



# GLOBAL SNOW LEOPARD AND ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION PROGRAM (GSLEP)

## FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING (SCM)

JANNAT RESORT, KOI-TASH REGION,  
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC  
MARCH 19-20, 2015

# MEETING REPORT



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Jannat Resort, Koi- Tash Region,  
Kyrgyz Republic





This report offers a transcribed summary of the meeting deliberations. The meeting was hosted by the State Agency of Environmental Protection and Forestry of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Secretariat, and co-sponsored and co-organized by partners. This was the first meeting of the high level steering committee after the adoption of the Declaration on Snow Leopard and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) at the Snow Leopard Conservation Forum in Bishkek under the leadership of H.E. President Atambaev in October 2013. Range countries presented progress till date, finalized the resolution and discussed the terms and conditions of the Steering

Committee before electing a Chair and co-Chair.

The workshop was attended by 77 people including the Honorable **Tayirbek Sarpashev**, First Vice Prime Minister of Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Sabir Atadjanov, Director of State Agency of Environment and Forest from Kyrgyzstan, the Honorable **Mushahid Ullah Khan** Minister of Climate Change from Pakistan, the Honorable **Lyonpo Jigme Zangpo** Speaker to the National Assembly of Bhutan, representatives from 11 out of the 12 range countries, and representatives from various national and international organizations (see List of Participants).

<sup>1</sup> Global Environment Facility, NABU, Snow Leopard Trust, UNDP, and WWF.



## SPECIFIC GOALS OF THE MEETING WERE TO:

- Define and formalize the structure, role and process of the GSLEP Steering Committee
- Review progress with GSLEP operationalization since the 2013 Global Forum.
- Discuss the status of development of the management plans for the Program's 23 target landscapes.
- Discuss strategic and near-term goals for resource mobilization, including the project pipelines, for the Program's national and global components.
- Standard information sharing mechanisms for regularly evaluating the progress under the GSLEP program

### KEY POINTS FROM PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS:

During the meeting, presentations were made by the representatives of the range countries, reporting on the progress to date with respect to the GSLEP program. Countries reported efforts to obtain approximately \$30 million in GEF STAR6 funding towards the implementation of the National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Priorities (NSLEPs). In addition, GEF Secretariat informed about the development of a \$1 Million Regional grant to support Global Support Components of the GSLEP program including

trans-boundary cooperation, illegal hunting and poaching, and capacity building. The issue of diversifying sources to raise resources was discussed, with emphasis on bringing corporates and industries on board.

The 23 snow leopard landscapes totaling more than 500,000 sq km (25% of the snow leopard habitat) include many features that require the development of special management plans for effective and integrative conservation and economic development. Snow leopard populations occur largely outside protected areas, and their habitats provide essential ecosystem services such as clean water for a third of world's human population. These landscapes are proposed to be secured for snow leopard conservation by 2020 through better protection, community-based conservation efforts, and multi-sectorial cooperation to encourage wildlife conservation and green growth.

During the Steering Committee meeting, specially created management planning guidelines for snow leopard landscapes were launched. The guidelines emphasize the need for the landscapes to be managed as fragile ecological zones with important wildlife habitats and corridors designated as priority wildlife areas, and multiple use areas where

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sustainable economic growth using green infrastructure needs to be promoted. A catalyst funding program to enable range countries to initiate management planning efforts was also announced at the meeting. The entire program will be coordinated by a Secretariat located in the city of Bishkek.

5. A working group represented by Kyrgyzstan, Bhutan and India, with support from UNDP, GIZ and the Secretariat to develop a paper on economic evaluation of the snow leopard landscapes taking into consideration the economic, social and cultural values.

#### KEY NEXT STEPS:

1. Develop Management Plans for the 23 landscapes; and if and wherever necessary, utilize the catalytic seed funding provided by the Snow Leopard Trust (SLT) and World Wildlife Fund US (WWF US).
2. Identify the resources required to secure the 23 snow leopard landscapes identified under the GSLEP program.
3. A working group led by Russia, Pakistan and India to identify models for innovative financing mechanisms including the corporate sector for the GSLEP program.
4. Develop a strategy for capacity enhancement of the frontline staff, to be led by the working group represented by Afghanistan, China and Nepal, and supported by the Secretariat.

#### ADDITIONAL ACTION POINTS TO BE FOLLOWED UP ON:

1. All edits and suggestions in the Resolution and constitution of the Steering Committee to be incorporated and shared by the Secretariat.
2. The Secretariat to bring out a quarterly newsletter for sharing information about activities and programs in the snow leopard range countries.
3. The GSLEP website ([www.globalsnowleopard.org](http://www.globalsnowleopard.org)) to be reviewed for its design and contents by partners and range countries.
4. SLT and WWF US to come up with the details of the catalytic small grant for management planning in the snow leopard landscapes.

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## DAY 1: OPENING CEREMONY

### OPENING REMARKS

**Tayirbek Sarpashev**, First Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Sarpashev - Welcomed everybody to Kyrgyz Republic and expressed the of Kyrgyz Government's appreciation to all snow leopard range country governments for joining hands in this effort for conserving snow leopards. The snow leopard, a majestic, mysterious and charismatic cat is an ambassador of alpine ecosystems. Snow leopards are a symbol of strength, nobility and power for many Asian countries. At the top of the ecosystems, they serve as a flagship for the conservation of wildlife in all central Asian highlands. He emphasized how the range countries have this historic opportunity to put together efforts on snow leopard conservation in the vanguard of political and economic decision making, and that it is the first time that an effort has been made to protect biodiversity at such a high level in a collaborative effort by 12 countries. He reiterated that October 23 has been accepted as the snow



leopard day when people can jointly celebrate the conservation efforts to save the high altitude mountain ecosystem.

He stated that snow leopards need true international trusteeship and that the international community should focus our attention to the threat of snow leopard extinction, and that conservation of the species should become a universal responsibility. He said that the adoption of the final resolution of the Steering Committee and approval of the management plans for the 23 landscapes should be a confirmation of the readiness of the large scale collaboration and range countries' commitment to snow leopard conservation.

Mr. Sarpashev emphasized on the support required from the range countries to establish and run the secretariat of the GSLEP

program in Bishkek. He spoke of the importance and responsibility that the country bears with hosting the secretariat and that Russia, China, India, Mongolia and Kazakhstan have already supported the establishment of the secretariat in Bishkek.

He expressed his conviction that the outcome of the SCM, including the final resolution will help the range countries coordinate efforts to attract significant financial, organizational and technical resources so that the wildlife of high altitude ecosystems are benefitted through an effective scientific cooperation. He concluded by reiterating a sense of great responsibility and desire to preserve the natural heritage that makes the world a beautiful and wise place, and urged to unite all forces so that the snow leopard is seen as a national and world treasure.

