



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

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13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Gandhinagar, India, 17 - 22 February 2020  
Agenda Item 10.1

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE 49<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CMS STANDING COMMITTEE**

*(Bonn, Germany, 19 November 2019)*

## **CMS STANDING COMMITTEE 49 - DRAFT REPORT - 19 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **1. Opening Remarks**

1. The Chair of the Standing Committee, Øystein Størkersen (Norway) welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked Germany, the Host Government, for providing the interpretation and the Secretariat for the preparations and organization. He commented that it had been a traumatic year with Executive Secretary, Bradnee Chambers, passing away in January. Mr Chambers had shown great fortitude continuing to work despite his serious illness and had had great ambitions for the Convention. Mr Størkersen was sure that the Secretariat was in safe hands with the appointment of Amy Fraenkel as Acting Executive Secretary as preparations for the Conference of the Parties (COP) progressed. A minute's silence was observed in Mr Chambers' memory.
2. The process for appointing a permanent Executive Secretary was underway and had attracted over 100 applications. A shortlist of 3-5 candidates for interview was being prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Mr Størkersen would be involved in the selection process, with the appointment being made by the Executive Director. He hoped that the interviews would be held before COP13, which was taking place in February 2020.
3. The Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council had met the previous week, presided over for the last time by its outgoing Chair, Fernando Spina. It had processed a large number of documents and had dealt with its heavy agenda efficiently. The views of the Sessional Committee on the proposed amendments to the Appendices, the species for Concerted Actions and all items of the COP agenda with scientific content could be found in the in-session documents posted on the Convention's website. The Secretariat was engaging in outreach activities with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and partners to promote the Convention's priorities, especially the inclusion of the concept of ecological connectivity in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The second workshop on connectivity had been held on 18 November, and COP13 would present the opportunity for delivering a strong message as the process for elaborating the framework progressed.
4. The Chair commented that the Convention had a capable and dedicated Secretariat and preparations for the COP were well in hand. One concern was the state of the Convention's Trust Fund, a common problem among MEAs as he knew from having chaired the finance committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Parties approved ambitious programmes of work but were unwilling to provide core funding to match. The greater part of the budget funded through assessed contributions covered staff costs, and voluntary contributions remained essential but were not a permanent solution.
5. The current meeting of the Standing Committee (StC) was scheduled to last just one day and would be followed by a series of regional pre-COP preparatory meetings. Despite the short time available, the Chair wanted the StC to have the chance to air its views. The next two meetings of the Committee immediately before and after the COP would also be brief, and the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting would be presided over by a new Chair.

6. Amy Fraenkel, the Acting Executive Secretary, said that she had been in post since May 2019 having taken over in unfortunate circumstances. She described Bradnee Chambers as a friend, colleague and champion of conservation, who had accomplished a great deal for CMS, presiding over two successful COPs, seeing membership of the Convention grow by nine Parties, instigating the innovative review mechanism and seeking to increase the Convention's profile in shaping the post-2020 framework. He had also been instrumental in encouraging India to host COP13. The current meeting was an important and unique one, because of the unusual timing of COP13 early in the year and also being part of a busy series of events.
7. There were concerns about the Convention's finances, which had been discussed the previous day at the meeting of the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee. The substantial level of arrears was a cause for disquiet.
8. The Acting Executive Secretary welcomed the Indian delegation, led by Soumitra Dasgupta, who had come to present details of the preparations for COP13.
9. Another important issue was the membership of the Convention's subsidiary bodies, with both the StC and the Sessional Committee facing a large turnover of membership.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

### **2.1 Provisional Agenda and Documents 2.2 Annotated Agenda and Schedule**

10. The Chair introduced documents UNEP/CMS/StC49/Doc.2.1/Rev.1, the agenda and documents and UNEP/CMS/StC49/Doc.2.2/Rev.1, the annotated agenda and schedule. There were no proposals to change the agenda, so both documents were adopted as presented.

