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A Park for the People?

***Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park –
Community Consultation in Coutada 16, Mozambique***

March 2002

A Park for the People? Community Consultation in Coutada 16, Mozambique

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Executive Summary

From 4 March – 15 March the Refugee Research Programme (RRP) sent a team of field researchers to the area known as Coutada 16 in Mozambique. One of the objectives was to conduct research on local knowledge of the establishment of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. This preliminary report covers the main findings on this issue, seeking to give a voice to the perceptions of the people and communities at the grass roots level. It will be followed by a second report with more detailed statistical analysis of the data collected by the study.

The RRP's field research team conducted interviews with 84 senior household heads in 11 villages within 3 districts in the Province of Gaza. The 84 household heads interviewed represent over 1000 individuals. Additionally, 10 village level questionnaires were also administered to local government officials.

The RRP found that there is a lack of information about the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park at the grassroots level: 40% of those interviewed had never heard about it and there is a great deal of confusion among those who had. Most of those aware of the park felt that they had not been consulted about their options in relation to it. There is also a spatial effect: villages on the less accessible western side of the Limpopo River were much less informed than those in relatively accessible Massingir District.

The RRP also found that there are serious concerns regarding all the possible scenarios that have been considered for the people who currently reside in the designated park area. Relocation and removal do not take into account the communities' determination, stated by 83% of the RRP's respondents, not to leave their land. Respondents reported that they would prefer the danger of living with the animals to being moved off their ancestral property. Furthermore, there has not been any clear or transparent planning on how these options will ensure an improvement in the socio-economic standing of the communities, if they are moved. The option of fencing poses problems of sustainability in terms of access to water, freedom of movement and the environmental and social effects of constraining growing communities on finite land.

The lack of awareness and sufficient planning for the resident communities is very worrying against the backdrop of quickly advancing plans to free wild animals into the designated areas. The RRP argues that the implementation of the park should be delayed pending agreement on a "development plan", that direct community representation should be included in the planning process, and that safeguards - such as independent civil society monitoring - are necessary to ensure that the rights and needs of the communities are respected. Furthermore, alternative models of park management, which allow communities to retain rights over their land should be considered.

Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park - Background

On 28 November 2001 the Mozambican Government designated an area of land within the Gaza Province stretching from Pafuri in the North and following along the Limpopo River to the East meeting the Elephants River as its Southern border and the international border with South Africa to the West as Coutada 16. This area is to be integrated into the recently renamed Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, which includes Kruger National Park in South Africa and Gonarezhou Park in Zimbabwe.

Responsibility for the implementation of the park on the Mozambican side is shared by the Mozambican Government under the Ministry of Tourism and the Peace Parks Foundation. A Management Planning Team has been designated to guide the implementation process. The members of this Team represent various other organisations.

Funding for the Transfrontier Park was largely going to be provided by the World Bank and the German Development Bank (KfW). The World Bank has already rescinded its commitment to fund the Park and the KfW have yet to release their first tranche of money. The retraction of funding by the World Bank as well as the delay in KfW funding are apparently connected to serious concerns about plans (or lack of them) for the 20-30,000 people living within the designated Transfrontier Park area in Mozambique. These concerns are mirrored in the results of this study.

Background of the RRP work in Coutada 16 and Research Methodology

The Wits Refugee Research Programme, which is based in Acornhoek in Limpopo Province, has been working with Mozambican refugees in South Africa since 1994. Since 1995, it has carried out regular assisted returns as one of its projects, through which several thousand Mozambicans living in South Africa and wishing to return to their home villages were assisted with counselling, transport and the means to rebuild their houses and livelihoods in Mozambique. In 1994, the UNHCR also repatriated Mozambicans from South Africa to the area that is now to be integrated into the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. Most recently, in August 2001, the RRP assisted 570 people to return to Gaza Province and hundreds of these returnees were settled in what is now Coutada 16. All these returnees, as well as the communities which remained in Mozambique, are now in danger of being forced off their land once again. As part of our commitment to the families and communities with whom we work, and our commitment to the quality and sustainability of our interventions, the RRP feels a responsibility to advocate for the rights of these communities to self-determination and a secure livelihood.

