

**Didima Declaration
Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains**

7 September 2003



We, the 60 delegates to the Mountain Workshop, a component of the IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, representing 27 countries, and with the support of the Mountain Club of South Africa and the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) have assembled in the Maloti-Drakensberg mountains between the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa, to draw attention to the continued need for co-operation among nations for the protection of globally significant biodiversity and the pursuit of peace and reconciliation among people.

We are aware of the value of transboundary conservation initiatives to conserve biodiversity at a landscape level, to foster peaceful co-operation among communities and societies across international boundaries, and to engender regional economic growth and integration.

We are conscious of the need and opportunity to promote and maintain peace and co-operation among nations and communities, especially in areas during and following armed conflict.

We acknowledge the particular needs of communities living in border regions who have strong kinship ties across national boundaries and who are often adversely affected by the historical circumstances of their situation.

We recognize not only the involvement and investment of many countries and conservation and development agencies in transboundary conservation initiatives worldwide, such as the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Area between Lesotho and South Africa, but also the need for enhanced co-operation to support and develop transboundary protected areas and to refine approaches for their sustainable effective management.

We therefore declare our commitment to pursuing transboundary conservation initiatives for peace and co-operation; and

Call upon our colleagues, governments, NGOs, development agencies and communities through the 5th World Parks Congress, in Durban South Africa, to support these efforts, and to strive for a just world which secures our shared resources for the benefit of all people through peaceful co-operative efforts which transcend national boundaries.