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PROGRESS ON CONCERTED AND OTHER ACTIONS FOR CMS SPECIES THAT ARE NOT COVERED BY AN ARTICLE IV INSTRUMENT

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. This document provides an overview of activities undertaken by Parties on Appendix I species designated for concerted action, with a focus on Sahelo-Saharan antelopes and Eurasian aridland mammals. Progress under Rec.9.3 on tigers and other Asian big cats is also reported.

A. SAHELO-SAHARAN MEGAFAUNA CONCERTED ACTION

2. Currently the majority of conservation organizations are focused primarily on areas of high biodiversity or hotspots. However, CMS has acquired a large amount of expertise in addressing the specific needs of aridland environments and wildlife, and therefore occupies a unique and privileged position in this area. Although aridlands are generally characterized by low species richness, they often support a large number of emblematic species that are highly and uniquely adapted to these extreme environments.

3. The development of the Concerted Action "Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna" (SSM), formerly known as "Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes" (SSA), demonstrates how aridland conservation has become a very important area of activity for CMS. This Concerted Action is also embedded into a series of international efforts by various United Nations agencies and by the European Union for the preservation of biodiversity and the fight against desertification in the Saharan environment.

4. The overall objective of the SSA Action Plan and the resulting current programme is to preserve the unique and critically endangered biodiversity of the Sahelo-Sahara region. In particular the aim is to preserve the last remaining viable populations of megafauna and to restore their habitat in areas where it has nearly disappeared. The aim is also to build on natural heritage ownership by nomadic pastoralists in the region and to find a balance between socio-economic development and conservation of the natural environment.

5. The SSM Concerted Action has now gained a strong reputation with members of the international community involved in biodiversity conservation in the Sahelo-Saharan region (NGOs, scientific institutions, international zoological community, etc.), the Range States concerned and funding agencies, and it plays an indispensable role in maintaining this momentum. In particular, the *Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial* (FFEM) and the EU need to be thanked for their very substantial financial support for the project.

6. All activities under the SSM programme are conducted as part of the implementation of the CMS Action Plan on Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes (1999). The action programme was specifically developed around two main areas: one north of the Sahara in Tunisia; and the other in the centre and south of the Sahara in Niger. These are locations where the last viable populations of large Sahelo-Saharan vertebrates survive in the wild. The many reports detailing the work done under the SSM programme during the last three years can be obtained from the CMS Secretariat.

7. In Tunisia, due to the high level of human pressure on the natural environment and the relictual status of wild populations of SSM, the programme has paid particular attention to improving the management of semi-captive populations of Scimitar-horned Oryx, Addax, Dama Gazelle and Slender-horned Gazelle through:

- a) establishment and management of meta-populations of Addax and Oryx distributed in the six southern national parks;
- b) in-situ conservation of the Slender-horned Gazelle, an endangered species throughout its range and present in Djebil and Senghar National Park;
- c) enhancing the technical capacity of the General Directorate of Forests (DGF), the regional governments (CRDA) and protected area staff; and
- d) preparations for the reintroduction of Addax from Djebil and Senghar National Parks to the wild in the Grand Erg Oriental.

8. In addition, the most significant progress of the last three years in Tunisia has been:

- e) development of a mechanism for the ongoing monitoring of populations of Addax in Djebil and Senghar National Parks;
- f) permanent monitoring of populations of Scimitar-horned Oryx in Sidi Toui and Oued Dekouk National Parks;
- g) an additional survey focusing on Slender-horned Gazelle and Dorcas Gazelle in Senghar National Park;
- h) supporting the General Directorate of Forests in the translocation and monitoring of new individuals of Scimitar-horned Oryx which were translocated from Bou-Hedma National Park to Sidi-Toui National Park; and
- i) the General Directorate of Forests in Tunisia also initiated a new programme of conservation and restoration for Cuvier's Gazelle along the Tunisian Dorsale, under the Tunisian Strategy for the Conservation of Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes developed with CMS in 2002.

9. Since 2009, the most significant part of the CMS SSM programme, in terms of in-situ conservation of species, has been the major effort undertaken towards the conservation of the Termit-Tin Toumma area in Niger. The importance of this region is recognized at the highest level by the Niger Government. There is political will to see the area officially designated and effectively managed and the gazetting of the protected area is already embedded within the national programme.