This report seeks to give a voice to the perceptions of the people and communities at the grass roots level, which we believe have not yet been sufficiently heard. The report aims to faithfully reproduce the answers given to our questions and other comments made to the RRP research team.

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The RRP sent a field research team who spent 13 days in Gaza Province with the double aim of monitoring and evaluating the success and sustainability of the August 2001 assisted return programme, as well as gathering information about the planned Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park and how it will affect the returnees and other community members. This report offers a preliminary response to the latter question, which will be followed up with a second report including more detailed statistical analysis of the data gathered. This preliminary report was considered necessary, given the proposed timing for the implementation of the park, and the concomitant urgency to advocate on the findings of our research.

The RRP's field research team – including native speakers of the local languages - conducted interviews with 84 senior household heads in 11 villages within 3 districts in the Province of Gaza. The 84 household heads interviewed represent over 1000 individuals. Additionally, 10 village level questionnaires were administered to local government officials.

The RRP research team visited the following villages within the indicated districts on the specified dates.

Chicalacuala District <i>5 March – 6 March</i> Pop. Unknown		Mabalane District <i>7 March – 9 March</i> Pop. 28,000		Massingir District <i>10 March – 14 March</i> Pop. 22,000	
<u>Village</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Population</u>
Mapai	17,074	Combomune		Chimange▲	595
Mpuz Rio		Matsambo▲	1,550	Machamba▲	686
		Mabalane town		Mbingo▲	572
		Ndope▲	1,300	Mavoze▲	2,686
				Massingir town	

* Population sizes are estimated from the Mozambican Government's 1997 Census. Where these statistics were unavailable, local government officials estimates are used.

▲ Indicates those villages within Coutada 16.

The RRP team found that our prior relationship with those who had returned to Mozambique through the RRP projects allowed us to gather very detailed and open information. The relationship of trust in these cases was strongly contrasted to the suspicion with which several of the communities received the research team. This suspicion was seemingly based on the conflicting information on the park that they had received in the past.

The **main issues** identified in the extensive interviews carried out by the RRP are:

1. A background of extreme deprivation in terms of ongoing low access to services and infrastructure in the area coupled with an increasingly deepening famine,
2. Lack of coverage and confusion concerning the process of awareness raising and consultation with local communities regarding how they will be affected by the park,
3. Problems with the options open to the communities in terms of moving or remaining in the area.

1. Socio-economic Deprivation, Low Access to Resources and Famine

The RRP survey confirms the extremely low levels of infrastructure and access to social services and other resources, which has been repeatedly noted for the area. In this regard, and in terms of the resulting poverty, Gaza Province and Coutada 16 are not significantly different than most rural areas in Mozambique. 85% of those interviewed do not have access to a water source other than a nearby river. Water supplied to villages via water pump or borehole is not safe for drinking. There is a severe shortage of schools in the area, with very few primary schools and no secondary or tertiary education opportunities. Most villages are supplied with a very basic health clinic or person trained to administer anti-malarial medication, but very few have professional nurses or any other types of medication. There are no doctors and only one hospital in the areas visited.

The only resource that is abundant is land. This is also the primary reason why former Mozambican refugees living in South Africa chose to return to Mozambique: because they wish to own and work their own land. 70% of household heads interviewed indicated that their main source of food and their main source of income was dependent on the productivity of their land. Crops grown are either consumed by the household or traded for other necessary household products like cooking oil and washing powder. Some families receive wage remittances from family members living in South Africa and others own and sell livestock to attain cash incomes, but overall most families rely strictly on their land to survive. Returnees most commonly stated “being able to depend on their own land for food” as the main reason that their life has improved since their return to Mozambique.¹

However, this dependence on subsistence agriculture makes the communities very vulnerable to drought and famine. In 1999-2000, major floods made farming impossible, and the lack of rainfall in the last two years has led to no new crops. There is little left in household grain stores. Reports from Father Le Scour, a Catholic Priest living and working in Mabalane for 3 years, show that there has been a significant rise in deaths related to malnutrition and starvation in the last few months. All of the households interviewed by the RRP stressed their fears that they would not be able to sustain themselves past May 2002.

