



## Niger creates the largest protected area in Africa

### The largest protected area in Africa

More than a decade's efforts were crowned on March 6<sup>th</sup> this year when the Niger Government formally decreed the establishment of the Termit & Tin Toumma National Nature and Cultural Reserve. At 97,000 km<sup>2</sup> (37,450 sq. ml) the reserve is the largest single protected area in Africa, approximately the same size as Hungary or Portugal. Thanks to the reserve's gazettelement, some 14% of Niger now lies under protected areas, thus achieving the recommendation of the United Nations Millennium Goals for Development.

### A huge step forward for the conservation of some of the world's rarest species

The reserve will give much-needed protection to some of the world's most endangered species, including the addax antelope (*Addax nasomaculatus*), the dama gazelle (*Nanger dama*), the Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*) and a small population of the elusive Saharan cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*). The reserve also covers a large variety of desert habitats, ranging from mountains and valleys to grassy plains, open desert and sand seas.

### A long partnership process with multiple stakeholders

The fruit of a process initiated in 2004 under the guidance of Niger's Environment Ministry and UNEP's Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), work was initiated with funds from the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and technical support from the Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF) and Belgium's Royal Institute for Natural Resources (IRSNB). Building on the results of a first phase of activities, a second round funded mostly by the European Union has now lead to the reserve's creation. Local stakeholders have also been heavily involved in the process, including pastoralists living in the area who see the reserve's establishment and successful management as an opportunity to preserve their way of life and the natural resources on which they depend. Public awareness has been undertaken at many levels to create a collaborative framework, including with the oil industry that is exploiting the reserve's eastern border.

### A milestones has been reached but the road ahead is still a long one

Witnessing the successful culmination of a long process is a major and positive event but it also marks the beginning of a new chapter because the new reserve will need strong support to be effective and to meet its conservation objectives to conserve its natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations.



For more information, please visit the following web sites:

[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)

[www.ass-niger.org](http://www.ass-niger.org)

[www.saharaconservation.org](http://www.saharaconservation.org)

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Termit & Tin Toumma National Nature and Cultural Reserve landscape and wildlife. Thomas Rabeil/SCF

