For Immediate Release

July 27, 2018

**Region Made Famous by Research and Conservation Work of Jane Goodall Named UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**

*Area recognized for efforts to conserve biodiversity and sustainable development.*

This week, the Gombe Masito Ugalla ecosystem was designated as an official Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These reserves reconcile biodiversity conservation with human activity through the use of sustainable natural resources. This designation is the first international recognition of Gombe since the government of Tanzania gave national park status to what is now Gombe Stream National Park in 1968. Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute, and United Nations Messenger of Peace remarked about the news saying:

*“It is wonderful news. I hope that it will lead to more recognition of a truly unique area that is home to almost all of Tanzania's remaining chimpanzee population as well as for many other animals and their habitats. Hopefully the added recognition of its importance will attract more funding to improve conservation efforts, and to improve the lives of local communities, and thus create new partners in conservation.*

A site that has been crucial for chimpanzee conservation for almost six decades, Gombe has been protected by a network of partners led by the Jane Goodall Institute through the organization’s hallmark style of community-centered conservation which began in the region nearly thirty years ago. “Conserving the biodiversity and the management of natural resources in these ecosystems is a prerequisite for sustainable development,” declared UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. Through collaboration with 74 villages surrounding Gombe National Park, the Institute’s programs have advanced habitat and species conservation through land-use planning, participatory forest management, livelihoods supported by the sustainable use of natural resources, environmental education, and public awareness campaigns.

While the naming of a Biosphere Reserve is based on the region’s integration of sustainable natural resource use; it is also informed by science and traditional knowledge. Ms. Azoulay continues, “They [Biosphere Reserves] facilitate the sharing of knowledge, promote the interaction between science and society and help bring concrete improvements to the lives of local populations.”

It has been nearly sixty years since Dr. Goodall began her pioneering study of the wild chimpanzees of Gombe Stream National Park, research that continues to this day. This research has taught us so much about our closest relative in the animal kingdom, as well as the habitat they rely on and other species living alongside chimpanzees in Gombe's dense forests. It continues to do so through generations of scientists who have followed in Dr. Goodall’s footsteps and who have helped inform the naming of Gombe as a biosphere reserve.

Evolving from Dr. Goodall’s research, the Institute’s conservation science research approach has also played an important role in informing species conservation and sustainable development in the region. Communities and their non-governmental organization partners have been able to guide and improve conservation efforts through land-use planning enabled by traditional knowledge from community leaders, high-resolution satellite imagery, and crowd-sourced forest monitoring communities.

Regarding further opportunities that the new designation will provide to the region, its habitat and biodiversity, Dr. Goodall continued, “I hope too that we shall be able to introduce the Jane Goodall Institute's environmental and humanitarian program for young people, Roots & Shoots, into all the schools within the Reserve. Congratulations to everyone who has worked so diligently to make this dream a reality.”

Every year, UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere Programme adds new sites. The Jane Goodall Institute Global Board and network of chapters is very grateful to UNESCO and the government of Tanzania for this important recognition of the Gombe Masito Ugalla Biosphere Reserve and look forward to continuing efforts to protect this important ecosystem and the species that inhabit it. To learn more about the newly recognized Gombe Masito Ugalla Biosphere Reserve, visit <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere-reserves/tanzania/gombe-masito-ugalla>. To learn more about the Jane Goodall Institute, visit janegoodall.org.

**About the Jane Goodall Institute**

Founded in 1977 by Dr. Jane Goodall, the Jane Goodall Institute is a global community conservation organization that advances the vision and work of Dr. Jane Goodall. By protecting chimpanzees and inspiring action to conserve the natural world we all share, we improve the lives of people, animals and the environment. JGI makes a difference through community-centered conservation and the innovative use of science and technology. We work closely with local communities around the world, inspiring hope through the collective power of individual action. Through Roots & Shoots, our youth-led community action and learning program, young people in 100 countries are acquiring the knowledge and skills to become compassionate conservation leaders in their own backyards.