



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **JANE GOODALL NAMED 2009 YEAR OF THE GORILLA PATRON Joint Initiative Aims to Protect Endangered Great Apes**

Renowned primatologist Jane Goodall, Ph.D., DBE, will serve as the official patron of the 2009 Year of the Gorilla (YoG), a 12-month campaign aimed at improving conservation of humankind's closest relatives and their habitats by bettering the livelihoods and incomes of local people. His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco launched the YoG initiative December 1 at the opening of a United Nations wildlife conference in Rome, Italy.

The YoG campaign also seeks to improve the management of national and cross-border primate populations, as well as those living in national parks, by strengthening cooperation between range states and providing improved support for rangers and other key personnel.

YoG is a joint initiative of the United Nations Environment Program's Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP-CMS); the UNEP-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Great Ape Survival Partnership (GRASP); and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA).

Dr. Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) and a UN Messenger of Peace, was in Asia at the time of the YoG launch. In a statement read in her absence, she emphasized the impact of human poverty on the great apes.

"People living in and around the last forested areas are struggling to survive," said Dr. Goodall. "If we can't help these people find ways of living that do not involve continual destruction of the forest, we shall fail in our efforts to protect these wonderful great apes—our closest living relatives."

Dr. Goodall also underlined the importance of community-centered conservation efforts like those detailed in the YoG action plan and those currently managed by JGI in Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). JGI's TACARE program, which is active in 24 Tanzanian villages around Gombe National Park, involves health care projects, forestry protection, training in sustainable farming methods, forest regeneration, water and sanitation projects, women's initiatives, microcredit programs and education. As a result of the program, local people have partnered with JGI to put aside land for forest restoration and to protect the remaining forest, which is home to many species including endangered chimpanzees.

"These initiatives benefit more than the great apes," said Dr. Goodall. "They help prevent the spread of contagious disease. They reduce poverty and protect forests. And they help slow global climate change. Finally, in areas where there is competition for diminishing natural resources with potential for violence, programs of this kind add to the security of the region."

About the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI)

**Founded in 1977, the JGI continues Dr. Goodall's pioneering research of chimpanzee behavior – research that transformed scientific perceptions of the relationship between humans and animals. Today, the Institute is a global leader in the effort to protect chimpanzees and their habitats. It is also widely recognized for establishing innovative community-centered conservation and development programs in Africa, and the Roots & Shoots global environmental and humanitarian youth program, which has groups in almost 100 countries. For more information, please visit [www.janegoodall.ca](http://www.janegoodall.ca)**

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