## **3. Financial and Human Resources**

11. The Acting Executive Secretary said that the deadline for publishing the budget was that day, but with the permission of the Chairs of the StC and of the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee, a few days' grace had been granted to allow the Secretariat to make revisions to reflect the discussions at the StC and the Sub-Committee.

### **3.1 Implementation and Status of the CMS Budget**

12. The Secretariat reported that the current budget was under control and on track. With regard to the status of contributions, since the preparation of document UNEP/CMS/StC49/Doc.3.1 in August, further contributions had been received from Brazil, Eswatini, Ghana, the Philippines and Spain. At 8 November, arrears for 2019 amounted to €514,460, accounting for 20 per cent of the contributions due, with 65 Parties not having paid. With regard to prior years, a total of €925,219 was outstanding, owed by 50 Parties. Fourteen Parties had arrears totalling €83,213 dating from 2015 and earlier, 31 Parties owed €457,631 from the previous triennium 2015-2017 and 48 Parties owed €384,375 from 2018.
13. Figures relating to the implementation of the budget in 2018 showed that against an approved budget of €2,559,888, actual expenditure was €2,067,590 including the sum of €14,085 drawn down from the Trust Fund reserve mainly to cover the cost of a staff retreat. The underspending on various budget lines did not, however, result in a correspondingly higher cash balance on the account because of the non-receipt of contributions.

14. The implementation of the 2019 budget had required the redeployment of some funds from the 2020 budget because the timing of COP meant that some contractual costs had been incurred in the current year. The agreed budget was €2,599,329, expenditure was €2,351,008 and €113,000 had been redeployed from 2020. It was estimated that there would be a balance of €361,321 at the end of the year.
15. The representative of South Africa asked whether contributions received in advance from Parties could be spent straightaway.
16. In response to a request from the representative of Australia, the Secretariat undertook to publish a revised version of the table showing the up-to-date status of Parties' contributions (see Annex 1 of document [UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.13.1](#) *Execution of the CMS Budget 2018-2020*)

### **3.2 Implications of Arrears on the CMS Budget**

17. The Acting Executive Secretary said that the outlook was less positive considering the large amount of arrears, even though there was some better news following receipt of some late payments. The Convention's reserves were depleted, and the Secretariat was trying to balance the budget. Parties in arrears had been contacted and urged to pay, while expenditure had been reduced as much as possible, with the recruitment of the head of the avian team being suspended, leaving the other staff in that unit overstretched. There was little flexibility given that staff costs accounted for a large proportion of the budget and without staff, the Convention's programmes could not be implemented.
18. The steps already taken included personalized letters being sent to all Parties in arrears, with those being more than three years behind being warned of the sanctions, which included loss of voting rights and disqualification from holding elected office. Parties in arrears were offered the option of negotiating a payment plan, but none had taken this up. Follow-up letters had been sent to the countries with the highest arrears. Efforts had been made to reduce the Secretariat's expenditure, the Chair of the StC had been kept apprised and advice and assistance sought from UNEP headquarters.
19. Ten Parties had arrears of up to four years, with the bulk of the money due being owed by Brazil. Three countries had arrears of six years and eleven countries had arrears of eight years or more, including five that had not paid for over twenty years.
20. Projected cash balances for the end of the years 2019 and 2020 had been calculated on the basis of various scenarios. The most realistic based on past experience assumed receipt of 83 per cent of assessed contributions and no payment of arrears. The most optimistic scenario assumed that all arrears would be cleared. Three levels of expenditure were projected – with implementation rates of 100 per cent, 88 per cent and 80 per cent. Expenditure levels of 88 and 100 per cent would leave the Trust Fund in deficit respectively by €145,138 and €489,806 by the end of 2020. Reducing the level of expenditure to 80 per cent of the approved budget would leave a positive balance of €84,640.