10. In Niger, CMS works in close association with the Ministry of Water, Environment and Fight against Desertification (MEELCD), and with the project's main partner, the Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF). The project in the Termit-Tin Toumma area focuses on:

- a) the development of the Termit-Tin Toumma (RNCNTT) as a future national nature reserve;
- b) the preservation of the Sahelo-Saharan fauna of the region, especially the last viable populations of Addax and Dama Gazelle in the world;
- c) the establishment of ecological inventories and monitoring;
- d) the collection of biological and socio-economic data on the area;
- e) the involvement of local pastoralist communities, including employing them as eco-guards to provide surveillance of the area; and
- f) in initiating community development projects.

11. The project in Niger has continuously worked in partnership with MEELCD and with the help of an excellent field team, on instituting the necessary conditions for the establishment of the RNCNTT. In 2010 however, the country went through a period of political instability, and the establishment of a transitional government has unavoidably slowed administrative procedures. However, the designation decree is likely to be enacted soon by the new Government of Niger. The formal establishment of the RNCNTT will be a major achievement for CMS in terms of conserving Sahelo-Saharan biodiversity for future generations.

12. Many activities have been developed within the framework of the Sahelo-Saharan Concerted Action and a significant part of the CMS Action Plan for these species has been implemented. Aims for the period 2012-2015 include additional efforts to support existing initiatives undertaken by some of the range states such as Morocco and Senegal. The Concerted Action coordination team also hopes to launch operations in new parts of the range of Sahelo-Saharan species, especially in Ethiopia.

13. The Third Meeting of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Range States must be a top priority for the next triennium and financial resources must be identified with the assistance of the COP. During this third meeting, in agreement with the wishes expressed by the Range States, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the CMS conservation and restoration of Sahel-Saharan megafauna is expected to be signed, see also document UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.16 on priorities for agreements.

B. CENTRAL EURASIAN ARIDLAND MAMMALS CONCERTED ACTION

14. The open arid plains of Eurasia are one of the last remaining large migration ecosystems on Earth. Still largely interconnected and less fragmented, they are of crucial importance to many migratory mammals. Recognizing this importance and using its great expertise in addressing the specific needs of aridland environments and wildlife, CMS initiated the Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals Concerted Action to emulate the success of the Sahelo-Saharan project in similar arid biotopes in Eurasia.

15. The Concerted Action and Cooperative Action on Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals was initiated by the 12th Meeting of the Scientific Council in 2004, then proposed at COP8 in 2005 (UNEP/CMS/Rec.8.23), and confirmed by COP9 (UNEP/CMS/Rec.9.1). Res.9.2 (Priorities for CMS Agreements) appeals to Range States and other interested Parties

to support the development of a Memorandum of Understanding or other instrument to complement this initiative, see also document UNEP/CMS/Resolution 10.16.

16. According to Rec.9.1 on Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals, the initiative should include an Action Plan and status reports for all species concerned and link to other existing instruments as well as activities already undertaken by Range States and partners. The Secretariat is encouraged to pursue efforts to bring into the Convention Range States of the Central Eurasian fauna that are not yet Parties, and to liaise with other concerned Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements to enhance synergies.

17. Discussions concerning its taxonomic and geographic scope are going on within the Scientific Council. The Working Group on terrestrial mammals at the 16th Meeting of the Scientific Council (Bonn, 2010) observed that the scope of the Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals action was very broad, both in terms of potential species to be included and in geography, and that priorities had to be decided on. A meeting between Range States and other interested Parties was identified as a first step, as well as initial pilot projects. With the arrival of a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) for Central Asia in October 2010, who is funded by Germany, the Secretariat has temporarily increased its capacity to develop this initiative and the first meeting of range states further.

18. So far, activities to complement the Central Eurasian Aridland Concerted and Cooperative Action have mainly focused on drafting and initiating pilot projects and studies covering the relevant species and ecosystems. In particular, two projects have been developed and submitted to the Mohamed bin-Zayed Conservation Fund to secure funds for implementation. One project aims at monitoring populations of Asiatic wild ass (*Equus hemionus*) and at developing recommendations for the conservation of the species in Turkmenistan. The second project will develop an environmental education program for local schools and communities to stimulate the conservation of Bactrian camels (*Camelus bactrianus*) in China and Mongolia.

