

Testimony of John F. Calvelli
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Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the FY12 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. I am John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which was founded in 1895 with the mission of saving wildlife and wild places worldwide. WCS fieldwork helps address threats to over 25% of Earth's biodiversity in 60 countries around the world. As an implementing partner of the U.S. government overseas, WCS is closely following foreign aid priorities related to the Global Health Initiative (GHI), the Global Climate Change initiative (GCCCI) and the Feed the Future initiative (FTF). Our work demonstrates how conservation helps achieve our foreign policy objectives, such as: understanding the spread of diseases between animals and humans; securing land tenure and promoting indigenous rights to protect tropical forest habitat and fortify the sources of drinking water for rural communities in the developing world; and supporting sustainable agriculture as an alternative to illegal logging and wildlife poaching to increase food security and household incomes in some of the world's poorest regions.

As the Subcommittee balances the nation's fiscal challenges with national security interests, it is important to note that international conservation comprises less than 1% of our foreign assistance, which, in turn, is only 1% of the federal budget. This modest investment in sustainable natural resource management in places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and South Sudan reduces conflict around scarce resources and serves to prevent costly civil strife and potential future military interventions. This testimony will focus on programs at USAID and the State Department where conservation delivers on our foreign policy objectives.

Biodiversity: USAID's Biodiversity Conservation Programs help protect some of the largest and most at-risk natural landscapes while boosting economic security, regional stability and human health. Unfortunately, the President's FY12 budget request includes a sharp 60% decrease in funding from FY10 enacted levels for biodiversity. Over 80% of the 146 armed conflicts in the past 50 years occurred in places that contain a high percentage of the world's wildlife and plant species. For example, a study from the Center for a New American Security found that depleted fish stocks eliminated the livelihoods of Somali fishermen, resulting in many of them becoming pirates. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, where WCS is the only U.S. based conservation organization at work, desertification from unsustainable land use, erosion caused by deforestation, and water contamination have devastated the region's inhabitants. Reversing these destructive trends is key to good governance and capacity building, which is essential for effective local management and security. This is also a goal in the new state of Southern Sudan where WCS is working with the government to incorporate resource management into its development strategy. In Central Africa, despite a long history of conflict, the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) brings 6 nations together to discuss how to save the world's gorillas and elephants, the importance of sustainable development, and transboundary national park development. Examples like these emphasize the importance of incorporating conservation and natural resource management into a larger conflict-prevention strategy. WCS recommends \$205 million for biodiversity in FY12 (level with FY10 enacted) of which \$23 million is requested for CARPE, \$20 million for the Andean Amazon Conservation Initiative, \$5 million for wildlife conservation in Southern Sudan, \$7 million for USFWS programs in central Africa, \$2 million for Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, and \$500,000 for tiger conservation in the Russian Far East.

Sustainable Landscapes: WCS supports the Administration's FY12 request of \$421 million (\$213 million to USAID; \$28 million to State; and \$180 million to Treasury) to protect tropical forests

from deforestation and degradation. Forests are essential for regulating water flow, capturing rainfall for drinking water and often preventing catastrophic flooding and soil erosion. Forests supply direct food, economic resources and medicinal products to the over 1.6 billion people who live in them, and are vital to the healthy ecosystems we all depend on. U.S. support will give developing countries the ability to address the drivers of deforestation and degradation, halt illegal logging and restore degraded lands. This has direct economic benefits for U.S. producers as well: unfair competition from illegally harvested timber in developing countries costs the U.S. timber industry \$1 billion annually. WCS encourages the Administration and the Subcommittee to look for additional creative funding streams to complete the U.S. pledge of \$1 billion over 3 years for Sustainable Landscapes so that money does not have to be redirected from other efforts, like biodiversity or adaptation assistance.

