

*Sahamalaza National Park, Madagascar:
the Benefits of a Participative and
Integrated Approach to Natural Resource
Management*

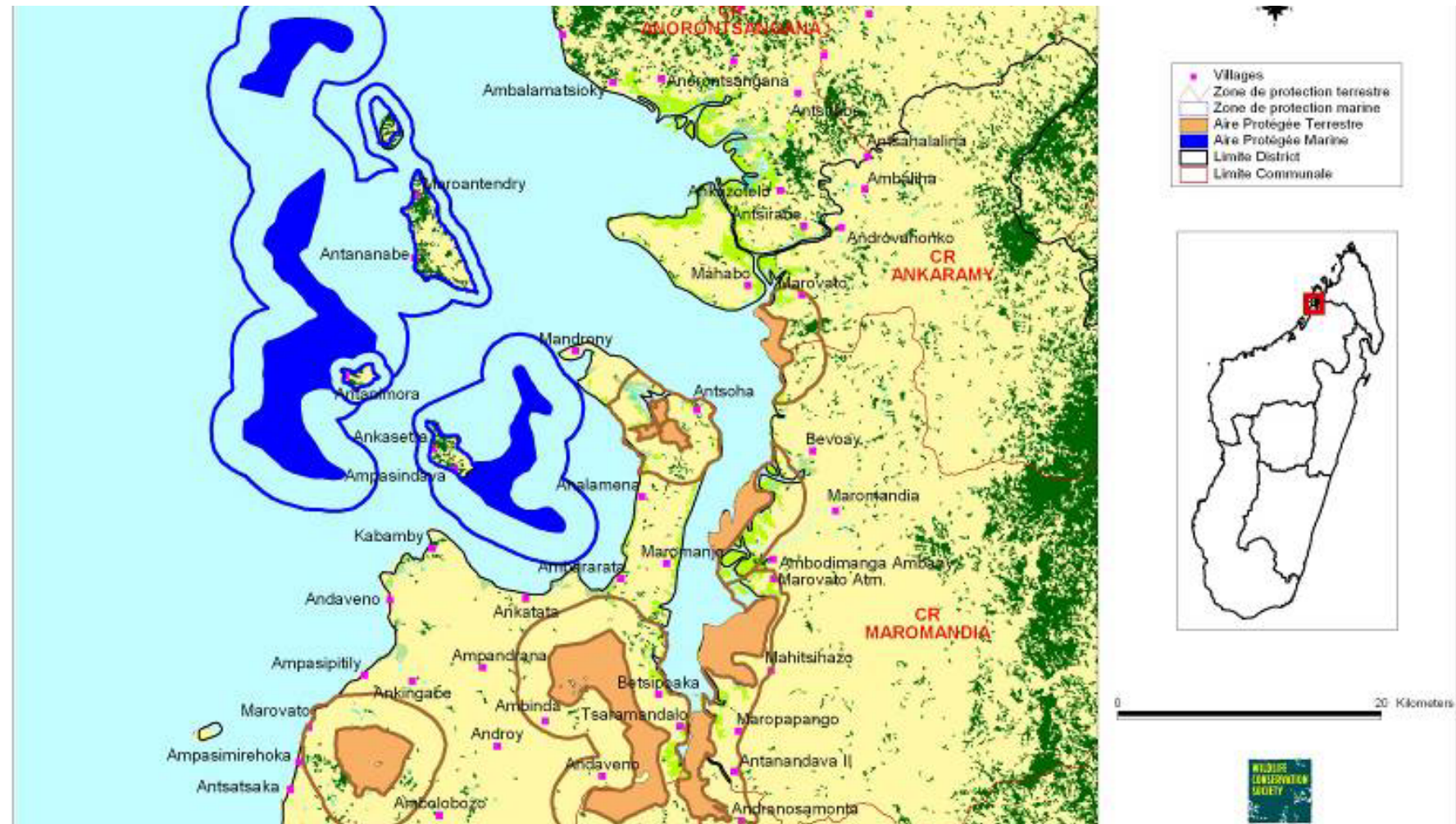
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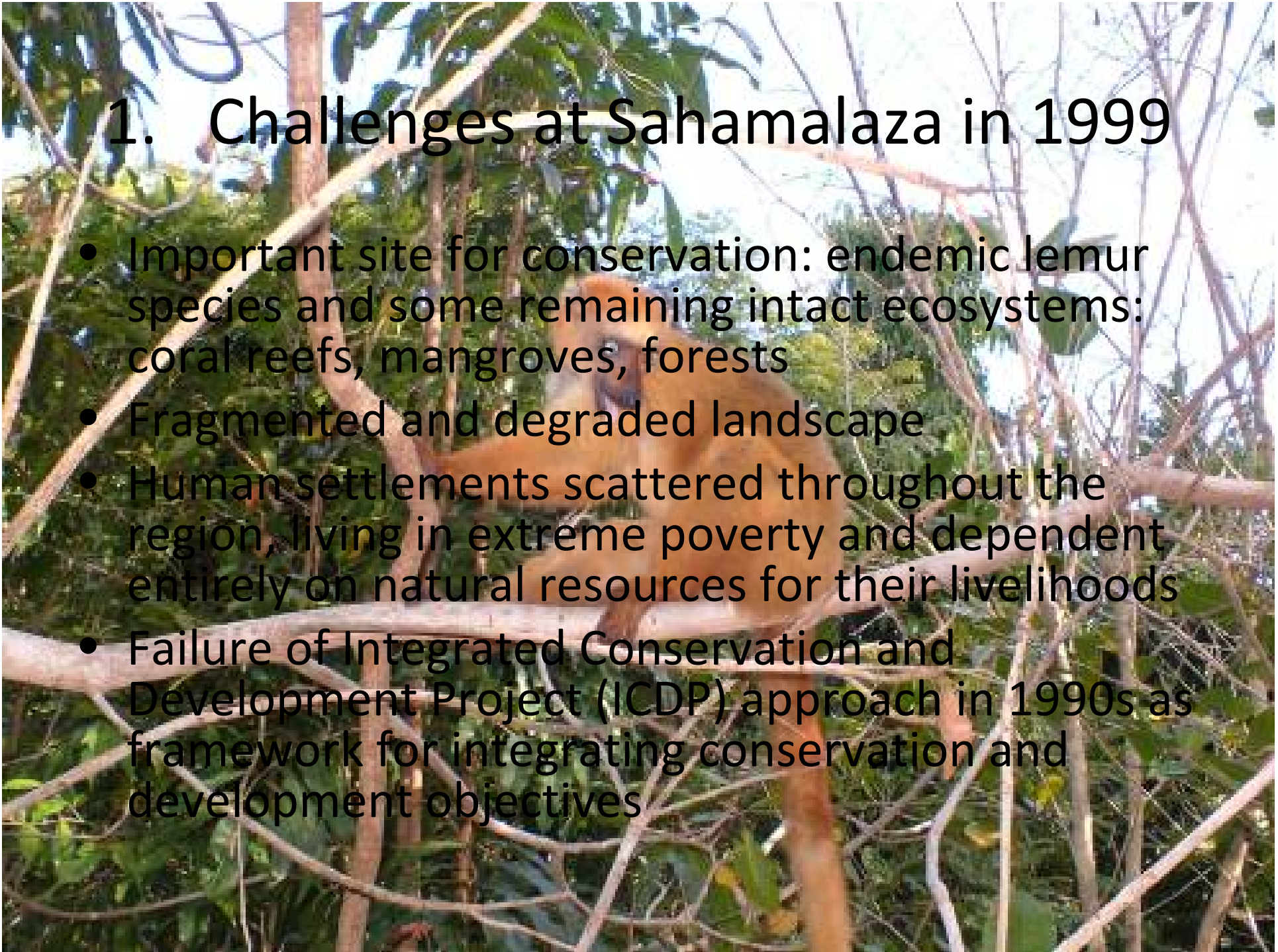
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Réserve de Biosphère Marine de Sahamalaza / Iles Radama et Parc National Sahamalaza