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**Welcome speech - Sabir Atadjanov, Director,** State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

Mr. Atadjanov welcomed all range country delegates to the Kyrgyz Republic and expressed his gratitude for their support in organizing the first steering committee meeting of the GSLEP program. He thanked the international and non-governmental organizations involved in conservation for their support to the initiative. Mr. Atadjanov invoked the importance of conserving snow leopard habitats by quoting that the traditions of the people from the 12 range countries are inextricably linked with environment, mountains, forests, lakes and plains that are home to rich and unique biodiversity, and that it is our joint responsibility to conserve it for the world community. Combining efforts and learning from each other's best practices may offer a real chance to conserve the snow leopard and its ecosystems. He mentioned that 23 snow leopard landscapes have been identified by the range countries to be secured by 2020 and that they cover a large area

whose diverse value and characters are yet to be discovered. The range countries have an immediate task of developing a management plan for securing these. Highlighting that the scope of work for the GSLEP program requires large amount of financial resources, he mentioned how Kyrgyzstan has made gradual steps towards securing these. A total of \$4.5 million out of \$6.6 million was announced to be committed for snow leopard conservation from the upcoming GEF6 grant. Not just that, Kyrgyzstan has also allocated about \$200,000 from the outgoing GEF 5 grant to support the functioning of the Working Secretariat in Bishkek. The Kyrgyz Republic initiated the process of establishing a working secretariat in Bishkek immediately after the Global Forum, and with support of the State Agency for Environment and Forest Protection, and partners of the Global Program including UNDP, Snow Leopard Trust, World Wildlife Fund and NABU, the Secretariat in Bishkek has been fully operational. The workshop in June 2014 on Lake Issyk-Kul was the next step for development and implementation of the Global Program. It helped identify the 23 snow leopard landscapes, identified the definition of secure landscapes,

developed management planning guidelines, and developed priority actions and information sharing protocols at the national and international level. From the Kyrgyz side, official processes have already been put in place to celebrate October 23 as the day of the snow leopard. Mr. Atadjanov urged all range states to take into account the Bishkek Declaration and work out the formalities to officially announce the International snow leopard day, and 2015 as the international year of the snow leopard in order to secure support the cause of conservation and sustainable development of highland ecosystems, with snow leopard as one of its symbols. He reported about the interim meeting on December 8, 2014 at Lima, Peru in the sidelines of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties, following which the Kyrgyz Government and Secretariat were able to approve the map with 23 snow leopard landscapes. He urged the range countries to adopt the resolution and management planning guidelines for the 23 landscapes as a key proposed outcome of the meeting resulting in large-scale collaboration and commitment to conserve wild snow leopards.



**Mr. Lyonpo Jigme Zangpo, Speaker  
of the National Assembly of the  
Kingdom of Bhutan**

Greeting the delegates of the snow leopard range countries, heads and representatives of the international donor communities on behalf of His Majesty, the King of Bhutan and the Royal Government of Bhutan, Mr. Zangpo expressed his appreciation for the commitment and energy shown by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic during the ministerial conference in October 2012 and then during the Snow Leopard Conservation Forum in October 2013. He said that the events elevated the status of the global program to conserve snow leopards. He remarked that the importance of the advisory body, the steering committee could not be overemphasized, which would have a significant role in guiding governments and partners across the snow leopard range. Defining and formalizing the structure, role and process are key, and he supported the view that although

snow leopard conservation is national responsibility, cooperation and coordination of efforts among the range countries is essential. Financial and technical support from the international community is imperative bearing in mind that most range countries are in fact developing countries. It is critical to have adequate resources in place, though one needs to address the issue of unequal resource matching and work with the international community to address the aspect of bridging the gaps among range countries. Bhutan is exploring and experimenting with innovative mechanisms to sustain funding for the Protected Areas. Bhutan celebrated the first snow leopard day in a snow leopard protected area and declared it to be an annual event. He reiterated his country's full commitment to the snow leopard program.

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**Mr. Mushahid Ullah Khan Minister  
of the Climate Change of Islamic  
Republic of Pakistan**

Thanking the Kyrgyz Republic for making excellent arrangements and extended hospitality, the Minister greeted the audience before reiterating his government's commitment to the Bishkek declaration on snow leopard conservation and political support to the GSLEP program. He emphasized the need to share more information and experiences under good practices of conservation. He mentioned that projects worth up to \$30 million have been successfully implemented and that Pakistan

has created a good network of Protected Areas while keeping biodiversity, especially snow leopard conservation as a priority issue. He remarked that snow leopard conservation may only succeed when local community is engaged. Mr. Khan highlighted that under GEF 6 STAR allocation, Pakistan has already allocated \$1.5 million for snow leopard conservation work.



**Mr. Aleksandr Avanessov, UNDP in  
Kyrgyz Republic**

UNDP is collaborating closely with international organizations in supporting the Kyrgyz Republic in conservation of biodiversity and sees the opportunity to contribute in providing sustainable development of the country. Given that the national strategy of Kyrgyz Republic is based on interreaction of ecological, economic and social aspects, UNDP coordinates and supports projects on sustainable development, environmental issues and aspects according the strategic plan of the development program of UN. UNDP, in collaboration with

GEF is implementing a project on improving coverage and management of protected areas in mountainous territories of Central Tien Shan and helping the government of the Kyrgyz Republic create a new National Park, Khan-Tengri with a focus on snow leopard and biodiversity conservation, as well as provisioning of opportunities for the local communities. UNDP is also providing technical expertise to the GSLEP Working Secretariat and developing a new project under GEF6.





**Mr. Brad Rutherford, Snow leopard  
Trust (SLT)**

Thanking the Kyrgyz Government in demonstrating the importance of snow leopard conservation across the range, he acknowledged the range countries for participating and thanked the working secretariat for making this meeting a success. He remarked that 23 landscapes have been identified to be secured by 2020, cumulatively totaling to more than 25% of the snow leopard range, which is 15% more than what was promised in the Bishkek declaration. The job in hand now is to develop focused management plans so that the target can be achieved. It requires a full time joint effort and one country, one organization or one secretariat alone cannot achieve it. He reiterated the commitment of SLT from the beginning, and mentioned that SLT is collaborating because they believe in this goal, range countries' commitments and the Secretariat based in Bishkek. The Secretariat needs representation from all range countries to communicate effectively. Highlighting the importance of the Secretariat, he said that if the international secretariat can maintain communication with all range countries, the goal may well be achieved. He pledged full support to the Secretariat.

**Mr. John Farrington, World Wildlife  
Fund-US (WWF-US)**

Mr. Farrington emphasized that saving snow leopards will require cooperation beyond country boundaries, and thanked the range countries for coming. He expressed the pleasure his organization had of being able to support this historic process less than two years ago during the Snow Leopard Conservation Forum. The efforts since have elevated the profile of the snow leopard to that of the tiger. WWF is supporting the program through its South Asian Program office along with the tiger conservation program. He mentioned the active participation of WWF in 8 out of 12 range countries, and was pleased to be able to support snow leopard conservation projects through econet of WWF Russia, Protected Areas and Conservation, and continued support to the GSLEP secretariat. WWF is looking forward to working on issues with communities, because to get them on-board will be the key to protecting snow leopards.



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**Mr. Tichomirov Boris, NABU**

As an initiator of the Global Forum on Snow leopard Conservation, NABU is happy to see it supported by the President of Kyrgyz Republic, Snow Leopard Trust, Global Tiger Initiative and other organizations as well as range countries. Now is the critical phase, that of implementing the GSLEP program. The Steering Committee is the most important component of the process and it is wonderful to see the readiness of 12 range countries to implement and to fund activities. So far, the program is being funded by NABU, SLT, WWF, UNDP and Kyrgyz Government, but we need other governments to start supporting the program as organizations have limited capacity. It will be great to hear of the support for implementation of the program from other range countries.

**Mr. Keshav Varma** introduced the goals of the next two days that would lead the GSLEP program to concrete activities and remarked that one feels as if the snow leopard is looking at us, expecting concrete steps to be taken for its conservation.