It must be very strongly emphasised that these extreme conditions should not be taken to imply that the communities wish to leave their land permanently. The famine is a short-term problem, which must be addressed immediately through food deliveries to the region. It should not be connected to the question of whether and how people are asked to leave their land in relation to the planned Park.

¹ It must be noted that the return to subsistence agriculture for returnees, compared to mixed economic coping strategies in South Africa, has a gender-specific effect. While it is considered an improvement by men, who are no longer required to support the household through a regular income women often stated that life had worsened in Mozambique because the burden of sustaining their families now fell on their shoulders which required intensive farming on poor land. Moreover, some had lost access to their own source of income.

2. Consultation

The second main issue identified through the interviews was that there is a serious lack of awareness at the grassroots level concerning how communities and households will be affected by the park. The responses to the questionnaires show that 40% of household heads interviewed had never heard about plans to develop a game park or conservation area in the region where they lived. Most of these households are in villages to the west of the Limpopo River. The 60% who had heard about a park were largely from Massingir District. But even when these 60% were asked how informed they felt about the park, 71% responded that they had almost no information and 83% said that they had never been consulted about the Park. These findings contradict the statements made in the Suni/CREATE preliminary report, which was commissioned by Peace Parks Foundation and which is being used to inform a “development Plan” on how to deal with the communities in the area. This report states that: “Each family now knows that the project will affect them and they have been informed personally of their being in the area of the Park“. (Sun/CREATE preliminary report, page 20, published February 2002)

In addition to the general lack of information, the research also found a great deal of confusion among local communities regarding how they will be affected by the park. The following information is based on the information gathered from the communities, reflecting their perceptions of the various interactions they have had with outsiders concerning the Park. Different sources of information, including various studies, government officials, media reports and rumours have spread incongruous and partially contradictory information. This is particularly true in the Massingir District where the proposed airport and main park entrance will be located. Communities in this district are very suspicious of outsiders and unwilling to divulge information because of the confusing and partly intimidating interactions they have had with various actors on the topic of the Park. On the other hand, villages to the west of the Limpopo River from Mapi to Mabalane seem to be totally uninformed and unaware of the impinging park and have had virtually no contact with anyone outside their village structures. This is probably because these villages can only be reached by crossing the Limpopo River on foot, which the RRP research team did, since there are no bridges, drivable fords or river barges in this area. Difficult accessibility from the point of view of external research and consultation missions must not exclude certain communities from the consultation process.

The sources of information to which people in the villages have had access include visits to the area by the IUCN (The World Conservation Union), Suni/CREATE, and Mozambican Field Rangers (trained by the South African Wildlife College), all carrying out different research and supposed awareness raising missions. There were also reports by Radio Mozambique saying that the government will extend Kruger Park into Mozambique and that fences will be erected displacing some villages. Mozambican local government officials have also given various, and partly conflicting information to communities. Moreover, village-based government administrators in most cases were very reluctant to provide the RRP with information regarding plans for the park, except for those that clearly refused to move along with their villages. Conferences called Tri-Nation Community Workshops were held in May 2001, June 2001, and November 2001, and were attended by village administrators with the intention to “provide information to the community representatives regarding the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park”. Based on the RRP’s findings, this information has not filtered down to the household level. Finally, rumours mixing the various sources of information are rife.

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To illustrate the level of confusion experienced in different villages and areas, the range of perceptions recorded from respondents is reflected below.