19. Another project addresses the effects of large infrastructure projects (such as railways, mining sites, pipelines, border fences, roads, etc.) through critical habitat and migration routes of major migratory ungulates. The increasing number of infrastructure projects planned and currently being implemented in the open and still largely interconnected landscapes of Mongolia necessitates a comprehensive assessment of the effects of these projects on migratory mammals. The assessment should inform relevant policy processes and develop recommendations and appropriate measures in order to ensure that fragmentation of habitat and migration routes is avoided and their integrity is maintained. The Secretariat therefore commissioned WWF Mongolia to conduct a study on the main threats arising from infrastructure projects on migratory terrestrial mammals in Mongolia and ways to address them. The study is funded by the Principality of Monaco and the resulting report will be tabled at the 17th Meeting of the Scientific Council as a background document for discussion.

20. Following the Recommendation and relevant discussions during the 16th Meeting of the Scientific Council, the Argali mountain sheep (*Ovis ammon*), one of the target species of the initiative, has been proposed for listing on Appendix II of CMS by Tajikistan and Kazakhstan with a view to develop an Action Plan and MoU on the species if the proposal is adopted at COP10.

21. COP9 urged the Scientific Council and the Secretariat to design a global strategy to approach donors and general stakeholders for fundraising. It was however pointed out that there are already a number of projects being implemented in that area under other conventions and by many governmental agencies and NGOs. It was seen as important to ensure that a cooperative approach was followed and that CMS acted as an "umbrella". Taking this into account, a draft strategic regional Action Plan is currently being developed by the Scientific Council and the Secretariat as a document for discussion at the Scientific Council.

22. The Secretariat has also undertaken efforts to promote the accession of relevant countries to CMS, in particular Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. It has strengthened its cooperation with partners and stakeholders in Central Asia and has developed several project proposals addressing the conservation of keystone and flagship species and ecosystems in Central Asia, which are being used for fundraising.

23. Considerations related to the most appropriate instrument to complement the Concerted Action are being developed in parallel with the development of the Concerted Action itself. However, there is still no intergovernmental negotiation process. The main priority at this stage is the finalization of the Action Plan. Similar to the Sahelo-Saharan Concerted Action, attention is focused on the identification of the most appropriate instrument and of the most appropriate financial/institutional arrangement that would ensure its long term sustainability. A meeting of the range states to discuss and further develop the strategic action plan as well as to decide on the appropriate cooperative framework would be the next step.

C. TIGERS AND OTHER ASIAN BIG CATS

24. Following on from Rec.9.3 on tigers and other Asian big cats, there are a number of developments to report related to tigers. The 16th Meeting of the Scientific Council discussed a draft proposal for listing the tiger on CMS Appendix I (UNEP/CMS/ScC16/Doc.19/Rev.2) following consultations by the Secretariat with international conservation bodies, including the IUCN Cat Specialist Group. The Council concluded that the tiger was covered by the CMS definition of "migratory", but that any proponent of a listing proposal for the tiger should clearly indicate the added value, given that there were already many organizations engaged in tiger conservation and a number of international legal mechanisms in place, such as the CITES listing of the tiger on Appendix I. A concern was that only two of the 13 tiger Range States were CMS Parties, namely Bangladesh and India. No proposal for listing the tiger on CMS Appendices at COP10 has been submitted to the Secretariat.

25. At the request of the Russian Federation (non-Party), the Secretariat and CMS Ambassador Stanley Johnson attended the International Tiger Forum (St. Petersburg, November 2010) to highlight the importance of trans-boundary collaboration in tiger conservation and to outline how CMS could facilitate this and other conservation measures as an instrument. The Secretariat consulted with tiger Range States, specifically Bangladesh and India, and has since then been following the developments of the Global Tiger Initiative and the Global Tiger Recovery Program, which was signed by all 13 Range States in St. Petersburg.

Action requested:

The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

- a. take note of the activities undertaken by Parties and the Secretariat as contained in this document;
- b. encourage Range States to support the development of various instruments, in particular an MoU for Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna;
- c. assist the Secretariat by encouraging Parties, other partners and stakeholders with additional financial resources to implement the proposed activities as soon as possible;
- d. invite Range States to make proposals for hosting (in collaboration with the Secretariat) the third Range State Meeting of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action, and with regards to the Central Eurasian Aridland Mammal Concerted Action, a workshop to conclude and implement the Action Plan;
- e. make recommendations for continuous conservation action targeting Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna following the conclusion of the EU project at the end of 2012;
- f. endorse follow-up under the Central Eurasian Aridland Mammal Concerted Action; and
- g. consider engagement of the Secretariat within the Global Tiger Initiative.