## PLENARY SESSION 1:

Presentations by range countries  
on progress till date including status  
of management plans for the 23  
landscapes and future action plans

### AFGHANISTAN:

The highlight of the presentation from Afghanistan was the map of likely distribution of the snow leopard in country that could be three times than currently known. The key threats listed in Afghanistan included retaliatory killing, market demand for pelt, competition of resources between livestock and prey, and decline in the prey populations. A wide range of on-going activities were reported from the country including:

1. Research
  - a. Prey base studies
  - b. Depredation studies
  - c. Camera trapping surveys
  - d. GPS collar study in Wakhan NP
2. Mitigation of conflict
  - a. Identification of conflict areas
  - b. Creation of predator-proof corrals in conflict areas
3. Controlling illegal trade at international level
  - a. Capacity building and training of international troops on trade in wildlife furs and other wildlife products.
4. Public awareness
5. Community rangers & community associations

6. Management and legal protection
  - a. Declaration of Wakhan corridor as a National Park
  - b. Finalizing of Management Plans for Big Pamir and Teggermansu Wildlife Reserve
  - c. Initiation of Management Planning for Wakhan National Park

Future actions included deployment of additional camera traps, analysis of existing camera trap data, continuing the telemetry project, baseline surveys and routine monitoring of prey, and identification of additional priority areas for snow leopard conservation. Although the country assured allocation of 50% of the total GEF 6 country STAR funding for snow leopard conservation, there seems to be a shortage in resources and capacity to fully implement the conservation work.

Pakistan congratulated the Afghan delegation and offered to collaborate by sharing their management plans from the PA bordering Wakhan corridor. They emphasized on the need to maintain corridors and trans-boundary territories. The Afghan delegation mentioned the initiative between Afghanistan, Pakistan and China that had taken off in 2006, but stopped abruptly, and indicated that it can be reinitiated under the GSLEP program.

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## BHUTAN:

In Bhutan, the entire snow leopard distribution range has been identified as the landscape to be secured under the GSLEP program, extending to nearly 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> with a population estimated at about 100-200 snow leopards. Bhutan has a constitutional mandate to maintain 60% of the country under forests, and 9% of the population resides in Protected Areas, making it important to work closely with communities in high conflict zones through insurance, livestock herding and livestock management programs.

The current profile of action plans for the next 5 years as per NSLEP include:

1. Snow leopard survey and research using camera traps to update status on population and support long-term research.
2. Redefinition of Protected Area boundaries to incorporate most of the snow leopard distribution and development of conservation plans for snow leopards based on threats and ecological studies.
3. Human wildlife conflict management by understanding the main cause of livestock depredation and study of herding practices

4. Trans-boundary conservation initiatives along the northern border with China.

Several activities were undertaken by the country after the Bishkek declaration:

1. Consultation Workshop to stock take snow leopard works amongst the range protected areas and territorial division
2. Capacity building of national focal points at Kyrgyz Republic (attended by DechenLham -WCD and Namgay Wangchuk- JKSNR)
3. National Consultation for Snow Leopard Conservation in Bhutan and endorsement of nationwide Snow Leopard Survey
4. Formation of core team members for Nationwide Survey
5. Finalizing the survey protocols (methodologies)
6. Celebration of the international snow leopard day
7. Planning and training workshop in SL range protected areas and territorial division. Commencement of sign survey, prey base survey and questionnaire survey in Snow leopard range protected areas and one territorial division.
8. Continuation of sign survey and prey base survey and completion

Future activities that have been planned include:

1. Completion of Phase 1 sign survey- June 2015
2. SL distribution map and prey base density & abundance
3. Camera trap exercise start October 2015
4. March 2016 – Produce population figures of "Snow Leopards in Bhutan"
5. April-June 2016 – Management Plan of Snow Leopard Landscape in Bhutan
6. Set up a basic genetic lab under WCD by strengthening the existing wildlife clinic to cater services to all Protected Areas.

The fund requirement for 7 years is estimated at \$7.53 million and, for the 2 year implementation plan at \$3.4 million.

Bhutan strongly expressed the need of regional snow leopard consortium to create a platform for sharing knowledge and also conservation initiatives at the transboundary level

#### CHINA

Considering current capacity on conservation of snow leopard and ecosystems, 3 Nature Reserves have been listed to be secured by 2020 under the GSLEP program. China has more than 50% of the total area of the global distribution of snow leopard, but still report limited information on ecology for effective conservation of the species. Other than confirming snow leopard distribution from many sites within China in the past 7-8 years, the delegates reported human-wildlife conflict surveys. Confirmations were obtained with the help of extensive camera trapping. Specific projects have resulted in training of 200+ frontline staff working in Nature Reserve across the snow leopard landscapes. The need for a mechanism for international collaboration to control illegal hunting was underscored.

#### INDIA

On behalf of the delegation from India, Mr. Nitesh Kumar made a brief presentation highlighting the plans for resource mobilization, focusing on \$5 million from the corporate sector and \$12.5 million earmarked from the GEF 6 STAR allocations.

#### KAZAKHSTAN

Currently a strategic plan on snow leopard conservation is being developed in Kazakhstan, which will subsequently go to the Government for approval. No research on snow leopards dates before 2011. Kazakhstan reported about 180-200 snow leopards in Kazakhstan during the 1980s. The recent research puts a current figure at 110-130 snow leopards. Kazakhstan has identified two landscapes, viz. Northern Tien-Shan and DjungarAlatau for conservation under the GSLEP program. The delegates projected that the snow leopard population is likely increasing in the country, especially after the Soviet era when livestock provided tough competition to wild prey. Funding remains a key issue where outside resources need to be explored to conduct research and conservation action.

#### MONGOLIA

Several research and conservation initiatives are on going in Mongolia including long-term research using telemetry, camera trapping and population monitoring. New initiatives include livestock corral improvement program, resource managed protected areas and camera trapping surveys in new areas. The Snow Leopard Enterprise, Livestock Insurance and WWF-Community based programs are some of the key conservation initiatives. With Russian partners, a joint project titled Altai Sayan is being initiated.

Several awareness and education programs were reported including release of a snow leopard postage stamp, and distribution of books to universities, schools and community centers.

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## NEPAL

The key challenges being faced by Nepal include vegetation changes to 30% of the snow leopard habitat, degradation and fragmentation of habitats, increasing proximity to human settlements resulting in more instances of conflict, and illegal poaching of snow leopard and its prey. Lack of awareness, weak trans-boundary cooperation, limited human and financial capacity for conservation institutions, weak conservation policies and regulatory mechanism and inadequate research and monitoring continue to remain the key threats.

Various programs are being implemented to engage communities and address human-wildlife conflict such as community based livestock insurance, wildlife damage relief fund, support for alternate crops production, alternate livelihoods and micro-financing schemes. Other programs aimed at engaging communities include construction of predator-proof corrals, involvement of local monks and religious leaders in awareness building, improving basic infrastructure and maintenance of monasteries and temples. Nearly 78% of the 13000 km<sup>2</sup> of potential snow leopard habitat is protected under PA system. The snow leopard population in Nepal is expected to be between 300-500 individuals, and three complexes are identified under GSLEP to be secured by 2020.

To manage habitat and prey, revision and implementation of snow leopard action plan 2005-2015 is being done along with preparation and implementation

of management plan of DFOs and PAs. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up and local youth are mobilized to establish and strengthen community based joint patrolling and information sharing across India-Nepal-Tibet borders.

The trans-boundary initiatives include the Kailash Sacred Himalayan landscape and the Kangchenjunga landscape. The program is based on livelihood, climate change adaptation, ecosystem management resource governance and long term monitoring.

A guideline has been prepared and implemented by the government to compensate for losses born by environment due to infrastructure or developmental activities. Under Corporate Social Responsibility, banks and businesses are engaged in supporting conservation action.

Several activities are being undertaken to build capacity and enhance conservation policies and institutions. These include renovation of small infrastructure, formation of support for buffer zones, review and revision of existing policies, and institutional restructuring.

One snow leopard has been collared, and non-invasive genetics and camera trapping based surveys are underway along with establishment of climate stations.

Currently, \$0.59 million is provided by government and \$1.61 million through donor support. In total, \$2.2 million are required to achieve future goals.

## PAKISTAN

About 200-400 snow leopards live in Pakistan. Habitat loss and degradation, retaliatory killing, weak national capacity, lack of awareness and climate change are the key threats facing snow leopard populations in Pakistan. Several on going research programs focus on camera trapping to understand not only the snow leopard populations, but several sympatric species as well.

