

Introduction

In April 2002, some 30 experts from around the world, with various professional backgrounds, attended a five day conference in the Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan. The Dana Declaration is a product of that meeting, where the group discussed how environmental protection and wildlife conservation projects affect the lives and livelihoods of nomadic and other mobile peoples.

The aim of the Dana Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation is to ensure that future conservation policies and programmes respect the rights of indigenous and traditional communities, and to highlight the many areas of common interest between mobile peoples and conservationists. It is hoped that it will lay the groundwork for participative and multi-disciplinary approaches to conservation that will address the specific interests of mobile people, to the benefit of all parties.



Photo: Nicholas Turvey

Mobile Peoples and Conservation: Crossing the disciplinary divide Wadi Dana, Jordan, 3rd - 7th April, 2002

A conference hosted by the Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, in collaboration with: Durrell Institute of Conservation Ecology, University of Canterbury; World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); Oxfam UK.

Conference Proceedings

The invited experts had backgrounds in the social sciences (anthropology and sociology), natural sciences (ecology and biology), worked in the policy making arena, were engaged in projects on-the-ground, or worked in academic institutions. The geographic regions of East and Southern Africa, North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, South and East Asia and Australia were represented.

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Talal of Jordan formally opened the conference, which was organized around two key-note speeches and six case study presentations. Discussions in working groups produced a 'Statement of Principles', which became what is known as the Dana Declaration. The conference papers will appear simultaneously in special editions of the journals *Nomadic Peoples* and *Biodiversity and Conservation*.

The steering committee thanks the following for their financial support (Donors listed in alphabetical order):

Department for International Development
(Rural Livelihoods Department, UK);
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(Environment Policy Department, UK);
Institute of International Education
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The Wenner-Grenn Foundation for Anthropological Research;
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The Dana Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation

A Factsheet



Photo: Marcus Colchester



The Dana Declaration

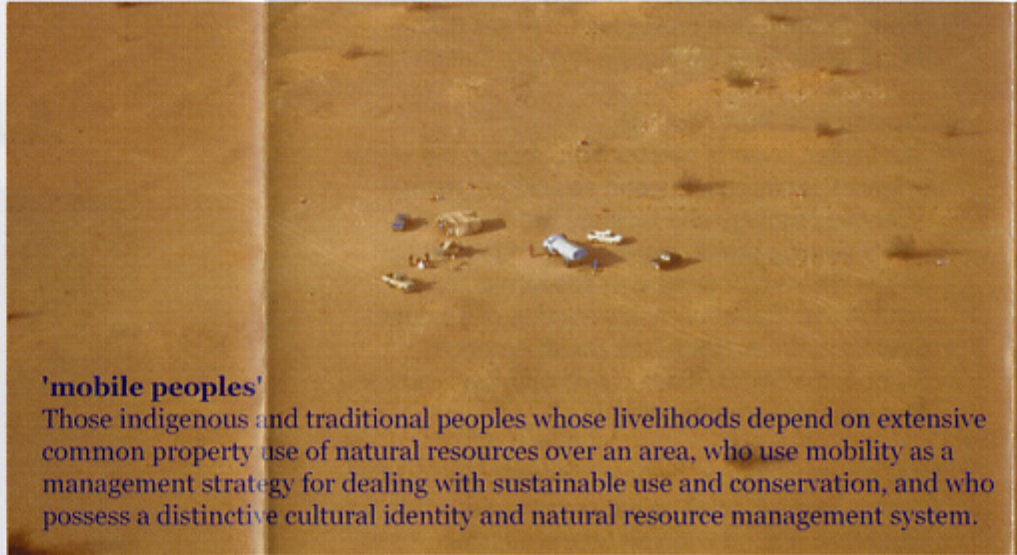
The world faces unprecedented threats to the conservation and sustainable use of its biodiversity. At the same time, its cultural and linguistic diversity, which includes an immeasurable and irreplaceable range of knowledge and skills, is being lost at an alarming rate.

The linked pressures of human population dynamics, unsustainable consumption patterns, climate change and global and national economic forces threaten both the conservation of biological resources and the livelihoods of many indigenous and traditional peoples. In particular, mobile peoples now find themselves constrained by forces beyond their control, which put them at a special disadvantage.

Mobile peoples are discriminated against. Their rights, including rights of access to natural resources, are often denied and conventional conservation practices insufficiently address their concerns. These factors, together with the pace of global change, undermine their life-styles, reduce their ability to live in balance with nature and threaten their very existence as distinct peoples.

Nonetheless, through their traditional resource use practices and culture-based respect for nature, many mobile peoples are still making a significant contribution to the maintenance of the earth's ecosystems, species and genetic diversity - even

though this often goes unrecognized. Thus the interests of mobile peoples and conservation converge, especially as they face a number of common challenges. There is therefore an urgent need to create a mutually reinforcing partnership between mobile peoples and those involved with conservation.



'mobile peoples'

Those indigenous and traditional peoples whose livelihoods depend on extensive common property use of natural resources over an area, who use mobility as a management strategy for dealing with sustainable use and conservation, and who possess a distinctive cultural identity and natural resource management system.

Photo: Dawn Chelty

The Dana Declaration elaborates five principles defining this new approach, under the headings:

- Rights and Empowerment
- Trust and Respect
- Different Knowledge Systems
- Adaptive Management
- Collaborative Management

Visit:

www.danadeclaration.org

for the full text, a list of signatories, and more...

What next?

The Wadi Dana conference participants recognize that this is only the first step. The principles need to be considered and developed further in dialogue with mobile peoples and other interested groups and organisations. The Dana Declaration is therefore being widely disseminated to indigenous peoples' organisations, NGOs, academics, professional bodies and practitioners.

An international Standing Committee on the Dana Declaration has been formed to oversee progress with the conference outputs.

A website and e-mail list-serve have been set up to aid communications and outreach strategy.

A programme of exchange visits is being developed, to increase mobile peoples' exposure to a variety of community-based natural resource management projects.

A documentary series, based on the ideas and debate generated at the conference, is being developed for broadcast. A pilot for the series - "Rum Business" - is available on the website.