Perceptions of Communities in Massingir District

Communities in Massingir District had mostly heard of the plans for the Park. IUCN carried out house-to-house surveys in this district in September 2000, Suni/CREATE also did a survey in August/ September 2001 and the Mozambican Field Rangers carried out community meetings for awareness raising in some communities. Some of the perceptions raised in interviews with households and local village administrators are:

- That communities will have to move to a place called Sovila. Respondents reported that they were told this by IUCN.
- That 19 villages in Chicualacuala, 19 in Mabalane, and 16 in Massinger will be relocated. This was reported at the November 2001 Tri-National Community Workshop.
- That there is no concrete government plan on relocation. This was stated by local government officials.
- That a fence will be constructed to separate people living 20km west of the Limpopo and 20km north of the Elephants from the wildlife. This information was also reported to come from IUCN.
- That households will be paid for their land if they move. This perception reportedly is based on information from the Suni/CREATE study.
- That communities will be provided with all basic services and infrastructure if they agree to move. This information reportedly stems from the November 2001 Tri-National Community Workshop.
- That communities will be fenced in or forcibly moved if they do not leave voluntarily. This was reportedly threatened by Mozambican Field Rangers who visited Mavodze in December 2001 when told by the community that it did not want to move.
- That residents will benefit from the incoming tourists because the park will support the Mozambican economy. In some cases it was reported that jobs were offered, but without concrete information about what kinds of jobs. In other cases, there were no promises of jobs for local people.

Perceptions of Communities in Mabalane and Chicualacuala Districts

Communities in the region on the east side of Coutada 16 seem largely uninformed, gathering most of their knowledge about the park from rumours. Some heard the Radio Mozambique report (as stated above) or received information from local government administrators. The IUCN also visited Mapi according to the Mapi Chief do Post. Some of the perceptions raised in the RRP interviews are:

- That people will have to move from their land. This comes from the District Administrator in Chicualacuala.
- The Chief do Post in Combomune (Mabalane District) reportedly has orders from the District Administrator in Mabalane to start removing people in 2 weeks time (i.e. from 1 April 2002).
- That villages west of the Limpopo will have to move to the eastern side of the river to give the animals access to the Limpopo River. The Chief of Ndope (Mabalane District) reportedly told this to his village in January 2002.
- That the park will give people jobs and money from tourism as well as game meat from animals.

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A striking finding concerning perceptions of the park is that of those 60% of respondents who had heard of the park, 61% reported that they were told that they would benefit from this park, but 76% believed that no-one or only a few would benefit from it in reality. This perception is supported by that fact that of the 150 field rangers who will be trained in total for the Mozambican side of the Park, only 29 individuals were selected from villages in the area to be trained, while the rest of the rangers are South African. Some villages (e.g., Chimange) refused to give one of their community members up for training saying that one person with one job could not support the entire village.

There are various factors which seem to be working against the development of a truly participatory and beneficial plan “for the people” in Coutada 16. The main problem is that all the actors responsible for formulating such a plan have interests which potentially conflict with their ability to work without bias in the interest of the local communities. The Peace Park Foundation’s main focus is on wildlife conservation and tourist attraction, which both conflict in some situations with the stated interests of the residents. The study by Suni/CREATE was commissioned by the Peace Parks Foundation and it is not clear from the IUCN (The World Conservation Union) report who their funders are and where their mandate comes from. While it is highly desirable for the implementing organisation to carry out social impact and consultation studies itself, so that they are an integral part of the Park planning, the fact nevertheless remains that they are not independent voices which are accountable to the people themselves. The Government is the sole body representing the people, but it also has a great deal to gain if the Transfrontier Park is implemented. Of the NGOs represented in parts of the planning process, most are conservation focused (such as the African Wildlife Foundation) and have a stake in the Park.

