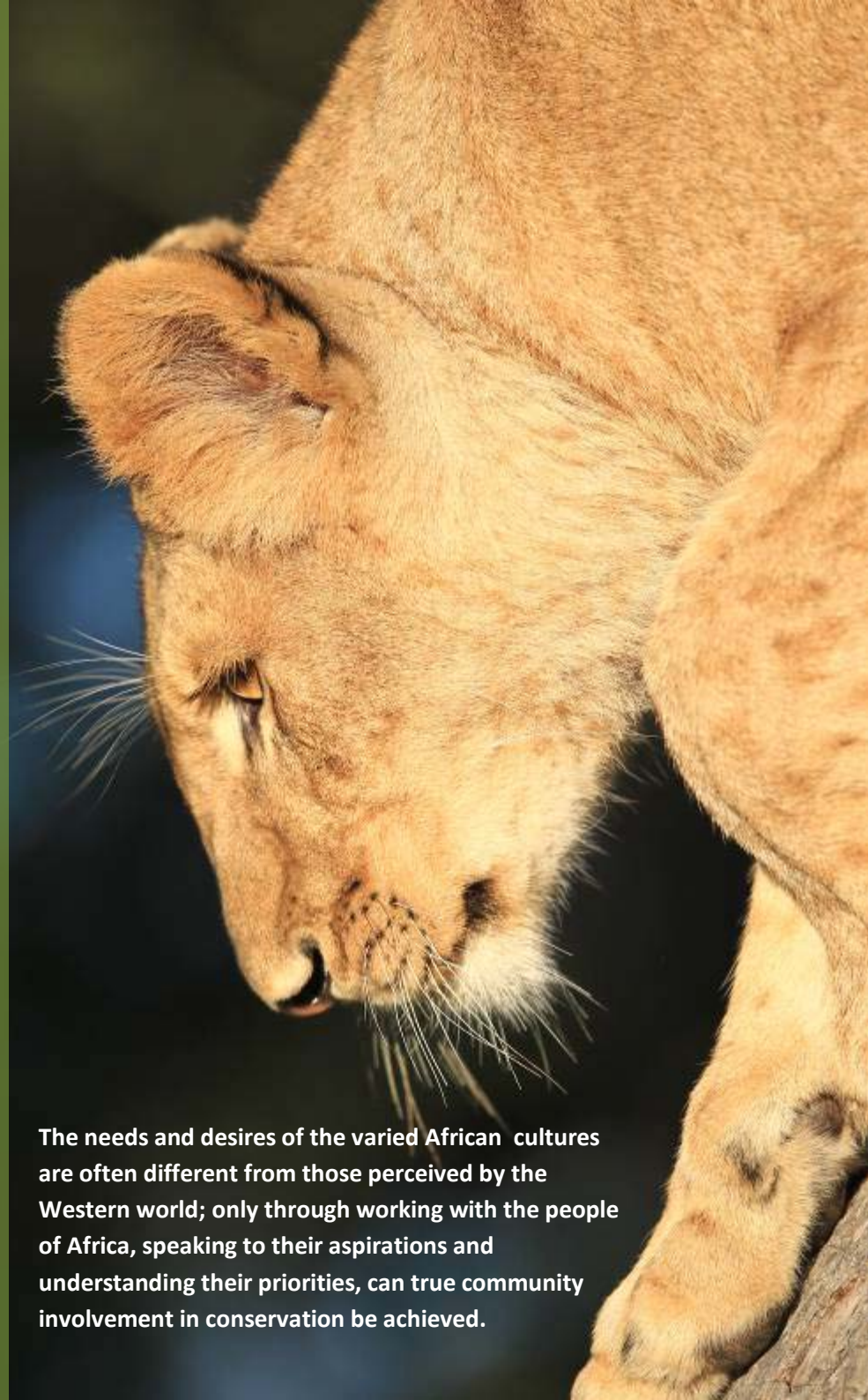
unprecedented rate. Ecosystems, both terrestrial and aquatic, on our continent are being rapidly altered and undergoing a dramatic loss of biodiversity. If we continue to lose species, what we are saying is that the underlying fabric of nature is tearing with huge repercussions for the people of Africa. We need biodiversity to satisfy basic needs like food, drinking water, fuel, shelter and medicine.

Illegal logging and the trade in wood products coupled with the conversion of forest areas to agriculture has wide ranging effects on the environment of Africa through climate change, the reduction of food, shelter and protection for the animals that inhabit forest areas as well as changing the natural cycles that affect water and soil.

Widespread poaching, unsustainable hunting practices and the wildlife trade, as well as the spread of disease from domestic animals to wild species, are all having increasingly negative effects on the wildlife of Africa.

When their environment degrades communities are unable to meet some of their most basic needs, such as the need for firewood, for clean water, or the need for nutritious food. When people understand that these basic needs can easily be met by the resources in the environment then they are going to be more willing to work towards utilising those resources in a more sustainable manner.

Through careful and considered partnership we can encourage social and economic development by engaging local communities in good natural resource management; providing people with tangible benefits to enhance community participation in environmental protection.



The needs and desires of the varied African cultures are often different from those perceived by the Western world; only through working with the people of Africa, speaking to their aspirations and understanding their priorities, can true community involvement in conservation be achieved.

In alignment with our holistic ethos our efforts are channelled through three entities:

ALERT – implements sound conservation and management plans for the African lion fostering African solutions to African challenges

CCWA – focuses on the conservation of habitat and the diversity of Africa’s wildlife in recognition of the symbiotic relationship between the lion and the delicate ecosystems on which it relies.

ACT - promotes community action in support of conservation by raising awareness and empowering people to protect and restore their environment thus improving livelihoods.



Epitomising the bravery, leadership and fortitude as exemplified in the symbolism of the lion, ALERT is proud to present our patron...

Sir Ranulph Fiennes



"I am extremely proud to represent ALERT, not just because of its forward thinking work to help save the African lion, but because they are looking at the wider issues in conservation on the African continent; looking at the whole eco-system within which the lion lives; trying to find ways to develop management plans that will work in the long term and involving and empowering local communities every step of the way.

I am also refreshed by ALERT's willingness to work with other organizations, in partnership, to share ideas and draw different people together to try and find the best solutions to face Africa's challenges"



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