

Praveen long presentation

Someone said at lunchtime that I had a dream; a dream about wildlife and adventure tourism, and that is exactly how I see it.

It may not be as important as the dream of Martin Luther King. His dream changed the world as we know and we celebrated 50 years of that some time ago.

My dream may not be as big, but it is a dream with which I was brought up by my father.

It is a dream that is central to the work of this wonderful Partnership

I would like to quote now Ansel Adams a master photographer and landscape recorder. He said: "Wilderness or wildness is a mystique, its a religion, an intense philosophy, a dream of ideal society and a unique contribution to the democratic ideal".

This is a quote from 100 years ago - can still inspire us for the Congo basin

The Congo Basin is one of the most exceptional and unique wilderness areas of the world

Of course it is difficult, it is challenging, but everything in life is challenging my friends and for the poor in Africa, those in the forests, those in our poorest cities, it is especially challenging.

So it is our duty to see what we can do in a practical way to support our people on this continent

It is important also because Africa today needs to be part of the mainstream of the world; they too have a right to economic development and to a future.

So who is going to do this?

We can all talk big at these conferences, but who is actually going to do it?

I will quote a third American example and that is the Hopi tribe -

The Hopi are an old Native American Tribe as many of you know, and there is an old

legend amongst the Hopi people that when they had troubles or problems they gathered together and they asked-who will be the people to find the solution? Who will take us forward out of the catastrophe?

At the 11th hour they came to the conclusion that they themselves would be the people to take themselves forward

So my friends it's the people in this room who can solve the problems of the CBFP - it is the strongest group of people imaginable.

From the youth that you represent, to the donors, the NGO workers - what you have in this setting is a huge voice

So how are we going to do this?

I would say this - if you define what you want, it is perfectly easy to address the problems

En se fiche avec des problems. On doit trouve les solutions et pas gaspialle les temps avec les problems.

As Margaret Thatcher used to say - don't give me problems, give me solutions

So what are our solutions?

We have met so many inspiring and interesting people over the past few days, talking about their work with communities, creating livelihoods, conserving habitat and wildlife, park management, developing capacity, controlling poaching, doing controlled logging, making national parks work

Its very challenging work and we should applaud such hard work. It shows that a lot is going on in the Congo Basin.

Yes more needs to be done

What do we want to define that needs to be done?

We need to feed the communities around the tourism and conservation sites, we

need more economic development, more ecotourism, more protection of species and land

But what does all this need?

A lot of it can be very simple - reducing paperwork, welcoming visitors. These are simple steps that people in this room can make today

One of my colleagues puts it very well - he says if you don't change, change will change you anyway, and the change today is going at an exponential rate

We also need to make sure there is openness from those who manage the parks and from the conservation non-profits. They both do a fantastic job, but they need to share what they do with us

The earth belongs to everyone - you must share it with everyone

In my opinion the only way to save these forgotten forests is to connect them to the world. Otherwise, within a few decades they will be gone.

So they need to support, love and champion, they need to become part of the mainstream

We need to include the communities more so that they too can take us forward and the communities are not as backward as we all think.

The people of the Congo Basin forest are some of the oldest peoples on this planet. They know what the environment is, they know what hospitality is, they know what their land is

Its a matter of us liberating our attitudes and working with them so that they can share what they have and what they have had far longer than us.

I am optimistic about this. I think if we liberate them they will share with us their traditions of building, of design, of architecture, of welcoming people

So we need to work with them, we need a new approach from our governments in this region, from donors and of course we need the famous private sector

The private sector sometimes has a bad name and sometimes does bad things, but the private sector is the engine of growth

Finally, we need to have public-private partnerships

Lets move forward on this.

I would even be so bold as to say to the facilitators, why don't you nominate a small group of people to see how you can structure this partnership and report back to your group?

Thank you