Secondly, none of the various reports from the consultation missions nor the plans put out by government or the Peace Parks Foundation mention alternative concepts in park management like Zimoza (Four Corners), the Makuleke Land Claim (Northern Kruger), and Swaziland Parks. This may reflect the prevalence of conservation specialists on the planning and research teams, who may lack a community development background. It should also be noted that South Africa, from where the main impetus for the park extension is coming, already has a reputation for community insensitive park management (sometimes called “Krugerisation”). There should be an interest in not repeating past mistakes, but rather in building on recent reforms and innovations, such as the case in the north of Kruger Park where the Makuleke community have reclaimed their ancestral land and are now continuing the conservation work and tourist business themselves.

Third, there is strong pressure coming from South Africa’s Kruger National Park to open up the Transfrontier Park to the Mozambican side as soon as possible. In Kruger Park, elephants have not been culled for some time because of expectations for the Transfrontier Park, and the overpopulation will cause irreparable damage to the ecosystem if they are not released into new pastures soon. Funding has already been secured for the transfer, and a date has been set for June 2002. This early date makes it simply impossible to plan for, prepare and carry out any suitable arrangement for the people still living in Coutada 16. A temporary fence is meant to be erected to protect people in the meantime, but it will be impossible to construct it by June. The needs of the resident communities should have priority in determining the time frame for the implementation of the park.

3. Plans for Land Use and Options Open to Local Populations

From information gathered in preparation for the field study, and from interviews with diverse stakeholders responsible for planning and implementing the park, it is clear that there is no coherent plan on how to deal with people currently living in areas soon to become part of the park. The Peace Parks Foundation is the Mozambican Government's main partner for the "development process." While the Foundation's land use plans are very straightforward and accessible (see below) their development plans are still unknown. The official development plans of the Mozambican Government are incongruous, and different information has been provided by different actors within the Government.

The **Land Use Plan** proposed by the Peace Parks Foundation consists of three zones.

- Tourism Zone – This is where the bulk of the tourism infrastructure will be developed and covers an area between the Elephants and Shingwizdy Rivers (c 356,000 hectares). Seven to ten different lodges/hotels will be located in this area and it will be where the majority of the game drives occur. This proposed area envelops all of the villages currently situated along the Shingwizdy River and to the west up to the international border with South Africa. Roughly 16 of these villages are in Massinger and several others in Chicualacuala.
- Natural Zone/Wilderness Zone – This zone will remain undisturbed with little tourism and infrastructure development. This covers a total area of 577,694 hectares and there will be no fence separating this zone and the tourist zone.
- Resource/Buffer Zone – It is proposed that the settlements along the Limpopo River be included in the resource zone. A fence would be placed to the west of the settlements to afford protection to the population's crops from wildlife in the wilderness zone. The communities would have entry into the resource utilisation zone and would provide access to visitors to camps along the Limpopo River. "These facilities would be developed for the benefit of the communities and would be run by these people. The authorities should give assistance at the initial stage of development".² The total area of this zone is 189,449 hectares.

According to the perceptions of officials interviewed in Mozambique, this proposed Land Use Plan assumes the removal of the entire population within the Tourism and Wilderness Zones, especially near Mavodze where the tourist lodges are proposed to be located.

Therefore, the options being discussed to manage the communities within the proposed Tourism and Wilderness Zones are relocation/ removal or fencing to separate communities from animals. The first option stands in stark contrast to the most striking finding of the RRP's research, which is that 84% of all households interviewed stated that they will refuse to move from their land. The second option is not reconcilable with the livelihood strategies of the communities. Therefore, a third option was brought up by the communities themselves, namely living with the animals. There are major problems with each of the possible scenarios.

² Taken from Tourist Zone Map designed by Peace Parks International.

Scenario 1 – Relocation/ Removal

Relocation involves providing an alternative place for people to go, including access to land, housing, infrastructure and services. This is the strategy currently espoused by the Peace Parks Foundation, based on the research conducted by Suni/CREATE and IUCN. The plan is supposedly to pre-emptively build settlements with all the resources and infrastructure already in place. The argument is that once these settlements are finished, local communities will voluntarily chose to resettle there, since they can then make an informed choice between concrete alternatives and will recognise that it is in their interest to move. While this approach is commendable in principle, since it purports to give the communities the final choice and aims to offer a sustainable improvement in livelihoods to those affected, there remain several important issues to be considered.