Following the Global Forum in 2013, several activities have been undertaken. These include sharing GSLEP goals and documents with provinces and stakeholders, identification of model landscapes, consultations with provinces to decide landscape boundaries, and sharing outcomes with GSLEP secretariat. GEF allotment of \$1.5 million, support in kind for \$7 million from provincial governments, and SLT commitment of \$0.6 million has so far been secured.

Various activities have been planned such as establishing livestock insurance schemes, improving existing corrals to make them predator proof, livestock vaccination program, social forestry and fodder cultivation programs, wildlife focused environmental education strategies, dissemination of resource materials, establishment of resource centres and holding environmental education activities under participatory conservation in snow leopard landscapes. Landscape level management plan is being prepared for the model landscapes with data and information available and recently collected through research projects.

## RUSSIA

The snow leopard population in Russia comprises 1-2% of the global population with 70-90 individuals. The 10 years' goal is to increase this population to 110-120 by 2022, and the five year goal is to increase the snow leopard population in key habitats by 15-20% until 2017. To implement the GSLEP plan, Russia is focusing on various aspects:

1. Building capacity and enhancing conservation policies and institutions
  - a. Strategy for conservation of snow leopard in the Russian federation approved by the ministry of the natural resources and environment.
  - b. Action plan of high priority measures for snow leopard conservation developed
  - c. Amendments on liability for endangered species poaching and trade approved by the Federal government
  - d. Ban on musk deer hunting in Altai republic extended
2. Controlling poaching of snow leopard and prey resulting in 90% decline in number of snares in key snow leopard habitats.
3. Managing habitat and prey
  - a. Antipoaching patrolling of snow leopard habitat in the altai Republic in 2014
  - b. 12 specialists of PAs trained in methodology of snow leopard survey
  - c. 300,000 ha of PA planned to be established in the next 6 years.
4. Engaging local communities & reducing human wildlife conflict
  - a. Former poachers engaged in conservation
  - b. Corporate and private donors adopted snow leopard monitoring program in Altai Republic
  - c. 230 new jobs for people living in snow leopard districts
5. Transboudnary management & engagement
  - a. 2 transboundary protected areas being discussed with Mongolia
  - b. Conservation of Big Cats project to GEF has a clear mandate for development of programs for conservation of trans-boundary snow leopard areas.

## TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan, especially since 2008, is doing a lot to save the snow leopard and its ecosystems. So in 2011 it was decided to adopt 5 new laws relating to environmental protection, which clearly address the issue of biodiversity conservation. The Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, Tajik National University and other institutions are doing a lot to preserve biodiversity and in particular the snow leopard. Now a National Action Plan for the conservation of the snow leopard in the period from 2010 to 2015. Also in Tajikistan is the center for the conservation of biodiversity, which also does a lot to save the snow leopard.



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The area of the snow leopard habitat in Tajikistan has nearly 86,000 km<sup>2</sup>, which is 3% of the global area of habitat of the snow leopard. Most of the habitat of the snow leopard in Tajikistan lies in remote mountainous areas. We have certain difficulties in conducting research on such a large area, given the difficult economic situation in our country.

As in past years, and is currently in Tajikistan the status of snow leopards are not well studied. We need support in the process of studying this type of wildlife. If countries will stand together on the issue of conservation of the snow leopard, we will achieve important results.

## KYRGYZSTAN

The network of protected areas in Kyrgyzstan consists of the following major categories:

State Nature Reserves, National Parks, Nature Reserves, Natural Monuments, Botanical Gardens, Zoological and Dendrological Parks.

In Kyrgyzstan a total of 1,206,000 ha, 6.05% of the total area of the country is protected. These include:

- State Natural Reserves – 559,650 ha
- State Natural Parks – 344,881 ha
- Wildlife Sanctuaries – 573,301 ha

There are 10 State Nature Reserves, 10 State Natural Parks and 68 Wildlife Sanctuaries in the country

### Legislative framework for snow leopard conservation in the Kyrgyz Republic

In order to preserve the flora and fauna on May, 2013 The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has adopted the provisional rates for calculating the amount of compensation for damage caused to the fauna and flora from legal entities and individuals" where the size of penalties for illegal hunting of snow leopards has increased up to 500,000 soms (approx. \$8,500) in comparison to 2008, when the amount was 199,000 KGS (approx. \$3,500).

### Snow Leopard Day

In order to preserve biodiversity and restore the population of the snow leopard the Day of the snow leopard is celebrated every year on October, 23.

### Priorities for snow leopard conservation in the Kyrgyz Republic

«National Strategy for the conservation of the snow leopard» approved by Provision of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on October 2012.

### The purpose of the Strategy:

Conservation and restoration of habitat and the number of snow leopards in Kyrgyzstan.

### The main objectives of the Strategy

- Reduction of poaching against the snow leopard and its prey (ungulates);
- Regulating the use of mountain pastures, in accordance with the Law on pastures;
- Reducing the negative impact of mining on the environment;
- Improvement of the legislative, institutional and economic framework for the conservation of the snow leopard in the framework of biodiversity conservation;
- Dissemination of information on the conservation of the snow leopard;
- Developing snow leopard research and monitoring programs;
- Network expansion and optimization of protected areas for reliable protection of the snow leopard;
- Ensuring adequate protection of the snow leopard during its breeding and migration.

### Priority areas for the study of snow leopards

- Padyshata State Reserve
- Chon-Kemin Natural Park
- Surmatash State Reserve
- Kulunata State Reserve
- Sary Jaz Hills
- Kara Buura Natural Park
- Pamir-Alai

#### **Planned PAs for comprehensive protection of the snow leopard**

- The project of launching the State Natural Park «Alai» which is Pamir-Alai transboundary protected area between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan
- GEF/UNDP project «Improving coverage and management effectiveness of protected areas in the mountains of Central Tien-Shan» - State Natural Park «Khan Tengri»
- The project of launching the National Natural Park «Alatau» (with the area of 51000 ha)
- The project of launching the National Natural Park «Kanachuu» (with the area of 30000 ha). In 2013 at the Global Forum in Bishkek was decided to launch the GEF/UNDP project «National Park Khan-Tengri.» The planned area of the new National Park were 300000 hectares.
- National Park bordering with the Sarychat-Eertash State Reserve, which is home to about 30 snow leopards.

#### **Activities at the Protected Areas to conserve the snow leopard**

At the Sarychat Ertash Reserve in 2011-2012 years based on the collection of samples and DNA identification has been determined that the Reserve is the home to over 20 snow leopards. To carry out comprehensive monitoring 40 camera traps were installed in 2014.

- Wind power station was installed to meet the needs for electricity.
- Held an activities to increase the capacity of local communities to protect and preserve wildlife.
- Two off-road vehicles were issued to Kulunata and Surmatash Natural Reserves with the aim to improve the protection of wildlife.

#### **International cooperation in the conservation of the snow leopard**

State Agency on Environmental Protection and international partners (SLT/SLF-K, NABU, FFI, WWF) are working together to study and conserve the snow leopard population in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Sarychat-Ertash State Reserve has received the support as part of the WWF project to improve the monitoring of the snow leopard and its prey at the State Reserve area and beyond. Some routes and warning signs were set.

Also, the awareness raising activities are held among the local residents to promote the protection of rare species of fauna.

Technical support was provided: laptop, camera traps, camera, video camera, binoculars, walkie-talkie with the aim to create a stable base for further activities of the Reserve.

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Four key issues came out during the first plenary session that required immediate attention: lack of baseline data from snow leopard habitats, raising resources for the GSLEP program to become a success, capacity building of frontline staff, senior officials and public, and economic evaluation of landscapes, which should in turn invoke the issue of bringing industry into conservation.