1. Challenges at Sahamalaza in 1999

- Important site for conservation: endemic lemur species and some remaining intact ecosystems: coral reefs, mangroves, forests
- Fragmented and degraded landscape
- Human settlements scattered throughout the region, living in extreme poverty and dependent entirely on natural resources for their livelihoods
- Failure of Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) approach in 1990s as framework for integrating conservation and development objectives



2. A community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) approach

- Agrawal advice to CBNRM practitioners (Agrawal 1997): “trust the tool”
- Initial assessment of natural resource management issues carried out by local experts
- Minimal involvement of outsiders (Malagasy or expat)
- CBNRM approach totally integrated into local culture and political structures (FPIC-compliant)
- Participative, multi-stakeholder workshop (2000) as next step to discuss initial assessment and discuss the way forward



Outcomes of CBNRM planning process:

- Immediate understanding of interests of improved natural resource management, including creation of protected area
- Sahamalaza CBNRM strategy fully integrating conservation and development agendas in a single plan
- Green light from traditional authorities
- Pressure from local communities to establish protected area as soon as possible
- Marine biosphere reserve status recognized by UNESCO in 2002
- National Park established in 2007
- Creation of local administrative structures (*Communautés Locales de Base*, etc.) to coordinate community involvement
- Transfer of management authority over natural resources to local community (GELOSE and GCF frameworks)
- Land use plan completed in 2010 (UNDP funding) and validated by all stakeholders in May 2011

3. Sahamalaza/Iles Radama today

- Management responsibility for national park and marine biosphere reserve shared between Madagascar National Parks and local communities (paid by MNP for law enforcement)
- Dramatic (five-fold) increase in rice yields thanks to SRI
- Significant reductions in deforestation and lemur hunting (no more *laly*)
- New lemur species discovered (*Lepilemur sahamalazensis*) and lemur festival established in annual calendar
- End to “resource mining” by itinerant fishers and improved artisanal fishing methods introduced
- Community-led habitat restoration and reforestation under way
- Improved access to water for some communities

Remaining Challenges

- More work required to improve access to water (e.g. sand dams)
- Healthcare and education infrastructure
- Capacity building for local institutions / management structures
- Comprehensive monitoring programme required covering livelihoods, wildlife and ecosystem services
- Financial sustainability?

Conclusions

- Rural communities are the first to suffer from environmental degradation
- CBNRM has delivered important conservation and development benefits at Sahamalaza
- Maximising local involvement has resulted in a high level of community buy-in
- Biosphere model well-suited to the region
- Integrated NRM approach more effective than a polarized conservation/development one
- Lemur as flagship for conservation and development
- Key roles for outside entities such as government of Madagascar, SAGE, AEECL, WCS and other partners
- Improving NRM is a long-term undertaking requiring correspondingly long-term commitments – though not necessarily very high levels of funding



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