

INVESTING IN NATURE FOR OUR SURVIVAL

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE | ROBERT-JAN VAN OGTROP

As Chairman of African Parks, I extend my deepest thanks to everyone who makes this organisation possible. That includes our Government partners who have entrusted in us the full responsibility to manage their national parks. And it also includes all our funders — institutional, philanthropic, and public alike — who have provided funding year upon year, as well as our exceptional and motivated workforce, who together make it possible to effectively manage a growing portfolio of parks, ensuring that 14.7-million hectares of Africa's unique landscapes are being conserved.



on our beautiful planet Earth. While the world's leaders have the ability to change the course of the planet, they do not seem to fathom the rate at which we are losing nature, or the scale of interventions required to secure what is left. Which is why African Parks has a critical role to play. African Parks is a very real and effective solution for sustainably managing protected areas in Africa. With 19 parks in 11 countries under protection, key ecosystems are being conserved while each park serves as an anchor of safety, allowing for conservation-led economies that support hundreds of thousands of people.

The year 2020 has been an extremely important year in funding developments for African Parks. We received two significant gifts from two private foundations which are transformational for conservation and in helping us achieve our growth ambitions. Equally important are how these commitments are structured, with allocations to sustain existing parks, to help us take on more parks, to grow our endowment fund, which is critical for long-term sustainability, and with matching components that are unlocked by other contributions, ensuring a critical need for every dollar, regardless of its source.

We have a clear vision for how we will protect at least 35-million hectares by 2030. But we need funding commitments to evolve with this ambition to make it real. Conservation needs flexible, long-term “forever funding” – where permanent capital is secured to sustain nature's capital. We are committed to Governments on average for 20 years, and we are committing to increasing our footprint to help protect 30% of Africa in the next decade. We need financial resources to be equally committed, that serve on the same time frames, and are diversified coming from all sectors: foundations, institutions, individuals, Governments, and corporations. We need everyone to be involved to succeed at the scale that is necessary.

Science dictates that we need to protect 30% of the planet in the next 10 years if we want to preserve the Earth's remaining biodiversity, curb extinction rates, and stabilise our changing climate. And if Covid-19 has brought us anything, it is that now many more people appreciate the importance of the role of nature, which we are intrinsically part of, and that biodiversity is necessary for our very own survival and that of all other living creatures. It is of vital importance that we understand the concept of “oneness” and that everything is interconnected

To our current partners, thank you for standing with us, and for choosing African Parks. To those of you who are inspired to do more or want to support our mission for the first time, we welcome you. There has never been a more urgent time to get involved in this race to protect Africa's biodiversity. The need is now: please join us.

Sincerely,
Robert-Jan van Ogtrop