## PLENARY SESSION 2:

Management Planning including  
economic evaluation of high  
altitude landscapes & green  
growth



The management planning guideline, specifically designed and put together for snow leopard landscapes by a working group comprising of delegates from the range countries was officially released during the Plenary session. Specific to the support that the donor community can provide to finish this initial task of management planning, the Snow Leopard Trust and World Wildlife Fund US offered a small co-financing grant of US\$5,000 for each range country. The details of this small grant mechanism were decided to be sent out within two weeks. While countries welcomed this offer, they raised their concerns about funding the implementation part. The Secretariat, supported by SLT offered to provide support not only financially (through the above mentioned grant), but also with a team of experts to travel

to the range countries to help with the management planning exercise, especially given the lack of local expertise as underlined by Afghanistan. An alternate suggestion from Pakistan was that of training the experts from range countries so that they can take the issue forward.

WWF Kyrgyzstan suggested that the management plans should be inclusive and synchronized with local government plans. They recommended inclusion of local state bodies in developing these. The management planning guideline recommends at gathering information from all relevant sectors for an integrated management plan.

Representative from US State Department US Embassy Astana Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Robyn McCutcheon covering Central Asia also mentioned about the small grant program for environment science, technology and health as an additional resource for funding via US Embassy in each country.



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## PLENARY SESSION 3:

Innovations, new initiatives,  
knowledge sharing, and  
mechanisms for coordination and  
convergence between Partners of  
GSLEP

The session started with Keshav Varma emphasizing on the need for economical evaluation of ecosystems, lack of which makes it difficult to go to the politicians and make them understand their importance.

Dr. Charu Mishra made a presentation based on research by his student in India. The economic evaluation of ecosystem services from a Himalayan landscape indicated that up to 27 different ecosystem services were identified by local people, including clean water, manure, medicinal plants etc. The economic value of provisioning services alone, just for the local communities contributed to up to nearly 4 times more than their annual household incomes, or more than \$12 million per year.

Keshav Varma reemphasized the need to evaluate the habitats in a comprehensive holistic manner. It is crucial to involve people working on infrastructure and economics who are unaware about the snow leopards. He also mentioned about the funds available in Southern Korea in the form of climate related trust funds that need to be utilized for snowleopard conservation. The need of the hour is to come out with modern rational model for snow leopard conservation through involvement of economists and local communities.



Kumar from UNDP Kyrgyzstan informed about a project that they are working on in collaboration with GIZ to conduct economic evaluation of walnut forests. Doley from UNDP mentioned about a similar exercise that was done in Maldives to come up with an estimate that the ecosystem services were several times more than the country's GDP.

Core groups were created to focus on the three main aspects of the work, i.e. economics of ecosystems, capacity building and innovative financing. It was decided that over the next three months the core groups would complete their respective presentations:

GLOBAL SNOW LEOPARD  
AND ECOSYSTEM  
PROTECTION PROGRAM  
(GSLEP):

	Global Priority Activity	Aspect	Countries, organizations
1	Economics of ecosystems (economic evaluation group)	Kyrgyzstan, Bhutan, India UNDP, GIZ	To present a business model, a group presentation
2	Capacity building	Afghanistan, China, Nepal	In cooperation with Secretariat
3	Innovative financing	India, Russia, Pakistan	To present alternate models of raising resources

Mr. Varma pitched the need of powerful people to support the cause of wildlife. He elaborated about the history and development of Global Tiger Initiative and shared the idea of the new GTI Council based in US, headed by Mr. Robert Zoellick. He clarified that the GTI Council will continue to support the GSLEP program the way it was being done under GTI. He also mentioned the alliance made by Panthera along with three other businessmen, raising \$80 million for big cat conservation. He sought support from the snow leopard range countries for the GTI council.

Russia supported the GTI Council on tigers and all other cats under the chairmanship of Mr. Zoellick.

A presentation was made by Shi Kun providing general information about the Snow Leopard Network (SLN). The presentation provided details about SLN's membership and functioning that focused on facilitating exchange of information between individuals from around the world for the purpose of snow leopard conservation. With a membership of nearly 500 individuals and 56 institutions, the SLN consists of

snow leopard conservationists and experts from public, private and non-profit sectors.

The SLN focuses on information exchange through a listserv and an updated online library with more than 1500 publications on snow leopards. The SLN brings out the Snow Leopard Survival Strategy periodically after assessing the global status of snow leopards and identifying priority needs. It also runs a small grants program, providing up to \$20,000 every year through a two step review process. It also issues position statements on subject importance for snow leopard conservation. The members of SLN assisted in the preparation of GSLEP document and process.

The presentation on behalf of Clemson University on Open Parks Network was made by Dr. Koustubh Sharma. It highlighted the need to disseminate scientific information efficiently and the need to work at large scales. OPN can be used as a secure platform for communications internally as well as globally (externally). It offers GIS based mapping and planning tools that use the powerful ESRI



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ArcGIS servers and also makes large datasets available to users for analyses. It offers a platform that can be used to develop training and capacity modules customized for various target groups ranging from community & PA rangers to Environment Specialists and Managers. The state of the art video production facility allows recording of the educational programs to be viewed later.

Responding to a question of the usefulness of OPN to the Global Tiger Initiative, Keshav Varma reported how the relationship with Clemson University was built at two levels, one at the GTI level where an MoU was signed with the World Bank, and the other with the Global Tiger Forum and Wildlife Institute of India. He emphasized on the possibility of integrating the strengths of the OPN and SLN, and sought a conversation to figure out about the mechanism using which the two networks could be used efficiently.

Bhutan mentioned about their existing relationship with Clemson University and underscored that a collaboration should benefit both parties. Currently the collaboration of Bhutan with Clemsons University supports a Master's program where student exchange between the two countries takes place.

Flora and Fauna International raised the issue of language being English, thus restricting the usability of OPN across Central Asia, whereas highlighting multilinguality to be the strength of SLN.

Chris Hergarten of University of Central Asia described their experiences in developing knowledge hubs. He recommended working instead with a more de-centralized approach, rather than focusing on a single hub. In this regard, he referred to the K-Link initiative that connects several existing knowledge hubs into a network, instead of building entirely new systems from scratch. The ownership and control of data is thus maintained by original partners (e.g. countries), but sharing amongst all partner agencies is enabled and in fact greatly facilitated. The University of Central Asia also is a regionally-based academic institution, embedded in the three countries of Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan; and its research scope spans nearly the entire snow leopard region.

Keshav Varma presented details about the India Wildlife Business Council (IWBC), a consortium that involves business sector in conservation programs. It was created with the purpose of building collaboration between business and environment sectors. The conflict of interest in areas, for instance for mining or large infrastructure projects now results in voices raising from within the business community about adhering to better standards. The IWBC is like an advocacy group for environmental sustainability. The focus remained on starting a new conversation about conservation.

He mentioned how in India it is mandatory for the companies to donate 2% of the profits made by companies as corporate social responsibility.

Russia mentioned about the strategy of conservation of rare species developed and approved by the Government. The document, although not as strong as law, includes norms such as obligated consideration of issues of impact of the activities of an industry on rare species including snow leopards. It facilitates conducting negotiations with the industry sector.

## PLENARY SESSION 4:

Standard management system  
for information sharing of GSLEP  
program



**Dr. Charu Mishra** presented the information sharing protocols and emphasized that the success of implementation of the GSLEP program depends on effective information exchange. The Secretariat can serve as a hub for such information exchange. The idea being that of sharing information periodically about the progress, challenges and exciting developments taking place in range countries regarding snow leopard conservation, a tabulated draft of the standard system of information management prepared by the Secretariat was shared with everyone. The GSLEP annual report will have to be produced by the Secretariat annually, and it will rely heavily on sharing such important information as described in the table. The Secretariat will also create an exciting newsletter periodically

to keep everybody informed and involved. This newsletter may not need to have technical information, but will help for press releases, updates and other information.