Resilience, Adaptation and Predictive Capabilities: Some of the world's poorest countries are experiencing increased droughts, floods and other extreme weather events. These regions need technical and financial assistance to monitor changes and integrate nature-based adaptation strategies into plans that address infrastructure, health, agriculture, natural resources management, disaster risk reduction and conflict mitigation. As part of ongoing efforts to protect ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of the people living in Africa's Albertine Rift WCS has helped the Uganda National Forest Authority to determine the economic value and services the forests provide for the surrounding communities. WCS supports the Administration's FY12 request of \$256 million for adaptation assistance (\$167 million to USAID; \$49 million to State; and \$40 million to Treasury).

Global Health: WCS agrees with the State Department's FY12 Foreign Operations budget justification that "investments in global health strengthen fragile or failing states, promote social and economic progress, and support the rise of capable partners who can help to solve regional and global problems." Since many of these fragile or failing states are located in some of the most

biologically rich regions, it is imperative that we continue to invest in efforts to anticipate and prevent the spread of infectious diseases between animals and people. One example within GHI is the PREDICT project, which is a global early warning system created in 2009 as part of USAID's Emerging Pandemics Program to leverage public and private partners in monitoring for zoonotic diseases. As one of five institutions implementing PREDICT, WCS monitors the trade in wildlife and wildlife parts and the potential role this trade may play in the spread of infectious diseases. WCS supports the Administration's FY12 request of \$60 million to combat pandemic influenza and other emerging threats.

Feed the Future: At the 2009 G8 Summit in Italy, leaders committed to urgently address sustainable global food security. WCS is pleased that the U.S. has taken a leadership role in this effort with a three year pledge of at least \$3.5 billion for the President's Feed the Future Initiative (FTF). The FTF Guide recognizes that "market-oriented approaches to small-scale agriculture deliver results on a large scale." WCS is committed to expanding small-scale sustainable agriculture in developing countries. WCS created the Community Markets for Conservation co-op (COMACO) in Zambia's Luangwa Valley as one such effort. COMACO has empowered residents to adopt new trades, including organic farming, beekeeping, and gardening rather than ecologically destructive activities like illegal logging and poaching. COMACO has established the *It's Wild!* brand of eco-friendly products that are distributed throughout Zambia. Surveys show that annual household incomes in these rural communities have increased from an average of \$35 in 2001 to \$149 in 2008. This increased income has moved households beyond the threshold of meeting basic needs and into a realm where they can afford to send children to primary schools. The rural farm families have economic security, ecosystems are being preserved and Zambian communities have access to cheaper, locally produced food. WCS urges FTF to emphasize small-scale, sustainable agricultural cooperatives, like COMACO, in its FTF priorities to help rural families prosper. U.S. agricultural

support programs should have safeguards to prevent large-scale deforestation and other ecological destruction, which would be counterproductive to the long-term goal of sustainable food security. As identified in the FTF Guide, “[e]nvironmental degradation and climate change are critical cross-cutting issues that can affect the sustainability of investments in agricultural development and food security, impede long-term economic growth, and adversely affect livelihoods and wellbeing.”

Global Conservation Act: National security, U.S. competitiveness, economic growth, natural resource management, agriculture, public health and women’s issues are closely intertwined, and a slight shift in one can have significant impacts on the others. As such, the U.S. government needs a coordinated, overarching strategy for addressing global natural resource degradation. The Global Conservation Act (H.R. 4959), introduced by Representative Carnahan last Congress, calls for such a strategy to improve coordination and increase efficiencies within and across federal agencies so that the declines in natural resources can be halted and reversed. The strategy should translate priorities into specific programmatic recommendations in order to integrate conservation needs into broader foreign assistance, development, and security decision-making. I urge the Subcommittee to review the bill when it’s reintroduced and work with the Administration to implement its principle recommendations.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to share WCS’s perspectives and recommend modest funding for international conservation in the FY12 SFOPs Act. A strong conservation effort will reinforce our core foreign policy objectives and will provide a significant return on investment for the American public.