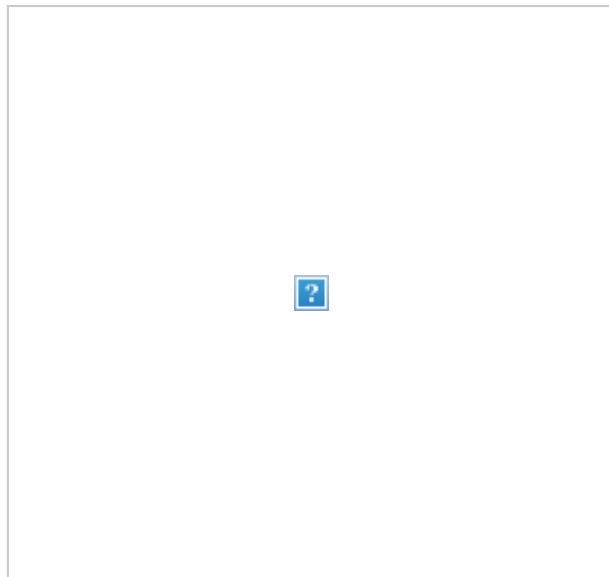


**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
JEFFRY BURNAM**

**DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT
BUREAU OF OCEANS AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

The Growing Problem of Bushmeat Consumption



**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND OCEANS
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JULY 11, 2002**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Department of State's views on the international aspects of the growing problem of bushmeat consumption.

On a recent trip to the Republic of Congo, I saw firsthand the seriousness of the large-scale bushmeat consumption problem. I had the opportunity to visit a pilot project where a forestry concessionaire and a local community were working together to help control poaching in a buffer zone around a reserve. I believe that this pilot project suggests that there are many opportunities in Central Africa to work effectively with logging companies to help control activities that have an impact on forests and wildlife.

The scale of bushmeat consumption is threatening the survival of species such as elephants, gorillas and chimpanzees in Africa. While bushmeat provides animal protein and a source of income for many families, the bushmeat trade has recently increased dramatically. Concession logging is an important economic activity in many of these countries. However, it must be properly managed because concession logging results in construction of roads and the migration of population into previously undisturbed and remote forest areas. These factors, combined with the development of social and economic networks to support the bushmeat industry and an increasing demand internationally, have transformed bushmeat harvesting from a subsistence activity into a commercial enterprise.

The United States recognizes the cultural and nutritional needs of many communities who use bushmeat for subsistence. Our concern is that the large-scale, unregulated and illegal trade in bushmeat could lead to extinction of many wildlife species and irreversible impacts on African ecosystems.

The threat to wildlife from the bushmeat trade is intimately related to political, social and

economic issues. In the Congo Basin, wildlife harvesting is occurring beyond sustainable levels. The illegal trade in wildlife often goes hand in hand with illegal logging and with lack of respect for the rule of law and good governance.

The Department of State has taken a number of steps to address these concerns. The project which I visited in the Republic of Congo is supported by the Department of State, by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and by the United States Agency for International Development through its Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). Nongovernmental (NGO) and private partners include the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the Columbus Zoo and the logging concessionaire itself, the Consortium Industrielle Des Bois (C.I.B.) This pilot project employs local people as "eco-guards" to protect against commercial-scale bushmeat hunting. It provides income for communities living on the edge of a national park and a means to enforce the forestry and wildlife laws.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) set up a Bushmeat Working Group to promote awareness of the issue of cross-border trade in bushmeat, which the Department of State supported. The United States has also supported the work of a coordinating NGO, the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force, which works with governments and concerned NGOs to address the bushmeat crisis in Africa. I understand that the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force has recently secured several grants from private foundations and from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist six Central African governments in addressing the bushmeat crisis.

At the Department of State, our Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) has supported the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force's work in Central Africa in conjunction with the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). We are also helping to sponsor a workshop on wildlife management and conservation in timber concessions in Central Africa in August 2002, focusing in particular on raising the awareness of government policy makers and regulators on the relevance of these issues to sustainable forest management.

The Department of State considers commercial harvesting of bushmeat for widespread consumption a significant biodiversity issue and is committed to working with partners domestically and abroad to address the problems associated with it, including in the context of sustainable development. In general, further international collaboration on this issue could include:

- Educating governments, forest concessionaires, and local people about the bushmeat problem and empowering them to understand the concept of sustainability in terms of wildlife harvest.
- Working through international agreements such as CITES, CBD and ITTO to further efforts to control the illegal commercial bushmeat trade.
- Encouraging governments, forest concessionaires, and local communities to take responsibility and put programs in place for maintaining viable and sustainable wildlife populations.
- Educating consumers internationally about the impacts of the bushmeat trade on wildlife populations.

Mr. Chairman, effective solutions to the bushmeat problem require a multifaceted approach that addresses the fundamental social, political and economic causes of the problem. We all share the common goal of preserving biological diversity for future generations. Our ability to do so depends upon devising practical measures to move science and policy towards this end.

Thank you very much. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.