**Evgeny Grechko** presented the upgraded GSLEP website, and informed how it is thorough, updated and simplified in its operationalization. The website is designed to cater to computer, mobile, tablet users, and will be regularly updated and upgraded.

Responding to Russia's concern about the verification of the website's contents by range countries, it was assured that comments will be sought by the Secretariat from range countries and partners about further modifications, changes or corrections.

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## DAY 2

### PLENARY SESSION 5:

#### Resource mobilization strategies

Keshav Varma initiated the discussion by calling it the most important session. He requested each country to provide some information about financial planning and expectations, including national budget, donor opportunities and possibilities of using private sector financing. Gaps for the next 2-3 years can

be presented along with possible suggestions on what needs to be done to fill these. The Secretariat's main function is to coordinate resource agenda carefully.

#### AFGHANISTAN:

Two types of budgets are available from the Government. One regular, out of which how much is regularly available for conservation issues is not clear. It is not always easy to convince the economy sector such as Ministry of Economy or Ministry of Finance to give money required for snow leopard conservation. The international partners such as GEF are a very good resource as their STAR allocation quotas make up for most deficits in funding. The Biodiversity component of GEF6 grant for Afghanistan is \$3.4 million, but all of it can not be spent on snow leopard conservation. Although the secretariat has suggested allocating about 10% from the GEF 6 cycle, Afghanistan has decided to allocate 50% of its STAR funding to snow leopard conservation. Another project,

with UNDP and GEF, for \$8 million is earmarked for biodiversity program in Afghanistan but will focus on snow leopard and its landscapes. The idea is to use GEF 6 budget as seed money and request donors to add to this for on-going and upcoming projects. Afghanistan is focusing on livelihoods within the snow leopard habitats. While preparation of management plans, projects etc. can be done by the national experts and international partners, the real challenge is that of implementing the plan in Afghanistan as it requires more resources. The lack of capacity creates a gap, and putting snow leopard and wildlife conservation within the government's regulatory framework from legal documents makes another gap. At least 20 people from the Central level and 15 from province level, particularly in Badakhshan snow leopard

habitat, representing two agencies need capacity building and training.

Keshav Varma pointed out that in Bhutan the stakeholders' conference had helped by gathering officials from departments of economic affairs, infrastructure, urban and other similar agencies in one place. A strategy where these stakeholders can be brought on the same platform can be quite effective.

Afghanistan has a similar Committee for Environmental Coordination that has representatives from all government agencies. The committee particularly discusses environmental issues.

#### **BHUTAN:**

The NSLEP implementation in Bhutan requires \$7.53 million. The two year plan developed at Lake Issyk-Kul meeting showed a gap of \$3.4 million. The national snow leopard survey, divided into two phases is currently going on. The first phase includes prey surveys whereas the second phase includes camera trapping. The surveys are expected to be over by June 2015. The \$150,000 required for the first phase are already committed through co-financing from donors such as WWF-Bhutan Ecolife Project. About \$87,8000 is committed for another year and partial financing is available from Janga conservation and landscape conservation initiatives and \$75,000 are being provided by the World bank. Annual budget from the Government of Bhutan provides part funding for snow leopard conservation. A gap of

nearly \$2 million exists to cover 8 snow leopard areas within Bhutan. The total frontline staff strength is 287 out of which half work in the snow leopard landscape, and thus need specific training and capacity building. Through Bhutan transboundary environmental conservation program, \$37 million is available but needs to be applied for.

#### **CHINA:**

China suggested that the meeting should focus on setting up the Steering Committee or else there will not be any decision making mechanism. It sought more information on the secretariat and then discuss other issues within its ambit. The issue of resources requires much more time.

Keshav Varma responded by saying that the aim of the session is to get specific idea about gaps in resources so that the following session led by GEF can provide more concrete and practical information. The Secretariat and Steering Committee are scheduled to be discussed in a later session.

#### **INDIA:**

No specific information available so far about the commitment of GEF grant for snow leopard conservation. However there is news about \$5 million being raised for snow leopard conservation through corporate social responsibility.

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#### **KYRGYZSTAN:**

Out of the total GEF6 grant, \$4.5 million has been committed for snow leopard conservation in the Tien-Shan Mountains, and part of it will be used to support the Secretariat. From last year's GEF 5 Small Grants Project, \$200,000 were allocated for Secretariat activities already.

#### **KAZAKHSTAN:**

In Kazakhstan the annual budget of PAs is about \$5 million. In total there are 5 national parks and 3 reserves in snow leopard habitat within Kazakhstan. The Nature Resource Protection Office has an annual funding of \$1 million and it looks after snow leopard habitats as well. There are few human settlements in snow leopard habitats and the majority of human inhabitants are the staff or weather station personnel. Livestock use the habitat only during the summer. As far as funding is concerned, there is a lack of resources for scientific research. Recent research has indicated that the snow leopard distribution might be greater than what was anticipated before. If that is the case, then there could be more snow leopards in Kazakhstan than what is currently reported. Funding is also required for not just protection of snow leopard, but also for research including DNA identification. Meetings are being organized between the Mayor of the city and representatives of business community to attract finances from the business sector. Training programs have been organized for the PA staff in AksuJabagly Reserve with support from various organizations. The Kazakh Government is reforming

the hunting concession regulations and are looking forward to the involvement of hundreds of local people in snow leopard conservation through support from the business sector.

#### **MONGOLIA:**

Money was raised from coal mining companies in Mongolia. Other than that, the Government has supported snow leopard conservation activities. Up to \$1 million is provided from the Central budget each year to support PAs and National Parks. This amount is spent for inspection, training, patrolling etc. In 2015-2016, 10 more state level National Parks are proposed to be established in Mongolia with money coming in from Central budget and donor organizations. Nearly \$500,000 is spent by international organizations on snow leopard conservation. The UNDP projects are not aimed at snow leopard conservation but are designed for ecosystem conservation. Several UNDP projects are implemented in the mountainous areas, and nearly one third is spent on snow leopard conservation. There is also an on going project funded by the World Bank to support livelihood in mountainous areas. Several Anglo-American Development agencies and mining companies are willing to contribute funding for snow leopard conservation. Currently, a Russian company «Siberian health» is giving up to \$40,000 every year for transboundary conservation projects in Mongolia. Since the PA administration changes regularly, with terms lasting about 4 years, training is required at regular intervals.

#### **NEPAL:**

The Government of Nepal spends about \$60 million each year in the conservation sector. There are 5 departments within the conservation sector. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation is one of these, and responsible for most protected areas and wildlife conservation. So far \$2.2 Million USD has been implemented for the snow leopard action plan. A majority of the snow leopard conservation activities are supported by donors and NGOs. Out of the total funding, about 27% is provided by the Government and 73% contributed by conservation partners and donors. Most of the national funding goes towards restructuring and institutional development. About 50% of the donor funding gets earmarked for research and monitoring. The Private sector is being engaged to support livelihood improvement and capacity building for the frontline staff. Some trans-boundary initiatives concerning landscape strategies and implementation plans have been prepared but are lagging due to lack of adequate funding.

Trust has committed \$700,000. For effective planning of snow leopard conservation, we need primary research but GEF funds are not meant for primary research. This leaves a gap of nearly \$12 million. This money is required to enhance participatory conservation in habitats that translates in training both local communities and relevant departments. The critical needs are enhancing scientific knowledge about prey species and snow leopard habitats, expansion of the PA network in Pakistan, and institutional strengthening and capacity building of stakeholders. So far it has been difficult to get the industries on-board conservation action. Help was sought from IUCN to establish business and industry forum in Pakistan, but the process has so far been slow and weak. An initiative similar to the India Wildlife Business Council will be of great help to engage industries in conservation. Instead of going back to GEF and the government, a holistic approach is being undertaken where snow leopard habitats overlap with those of migratory species and other important flora and fauna.

