

MINUTES OF 7TH SCB AFRICA SECTION MEETING

Date: 5th July 2007, noon – 1:15pm

Venue: Building 35, Room 40, NMMU, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Opening

The annual section meeting started with a powerpoint presentation by the President Elect, Delali Dovie. He gave a brief history on how the section started in 2001, and the election of the section board in 2002. He noted that the 2003 meeting in Minnesota focused on capacity building of the section. He added that the Africa Section has grown from 145 members in 2003 to 519 in 2007. The presentation was rounded off with introduction of the board members. The meeting was attended by 108 people.

Recap of San Jose's Meeting

Recap of the 2006 section meeting in San Jose, USA emphasized the need for active involvement of social scientists to drive conservation programmes through formation of the Social Science and Gender Committee. The issue of strengthening capacity was also discussed.

General Discussion

Alison Ormsby, Education and Science Officer encouraged members to visit the section's website for academic/professional development information. She added that some information are available in French language. She also requested for people that need assistance to get their work published to get involved in the new mentoring program being launched by the section.

Eligible members were asked to volunteer to assist with the translation of section materials into different languages such as French and Portuguese.

Ron Abrams, Financial Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, remarked that he will maintain the link with the Executive Office in order to circumvent the challenge of frequent power outage and poor internet access faced by board members based in Africa. He also mentioned that travel support was provided for 25 participants to attend the 2007 meeting.

Ron also reported that the section did not get funding for short courses but got \$20,000 to support the section's regional meeting. He remarked that plans are underway to hold a section meeting next year either in Central or West Africa.

Nuhu Daniel, Information Officer, beckoned people to join the Communications Committee and noted the numerous existing committees within the section (YWCB, Social Science and Gender, Newsletter, Website, Symposium, COPESCO, Communications, Short Courses, and Education).

Ademola Ajagbe, Membership and Nomination Officer, opined a good regional representation in the Africa Section membership. In his words, section members can be networked for capacity building of upcoming scientists.

Nick Oguge, President of East African Ecological Society (EAES) briefed the audience on how the EAES was established for East African countries. He promised to send detailed information on EAES to members from East Africa.

Nyawira Muthiga of Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), Kenya said that there are several capacity building opportunities in the marine section. She advised interested members to download information from the marine website and to publish in journals produced within Africa (wiomsa.org).

Committees of the Africa Section

1. Young Women Conservation Biologists' Working Group (YWCB)
2. Symposium Committee
3. Social Science and Gender Committee
4. Newsletter Committee
5. Website Committee

Standing Committee

1. Conservation, Policy, Education and Science Committee (COPESCO) – Stephen Awoyemi
2. Information and Communications – Nuhu Daniel
3. Short Courses – Ron Abrams
4. Education – Alison Ormsby

Publication and Newsletter

Delali explained that there are various reasons for 70% rejection of articles sent to the journal Conservation Biology. He however remarked that the section's newsletter has slots for publication.

Question & Answer

1. Q – Will I pay extra to change from one section to another?
A – No payment is required. Membership status to any section can be changed online.
2. Q – Are we going to have professional development for upcoming scientists in the section?
A – Yes, the mentorship programme geared towards capacity building for young scientists is scheduled to start right away. The programme is funded by MacArthur Foundation.
3. Q – How is the pairing of the mentor-mentee going to be done?
A – Pairing will be based on evaluation of the application forms. However, 2 people can decide to pair.

Delali closed the meeting noting that a regional section meeting is planned within the next year in Africa, and looking forward to seeing everyone again at the 2008 SCB meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee.