

## **Statement of the Independent Panel of Experts on the Presentation of its Report for the WWF Independent Review**

*24 November 2020*

The Independent Panel of Experts, composed of Judge Navi Pillay, Professor John H. Knox, and Dr Kathy MacKinnon, has presented its report reviewing, examining and assessing WWF's role in connection with allegations of human rights abuses in and around protected areas in six countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Nepal and India.

The focus of the inquiry was on allegations that WWF knew about alleged abuses by rangers and other law enforcement agents acting under the authority of governments, but that WWF nevertheless continued to support and collaborate with state agencies concerned, and that WWF failed to take effective steps to prevent, respond to and remedy the alleged abuses. There were no allegations that WWF staff directed or participated in any of these alleged abuses, and the Panel saw no evidence that they had done so. In some cases, WWF was also accused of not respecting the rights of indigenous peoples in its activities in support of existing and proposed protected areas.

This report provides the Panel's factual findings in relation to the allegations against WWF, its assessment of whether WWF's actions were appropriate and consistent with its responsibility to respect human rights, and the Panel's recommendations on the actions that WWF should take going forward. The Panel wishes to thank everyone who contributed to its work.

Many of the landscapes in which WWF works pose enormous challenges in terms of governance and the rule of law. They include important ecosystems and some of the most marginalised human populations. The Panel emphasises that respect for human rights is complementary, not contradictory, to the conservation of nature. The Panel hopes that its findings and recommendations will be valuable not only to WWF, but also to other conservation organisations, governments, funders, indigenous peoples and local communities, and other stakeholders, in promoting more inclusive and equitable conservation.

The report includes detailed chapters on each country and on WWF as a whole. It also includes an Executive Summary of the entire report. The Panel will therefore not attempt to summarise the report further or respond to media requests. The Panel encourages all those interested in conservation and human rights to read the report "*Embedding Human Rights in Nature Conservation: From Intent to Action*", which is available on [the WWF website](#).