

Acceptance speech at the ceremony of the XIV Biodiversity Conservation Awards

Alice Macharia, vicepresident for Africa Programs. Jane Goodall Institute

Ladies, gentlemen, distinguished guests, fellow honorees and the BBVA Foundation,

I am so honored to accept the BBVA Foundation Worldwide Award for Biodiversity Conservation on behalf of the Jane Goodall Institute, USA, which recognize efforts that began nearly sixty years ago with Dr Goodall's pioneering research on wild chimpanzees in and around what is now Gombe National Park. This award is a significant recognition for JGI's efforts in conserving chimpanzees and other biodiversity using our Tacare approach that ensures that communities are involved in the decision-making process of conservation.

JGI's approach, Tacare, was unique in its time when Dr. Goodall shifted her work from science to conservation in the early 90s. Dr. Goodall and the JGI team sought to engage communities in addressing the problems they faced, empowering them to be decision makers for the use of their own land and developing solutions together. This involvement is critical because 91% of chimpanzees live outside of protected areas in Tanzania – in their community lands.

The main threats to chimpanzees across their range are habitat conversion for small settlements and agriculture, disease and wildlife trafficking for the bushmeat and pet trades. In Tanzania, the greatest threats are habitat conversion for small settlements and agriculture. Over the last three decades, the commitment we have experienced from

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communities who have set aside their lands for conservation has fueled the continued growth of our work and impact into even more parts of Tanzania and the chimpanzee range. Women, men and youth have become champions for chimpanzees and their habitats.

As our founder Dr. Jane Goodall says, “Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.” We all have to take bold steps and become champions for wildlife and our environment.

On behalf of the Jane Goodall Institute, USA, our global JGI colleagues, partners and stakeholder, once again, I express our gratitude to BBVA for recognizing the impact of our work and supporting our efforts as we continue to grow and engage more communities across Africa in joining us as partners in conservation.

Alice Macharia
Vicepresident for Africa Programs. Jane Goodall Institute