

International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) has called on Rwandan media practitioners during an engagement meeting in Kigali to step up awareness about need to conserve the remaining endangered mountain gorillas in the Virunga massif.

IGCP was created back in 1991 to ensure that the critically endangered mountain gorillas are conserved in their habitat in the mountain forests of the Virunga Massif in Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).



“We recognize the potential of journalists in stepping up awareness about conservation of the gorillas, a reason why we invited you to discuss how best we can cooperate to spearhead the mission of IGCP,” observed Lillian Nakayima, Public Relations officer at IGCP during a recent Media Breakfast in the capital, Kigali.

The environmentalists who facilitated the engagement meeting with Rwanda’s media also elaborated the mission of CERTIFIED GORILLA FRIENDLY™ PLEDGE an initiative of particularly the IGCP and Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN).

CERTIFIED GORILLA FRIENDLY™ PLEDGE is an online awareness raising campaign aiming at encouraging tourists to pledge to observe gorilla tourism rules during treks and share their trekking experience after the visit through the Gorilla Friendly™ Pledge website at www.gorillafriendly.org

“Sharing feedback gives one the opportunity to share their opinions that help conservationists and park managers to strengthen measures that safeguard and secure the future for mountain gorillas as well as improve the tourism experience,” observed Alice Mbayahi, Communication and Advocacy Manager at IGCP.

Mbayahi said that taking the pledge gives one a chance to play an important role in the protection of mountain gorillas by reducing potential negative impacts on their health and behavior.

She also divulged into the objectives and achievements of the initiative as they walk the talk of gorilla conservation.

The initiative has increased awareness & understanding of the gorilla visitation rules, increased compliance to the visitation rules by tourists and improved enforcement of the gorilla rules by the rangers. Other gains are increased number

of people taking the pledge and increased interest in gorilla conservation by the private sector – tour guides and operators.



James Munyaneza, the Managing Director of the New Times

The achievements are a result of various efforts Revamped Gorilla Friendly™ Pledge Website, trained over 100 tour operators & guides, trained about 80 park rangers, guides & tourism wardens, developed and disseminated over 1000 materials including brochures, car stickers, flyers, posters, business cards et cetera.

Others are developed and disseminated short video on GF – this is being played during briefing, conducted several stakeholder engagement meetings on Gorilla Friendly Pledge and on-line popularization of the campaign, conducted Feedback sharing meeting with BMCA wardens and head guides.

They also developed a policy brief on Africa's Great Apes and COVID-19.

During his remarks James Munyaneza, the Managing Director of the New Times called on journalists to encounter misinformation and fake news in the conservation of gorilla conservation.