

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES SYMPOSIUM 22-24 FEBRUARY 2000

A symposium on the **Best Management Practices for Controlling and Preventing Invading Alien Species** was hosted by the *Working for Water* programme at the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in Cape Town from 22-24 February.

A milestone event for the emerging partnership between South Africa and the United States, the meeting also marked a commitment within the SADC countries to collaborate in this field. The importance of forging partnerships, effective communication and information-sharing between all participating nations and sectors, was a strong theme throughout the symposium.

The level of political support was high, with the presence of Ministers Ronnie Kasrils, Valli Moosa and Thoko Didiza. The United States was also strongly represented by the US Secretary of the Interior, Mr Bruce Babbitt and Under-Secretary for Agriculture, Mr Mike Dunn.

Many leading experts in the field participated in the meeting, including key-note speaker Dr Jeff McNeely (IUCN), most of the senior participants in the Global Invasive Species Programme, and a very strong contingent of experts from various USA institutions.

Delegates from SADC countries, the US, Australia, Norway, the United Kingdom, Germany and Switzerland attended presentations and workshops on best management practices for terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

The symposium produced the "**Kirstenbosch Declaration**" - the delegates' vision for the management of invasive species, and an eloquent call to collaborative action.

There was widespread praise for the relevance of the symposium, which certainly helped to advance the cause of programmes to control and prevent invasive species.