#### **RUSSIA:**

#### **PAKISTAN:**

The snow leopard territory in Pakistan comprises of about 80,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and it falls into three provinces. Currently three landscapes have been identified to be secured under GSLEP program, which include Hindu Kush, Karakorum-Pamir and Himalaya. Implementation of NSLEP requires roughly about \$20 million, but GEF 6 STAR allocation is only \$1.5 million. Another \$7 million is available in kind, and the Snow Leopard

The deficit in funding for activities under NSLEPs is about \$27.5 million. A sum of \$28 million is earmarked from the federal budget for four large cat species, with about \$4 million for snow leopards. There are three federal states with snow leopard presence. These include the Altai Republic (budget \$2 million), Krasnoyarskii Krai (\$9.5 million), and Tuva Republic (\$1.5 million). The regional budget thus sums up to \$13 million. There are several public, scientific and business companies that regularly



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finance conservation activities, e.g. the Russian Geographical Society provides annual grants for up to \$100,000 for research on cats including snow leopards. WWF's 5 year budget is \$1.5 million which is raised by engaging the private sector. Up to \$12 million have been sought from GEF, out of which \$2 million will be earmarked for snow leopard conservation. With nearly \$20.6 million covered, a gap of \$7 million still remains. The main areas that require attention include improvement of legislation, sustainable and rational use of snow leopard prey, capacity building including equipment, improvement of PA infrastructure and training, territorial protection, working with hunting concessions, annual and 10 yearly monitoring, trans-boundary activity including establishment of trans-boundary PAs involving Russian, Mongolian and Chinese experts, ecological awareness focused towards the business sector, and work with communities including engagement for protection and converting poachers into conservationists. Scientific research including genetics and regional PAs and snow leopard habitats outside PAs still need to be funded. The importance of primary research and science cannot be undermined, and there is a need to attract the attention of donors towards this field.

#### **TAJIKISTAN:**

Much work is being done in Tajikistan in the snow leopard habitats. This includes collaboration between international, local non-government organizations and the government.

In conclusion, it was felt that capacity building is the most urgent issue facing most range countries. It was advised by Pakistan that if a project can be developed focusing on capacity building for snow leopards, aiming at training the trainers, it can become a productive exercise. The delegates urged the Secretariat to develop a similar project. Keshav Varma mentioned one of the three core-groups which will come up and suggest a way to go about capacity building. A brief idea on the number of people requiring primary training can help build resources accordingly. Also, there is a strong possibility of collaborating with regional institutions and enhancing their capacities. The Secretariat can definitely play the role of coordinating such training modules.

## PLENARY SESSION 6:

Consulting and designing the  
regional GEF Medium Sized  
Projects, and enhancing  
coordination among the different  
National GEF projects

The session was conducted by Ms. Yoko Watanabe who specified the Issyk-Kul meeting and the three key agendas, viz. concrete action plan to move forward, move quickly in developing the GEF project proposals and project ideas, and third being that of coordination among the donors so that the resources can be diversified and elaborated. Expressing pleasure at the pace with which things have moved forward, she mentioned that in the past, before GSLEP initiation, GEF has committed \$55 million on 18 projects and are currently scaling up and working closely to each range country.

At present, a regional grant of \$1 million is being prepared as a regional project, which is additional to the STAR allocation, and was secured under GEF 5. It was highlighted that before going into the GEF 6 proposals, we had some funding to tie national projects and hence receive inputs from the regional level too. The need for better coordination between conventional focal points and implementing agencies was underscored.

Doley Tshering made a presentation about the regional project proposal which is currently being prepared to address some of the global and national priorities once the PEF was approved. The proposal's three components are providing

tools and training to enhance the national implementation of GSLEP, monitoring of key priority landscape, and resource mobilization and ensuring sustainability.

Pakistan suggested including community mobilization in the regional proposal, and avoid duplication so that the regional project can fill the gaps. Yoko clarified that the regional project will focus at the regional level, and only support national level implementation within a country. There is a need for common monitoring framework, training at the regional level or need of a knowledge platform to exchange experience. These regional functions can be supported from the regional project. Most work on the ground may not be supported by this project and hopefully the national resources will complement it.

Pakistan raised the other issue of only a few countries working with GEF support.

Elbegzaya Mountain Hub for Central Asia reported about its work at the regional level. CIMOT has a good protocol for standardization of information sharing. Countries face a shortage of capacity and hence require a lot of support for standardization of data.

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Lira Joldubaeva from GIZ informed about the support to CMS Secretariat in the initiative for mammals where they developed a program with 14 countries. Snow leopard program was an integral part of this and the document was shared with the secretariat. It was suggested that one should not only focus on snow leopard, but its prey and ecosystem too. It is important that the linkages between CMS, GEF and GSLEP are made clear for better coordination between the different plans.

Brad Rutherford of SLT raised the issue of World Bank not supporting GTI and GSLEP any longer, especially since they were the major supporters of such meetings. He requested specific information about support for such meetings in the regional proposal. Working closely may lead us to a functional relationship where resources could be combined to organize such meetings of the GSLEP and its Steering Committee in the future.

Doley clarified that one of the projected outputs of the regional project would be to organize stakeholder coordination platform where agendas can be coordinated in a way that they focus on resource mobilization. Yoko also provided details that within the project framework it will be possible to support meetings, but at the same time warned that the regional project is with limited resources. What is encouraged is that the national projects have a component of regional and global cooperation and another component on participation on knowledge sharing and training that can also support such meetings.

Mongolia asked specific information about raising resources for 10 National Parks developed in the country over the past 5 years. Yoko informed about the support from GEF to Mongolia, especially the Sustainable PA Management Project. She also mentioned that the third component of the regional project could be transferred to efforts at the national level. It may not be sufficient for all areas of Mongolia, but can definitely be targeted to collaborate and mobilize resources for snow leopard conservation related work. For national level projects there are three main components. If the focus is PAs, then the first component is to expand or strengthen PAs with snow leopards. Wider projects include land management on the ground. The second component, sustainability of legal systems, since many countries do not have the capacity or institutions beyond the ministry of environment and other sectors it becomes important. The third component is international and regional cooperation.

Bhutan reported securing \$3.4 million for biological conservation and sustainable forest management. However the focus of this money is towards the middle part of the country which is not snow leopard habitat.

## PLENARY SESSION 7:

Defining and formalizing the  
structure, role and process of the  
Steering Committee & Global  
Secretariat



The session was introduced by Bakhtiar Abdiev and he requested the range countries to give their opinion on the structure and role of the secretariat and Steering Committee. He mentioned that the guidelines for the steering committee were sent to all range countries and partners beforehand for review. After careful deliberations and suggested corrections, the resolution and annex defining functions and roles of the Steering Committee were finalized and endorsed by the range countries (see attached copy of revised resolution and annex) by aligning it to the Bishkek Declaration. It was decided that the range countries will be the permanent members of the steering committee whereas the major funding partners will be elected every two years as observers with a deliberative vote. This proposal was supported by

most range countries including Bhutan, China, Pakistan and Russia. Global Environment Facility, NABU, Snow Leopard Trust, United Nations Development Program and World Wildlife Fund were considered as the observers. It was decided that all decisions of the Steering Committee will be made unanimously. The Minister of Climate Change from Pakistan, Mr. Mushahid Ullah Khan was elected as the Chair and Mr. Sabir Atadjanov from Kyrgyz Republic as the co-Chair for the Steering Committee.