First, making the assumption that people will chose to relocate ignores the stated desires of the people. 84% of all households interviewed by the RRP responded to the question “in the event that you would be forced to move your household, where would you choose to go and why” with the statement that they would refuse to move, even if forced to do so. This attachment to their land stands against a background of experience where over 90% of the interviewees have been forced to move because of conflict, flood or drought at least once in the past, and 8.5% have moved 3 or 4 times already. Second, the focus on access to resources does not take into account that there is an inherent value in the land where people reside. The interviews revealed a strong attachment to the villages were people were born, to the land where their ancestors farmed and are buried, and to sacred trees and other idols. In the RRP’s experience of carrying out repatriations of Mozambican refugees from South Africa, the main motivation for people returning to Mozambique was to return specifically to their ancestral land, and not to Mozambique in general. 3.4% of the respondents to the question “where would you go if you were forced to move,” replied that they would go to South Africa, rather than to any other place in Mozambique. In addition, the relocation option assumes that all communities will decide to move, and that they will move as a whole, thereby ignoring those communities and households who do not want to move and greatly empowering local government structures to make decisions on behalf of the entire community, even if these may not be consensual.

In addition to these crucial issues of consent, there are also issues of feasibility. The RRP has neither received nor found information suggesting that alternative settlements are currently being built, where such settlements are planned, and how these are to be funded. As mentioned above, if the plan foresees the release of animals into parts of the foreseen park area by June 2002, which is claimed in the park update on the internet, it is unlikely that a secure temporary fence can be built in time which will effectively protect remaining populations. Beyond this short-term phase, it takes time to build sufficient alternative accommodation for all the communities needing to be relocated, let alone carry out a process of consultation on whether they, in fact, wish to accept this alternative. A further timing issue concerns the agricultural cycle; families require time before the onset of the rainy season to prepare and plant new land. In addition to timing, there is the issue of sustainable and long-term funding for the promised infrastructure. The provision and funding of this infrastructure lies within the responsibility of the Mozambican Government, and must be supported by a long-term plan with donors and civil society actors. Alternatively or additionally, a clear and significant share of the income gained through the future Park should go to the communities.

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A crucial point, based on the long experience of the RRP with issues of migration and community integration, is how the communities will be integrated into existing communities in the areas of relocation. Such movements inevitably cause tensions, and lead to conflict over already limited resources. A sustainable relocation plan must include services for the “host” communities in relocation areas as well.

In sum, relocation probably remains the least worst option, compared to the other scenarios outlined below, but it is only possible to justify asking people to leave their land against their stated preference if they are guaranteed significantly improved standards of living in terms of access to land, infrastructure and services. For this to be realistic and sustainable it will require much more careful and transparent planning, with a longer time frame, than has been presented to date, as well as a significant commitment of resources by the Mozambican government and/or a scheme of significant economic participation in park income by the communities.

If these minimum requirements for the successful relocation of the communities are not met, then a removal of the current population of Coutada 16 is likely to have highly detrimental effects on the lives and livelihoods of these communities. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the park as a conservation area is endangered if local communities do not perceive it to be in their interest. There is ample research showing that poaching and encroachment on protected land is common when communities are not adequately integrated into park planning and implementation. If the removal is effected through a government order or some form of compensation incentive other than alternative settlement options, then it must be ensured and monitored that compensation covers not only the true price of their land, but also takes account of relocation costs and costs associated with rebuilding homes and new livelihoods. There are also more unorthodox methods which have been used to remove people from their land in the past. These include providing ‘incentives’ to local chiefs or releasing wild animals. Closer monitoring and greater civil society engagement will be essential to ensure that this does not happen in the case of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

Scenario 2 – Fencing

The other option is erecting fences. This would mean leaving people on their land but putting up fences to protect villages from wild animals. This includes either fencing communities in or fencing them out. At first glance this option may look feasible and appropriate to the communities’ interest in remaining on their land, but it is not sustainable.

