

CMS REGIONAL REPORT – AFRICA

The following are some of the main activities taken place in the African region since the last standing committee meeting in November 2012. To some extent the Regional Rep. has been promoting the Convention and its Agreement by calling for information regarding the implementation for the purpose of preparatory reports to the StC Meetings. Unfortunately, the responses have always not been encouraging.

West Africa Elephant MOU

The Sub-Regional Steering Committee of the MIKE West Africa held its steering committee meeting at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on the 29th -30th May 2013. The programme was attended by the Program Director for MIKE for Africa and Asia, the Programme Director for ETIS and TRAFFIC, Coordinators for the MIKE Central and West Africa, Executive Directors in charge of Wildlife for all elephant range states of West Africa,(members of the steering committee) , experts from the IUCN, Technical Director of Program d'Appui aux Parcs de l'Entente (PAPE), and National Coordinators of MIKE for West Africa range states.

This meeting was placed in the framework of the implementation of the Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants program. It aims at presenting country reports of MIKE II implementation, the status of elephants and poaching, the issues related to ivory traffic.

At the end of the meeting participants made the following key recommendations:That countries further engage in resource management and share their experiences through exchange visits and regular communication;

- That communication among MIKE, the States, ACP focal points through directors in charge of protected area management, be improved and maintained;
- That every national coordinator get in touch with the country ACP Focal Point for the inclusion of elephants in the list of priorities to be submitted to the European Union within the framework of the European Development Fund (EDF);
- That synergy among ETIS, MIKE, CITES and countries in the elephant distribution area be enhanced for exchange of information;
- That advocacy actions towards States be developed for the financing of MIKE activities;
- That surveillance teams be provided with adequate materials based on the needs and specificities of the sites;
- That ivory consumer countries (China, Japan, Thailand, etc.) be sensitized in view of establishing collaboration for improved conservation of our natural resources, notably elephants;
- That sub regional institutions (UEMOA, ECOWAS) be approached for them to coordinate anti-poaching actions;
- That public private partnership be promoted to curb the pressure exerted by poaching;

CMS family meetings and Training Workshops

National Focal Points for CMS and/or AEWA participated in the CMS Family Capacity Building Workshop for African NFPs using the CMS Family Manual in Cape Town South Africa from 29-31 October 2013.

The meeting was followed with a an African Regional Consultation Meeting for African National Focal Points (NFPs) of CMS and its instruments on the development of the Strategic Plan for Migratory species 2015-2023 on the 1st November 2013

Trans-frontier Conservation project

Wildlife species particularly elephants in the Forest zone of West Africa are now found in small isolated fragments of forest Many of these groups are probably too small to be of be viable in the long term and will probably dwindle to extinction. A network forest reserves and shelterbelts in south-eastern Cote d'Ivoire and south-western Ghana has been identified as a priority landscape that provides the habitat for a number of scattered elephant and other endemic or threatened species populations.

A three (3) year project "Development of a Trans-frontier Conservation Area Linking Forest Reserves and Protected Areas in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire with support from GEF, National Governments, FAO and other co-financiers was launched on 20th November 2013 in Accra Ghana. Priority Trans-boundary projects:

The twelve (12) priority projects for Trans-boundary conservation of elephants have been developed for fund raising and implementation in West African sub region.

AEWA

Number of New Accessions since previous StC:

Two (2) - Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire acceded to the Agreement effective 1 June 2013. Burkina Faso officially became a Party to AEWA on 1 October 2013. The accession of Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso brings the number of AEWA Contracting Parties in the Western Africa sub-region to 12. Four (4) more countries are yet to accede to the AEWA.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD): Ghana and Nigeria reported organizing various activities to mark the WMBD 2013. It is encouraging to note that all the 4 non-contracting parties in the sub-region have also been participating in the celebration of WMBD. They are Cape Verde (2012), Liberia (2012, 2013), Mauritania (2012, 2013) and Sierra Leone (2012).

Ghana has issued a book: “**Birds of Ghana**” covering 758 species, including residents, migrants and vagrants. Each species has a map, an illustration, a description of male, females and juveniles, habitat and call. The guide is not only useful for tourism but also for birds study in Ghana and neighbouring AEWA Range States.

The Centre for African Wetlands received grant funding of Euros 21,699 from the AEWA Small Grants Fund under the 2011 cycle to implement the project, *Priority setting and conservation of migratory waterbird species at key coastal wetland sites in Ghana*. The aim of the project is to analyze the waterbird count data collected over a 20-year period, and based on the results, re-define key wetland sites in Ghana and advocate for their protection.

Implementation of the project started in January 2013 (the original start date of September 2012 had to be shifted because of the time it took for completion of the contractual arrangements) and is expected to be completed within a fifteen month period.

Key challenge

The Region faces key challenge of Anglophone – Francophone language barrier that limits effective communication and information sharing among member states.