Mr. Bakhtiar Abdiev also presented the Secretariat structure and staff, while reporting about the activities undertaken by the Secretariat in the past one year. Russia proposed regional coordinators seconded by range countries to work distantly with the Secretariat. Discussions followed on the means to resource

the secretariat. Keshav Varma mentioned that \$12 million were available with the GTI secretariat for operations. He emphasized on the need to raise resources so that specialists and technical expertise can be supported. He said that the Secretariat will work out all possible mechanisms to explore how countries can support the secretariat functioning. Currently the Secretariat is being financed by UNDP with support from GEF Small Grants Project. For a global secretariat one will require to reconsider the funding mechanisms as GEF can only support the secretariat within a wider initiative.

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## HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT:

Finalizing and adopting  
the Resolution

The meeting ended with the Chair's address where he thanked all the range countries for the honor of electing him as the chair of the Steering Committee. He ensured full commitment and political support from his side and promised to try his best to live up to the expectations from him by utilizing his relationship with politicians. He congratulated everybody present for the democratic process and suggested that everybody come together to achieve the targets of GSLEP.

The Speaker from Bhutan congratulated the Ministers from Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan for taking up the position of Chair and co-Chair. He also congratulated all the delegates from range countries and partner organizations for productive work during the meeting.

Mr. Atadjanov summarized the meeting and thanked all range country delegates for fruitful and active participation, and their commitment to snow leopard conservation. He expressed his gratitude to GEF, Snow Leopard Trust, NABU and World Wildlife Fund for their continued support. He

proposed that specific issues need to be closely followed up. The discussions on mobilizing financial resources provided an excellent dialogue platform for exchange of experiences and emergence of new ideas in the field of fundraising and resource mobilization. Defining roles and key positions of the steering committee will definitely provide clarity and strengthen the institutional mechanism of the program. He called the process of management planning as an important tool that will lead to securing the 23 landscapes identified under GSLEP program and be secured by 2020. He reiterated the need to review and approve the structure of the Global Secretariat after the meeting.

The meeting ended with all range countries endorsing the Resolution and annex.

## RESOLUTION

### First Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program «Steering Committee»

**Taking into account** the “Bishkek Declaration” on the Conservation of Snow Leopards and the comprehensive, long-term Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program («GSLEP»), adopted by representatives of 12 Range States on the Global Snow Leopard Conservation Forum in October 23, 2013 at Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

**Acknowledges** the leadership of the Kyrgyz Republic President H.E. Almazbek Atambayev, the support of the Kyrgyz Government for hosting the First High level Steering Committee meeting from March 19-20, 2015 in Bishkek, and the leaders of the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Is **grateful** for the crucial and timely support by international partners such as Global Environment Facility, Global Tiger Initiative, Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, Snow Leopard Trust, United Nations

Development Program, World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, Panthera, Snow Leopard Conservancy and other organizations for their assistance in the implementation of the GSLEP.

**Appreciates** impressive progress that has been made since the adoption of the Bishkek Declaration.

**Acting** under the Bishkek Declaration, the Steering Committee:

1. Directs and commits to an accelerated implementation of the GSLEP for building up the momentum, especially in terms of resource mobilization and awareness building;
2. High appreciates the coordination function and role undertaken by the Secretariat and supports its efforts in enhancing its capacity into a global Secretariat which could effectively service the requirements of the Range States and to help regular evaluation of the GSLEP;
3. In particular emphasizes the urgency for raising



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- financial resources to support implementation of the GSLEP implementation over the next few years;
4. Understands and emphasizes the need to build special capacities among frontline staff;
5. Calls all Range States to declare 2015 as the Year of the snow leopard in the Range States, and October 23 as an annually celebrated Snow Leopard Day;
6. Greets the initiative of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Almazbek Atambayev for organizing an international expedition connecting 23 snow leopard landscapes among Range States «Reinventing the Silk Route, the Snow Leopard way» to raise awareness about the GSLEP program and the 23 identified snow leopard landscapes;
7. Agrees to an official launch of the Secretariat to coordinate GSLEP implementation with its headquarters in Bishkek, for which the Range States and
- Partners will explore ways to support the Secretariat on an urgent basis.
8. Requests the Secretariat to:
- strengthen and improve cooperation efforts with Range States and other partners to improve collaboration in the implementation of the GSLEP;
  - regularly update the website ([www.globalsnowleopard.org](http://www.globalsnowleopard.org)) in order to provide opportunities for dynamic exchange of information;
  - maintain a coordinating role in assisting with the planning and implementation of priority actions at the national and international levels, including facilitation and implementation of relevant memorandums, and action plans in certain areas.
- By the adoption of this resolution in Bishkek for the implementation of the GSLEP the Range States undertakes to provide support and express their determination in collective action to achieve the goal of «Secure 20 by 2020».

## ANNEX

### GUIDELINES FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Steering Committee of the Global  
Snow Leopard and Ecosystem  
Program

Initiated and championed by H.E. the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, H.E. Almazbek Atambaev, and supported by the governments of the 12 range countries, the Global Snow Leopard Conservation Forum in Bishkek (October 22-23, 2013) endorsed two key documents—"Bishkek Declaration" on the Conservation of Snow Leopards and the long-term Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP).

Pursuant to the Bishkek Declaration, the snow leopard range countries have agreed "to form a high-level Steering Committee to guide GSLEP implementation, regularly review its progress, and maintain a strong commitment to meet its objectives, through a Secretariat to coordinate GSLEP implementation that is adequately resourced and staffed by the range countries and the international community."

#### 1. Objective of the Steering Committee:

To guide GSLEP implementation, regularly review its progress, and maintain a strong political commitment to meet its objectives.

#### 2. Roles of the Steering Committee:

- High-level alliance of decision-makers within and among snow leopard range countries providing stewardship and championing strategic issues, and innovative solutions in support of the GSLEP and towards sustainable development of high-mountain landscapes and local communities.
- To interface, influence and advocate international financial institutions and donor agencies to raise GSLEP program resources.
- To enhance and diversify the alliance by establishing a well-structured partnership with industry, business and NGOs.
- To influence public policy and opinion in respective range countries and prioritize and enhance resources in support of snow leopard and ecosystems conservation.
- Strategic guidance to the Secretariat's operations in support of the GSLEP implementation and periodic review of the GSLEP implementation process and outcomes.

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- Support the GSLEP resource mobilization process, including high-level dialogue with national and international funding sources in the public and private sector.

**3. Membership:**

The Steering Committee consists of Honorable Ministers (or their designates) of range country governments, in charge of snow leopard conservation with a right to vote. Senior representatives of major contributing funding partners to be voted in by the steering committee every 2 years as observer members with a right of deliberative vote.

**4. Chair and co-Chair:**

The Steering Committee would be chaired and co-chaired by the Honorable Ministers from the range countries, and would be elected for a period of two years. The position would rotate across range countries. The Chair would convene and host the Steering Committee meetings, and sign communications on behalf of the Steering Committee as needed.

**5. Meetings:**

The Steering Committee will meet in person or via a video conference at least once every twelve (12) months. A Steering Committee meeting

can be called on a self-standing basis or on the margins of other international events. The Chair circulates the meeting's date, venue, and provisional agenda two (2) months in advance of the meeting, and the meeting's minutes within two (2) weeks after the meeting. The meeting is valid if at least seven (7) Ministers or their designates are present. Decisions by the steering committee will be made by consensus.

**6. Operation between Meetings:**

Each Minister designates a Senior Official as the national focal point for the Program implementation. The Secretariat coordinates the work between Steering Committee meetings, and organizes the technical and logistical inputs of the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Chair with assistance from the interested partners and donors of the GSLEP.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee Meeting  
March 19-20, 2015 Bishkek-Kyrgyz Republic

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Photos: Courtesy of Secretariat on Global Snow Leopard  
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