Of central concern is people’s access to a reliable water source (currently a nearby river) for their own use, for their livestock, and for their crops, which are often planted next to rivers where soil is more fertile. 85% of those interviewed depend on the river for their water needs (one village has a pump, making up the other 15%), and 99% stated that they “would not survive without it.” Wildlife would rely on the same water sources and there is no way of reconciling the two. Accessible river corridors for either people or animals have been suggested, but they would not protect individuals from attacks and do not solve the problem of riverside cropping. If water pumps or boreholes were introduced, the government would have to ensure that the system would never fail and be limitless. It is also important to keep in mind that nearly everyone interviewed by the RRP stated that they enjoy access to the nearby river for cultural uses, swimming, and relaxation among others. Such emotional and psychological factors must be considered in any development plan.

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Additionally, fencing in is likely to constrain people's freedom of movement, since travelling on foot (the primary means of travel) within a game park is inconceivable. Safe, free, regular, and reliable transport would have to be provided shuttling people from their villages to other destinations within and outside the game park.

Lastly, fenced-in communities would be confined to finite areas, so population growth and environmental pressures on land are likely to cause long-term problems in degradation of grazing land, soil fertility, sanitation, biodiversity and genetics.

An alternative to fencing in is fencing out, i.e., leaving communities in the border areas of the park and erecting a fence to protect them from the wildlife within the park. This applies mostly to the fence separating the Wilderness Zone from the Buffer Zone west of the Limpopo River and fencing people away from the Shinguidzy. Firstly, this option only applies to a few of the current villages. Second, it has many of the same problems as fencing in, since it constrains the movement, land use and freedom of expansion of communities. Finally, water issues remain problematic, since it is very controversial to assume that animals would choose an alternative water source if they are cut off from rivers that people are using. Elephants especially can smell a water source from hundreds of kilometres away and will likely break down any barrier that stands between them and a potential source of water.

Scenario 3 – Living with the Animals

Although it has not been considered by the Peace Parks Foundation, who is implementing the Park, nor by the Mozambican Government, a curious third option was brought forth by communities themselves in the RRP study: living with the animals. Besides the obvious risks for the people themselves, this is certainly inconceivable in terms of sustaining their livelihoods. Wild animals would certainly destroy all livestock and crops. However this option is noteworthy, since it reflects people's commitment to remain on their land. Many noted that they would be willing to live with this danger and would adapt by killing the wildlife.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The RRP's research findings clearly show that there is a gap between the ideal and practice of consultation with resident communities in Coutada 16 concerning their future in relation to the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. Furthermore, the options of relocation/ removal or fencing are insufficiently thought through and need to be very carefully planned and discussed with the communities.

Recommendations:

- Involve direct representatives of the communities (not only government officials) as well as local and regional NGOs - i.e., actors who are accountable to the people, who can independently represent their voices, and who are independently funded - in "development" planning.
- Ensure coverage of all communities in the area for the consultation process, in spite of access difficulties.
- Ensure that no village removals take place before an integrated "development" plan has been formulated and agreed upon by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that the "development plan" lays out complete and realistic time frames, backed by concrete funding provisions and commitments.
- Delay the plan to release animals until there is a clear and agreed-upon plan for managing resident communities and that plan has been implemented.
- Ensure that there is consistent information and planning between the Peace Parks Foundation, the Mozambican government, and other implementing organisations.
- The feasibility of alternative concepts in park management – like Zimoza (Four Corners), the Makuleke Land Claim (Northern Kruger), and Swaziland Parks, among others – should be considered. The option of limiting the park size should also be discussed. Especially models which combine conservation with continued local community rights to their land, i.e. rights to the economic benefits accruing from the use of their land, should be prioritised. Such models respect the attachment of communities to their ancestral land, their right to choice and self-determination, as well as providing a sustainable base for building livelihoods for those communities.