21. The budget proposal for the 2012-2023 triennium would be based on the UN scale with possible variants involving minimum contributions of €2,000 and €1,000, similar to those applied in the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and the Agreement on the Conservation of European Populations of Bats. Consideration would be given to the treatment of contributions from new Parties, to ensure that the Trust Fund derived the benefit and that broadening the payment base did not lead to a reduction in payments from existing Parties. Other possible innovations were the introduction of a scale of voluntary contributions and cost savings through reducing the frequency of meetings of the Standing and Sessional Committees.
22. The Chair said that it was fortunate that Brazil had paid at least some of the arrears, but savings were still needed. Parties could be asked to make more voluntary contributions, and he thanked those Parties already supporting activities in this way, noting that such payments were usually earmarked for specific activities. Some measures were easier to implement than others, but nothing that had been proposed would solve the underlying problem, that the Convention faced a major budgetary deficit, if a large payer failed to make its contributions on time or at all.
23. The Chair confirmed that the Secretariat had been actively chasing Parties in arrears, had enlisted the help of UNEP and had approached ambassadors and other high-ranking representatives at major meetings. As staff and the cost of meetings made up the majority of the budget, and virtually no activities from the Programme of Work were covered, Parties would have to consider increasing the core budget.
24. The representative of France said that funding was a major issue for governments and inter-governmental organizations alike, with ministries facing budget cuts. He was open to the idea of introducing minimum contributions to complement the UN scale. He asked what the experience was at AEWA following the introduction of a minimum contribution with regard to the level of arrears. He also asked whether the Trust Fund balance was approaching the minimum level required by the rules.
25. The representative of Georgia said that holding more meetings remotely and electronically could help reduce costs.
26. The representative of Mongolia called for realism and pragmatism, recognizing that full implementation of the budget was not possible in the light of the arrears. She called on the Secretariat to continue pursuing Parties that had not paid. Expenditure had to be responsible to ensure that the Trust Fund remained in surplus. The recruitment of more Parties especially those that would pay larger contributions would improve the Convention's financial situation.
27. The representative of South Africa also thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in recouping arrears. She said that the additional contributions of new Parties should not be used to reduce the payments of existing ones but to increase the Secretariat's resources. She asked what would happen if the Trust Fund were to be exhausted and requested that India as host of COP put the question of finance on the agenda of the High-level Segment. The scope of the Convention needed to be broadened given the results of the recent the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment indicated that a million species would go extinct in the next few years. She was also amenable to holding more meetings electronically, although she warned that some regions had limited access to technologies such as Skype.
28. The representative of Switzerland asked whether the projected level of receipts of 83 per cent was realistic.

29. The representative of India noted that some countries in arrears had not paid for over 20 years. He asked what responses had been received to the letters sent and whether there were any further sanctions that could be imposed. He also advocated remote conferencing to reduce costs.
30. The representative of Germany agreed that the contributions of new Parties should be used to expand activities under the Convention but said that it should be made clear that Parties should honour their commitments. He said that minimum contributions would have less effect than addressing arrears. He welcomed the fact that Brazil had paid some of its arrears but asked whether there were any signals regarding Brazil's intentions for the future. He asked what action the Executive Director of UNEP had taken and whether there was any more that could be done.
31. The representative of Australia suggested that further sanctions that could be imposed on Parties in arrears might include the withdrawal of rights to propose amendments to the Appendices or Resolutions.
32. The Acting Executive Secretary said that the timing of the financial problems could not have been worse with the approaching COPs of CMS and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Brazil's accession had reduced the contributions of other Parties and the non-payment left a large hole in the budget. The Trust Fund balance was healthy at the moment but was being depleted. The introduction of minimum contributions and holding more meetings through electronic means would alleviate rather than solve the underlying problem.
33. The responses to the letters sent included arranging a face-to-face meeting with the Brazilian ambassador in Nairobi, involving the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP and contact with the UNEP office in Brazil. A payment of €222,165 had been made to cover some of the arrears, but if the 2020 payment were missed, the total owed by Brazil would reach €760,308. Brazil had submitted a proposal to add a species to the Appendices, so Australia's proposal to extend the possible sanctions imposed on non-payers had some potential as a deterrent. The Secretariat would continue to apply pressure, and asked Parties for their support and further ideas to keep the Convention solvent. A revised budget document would be prepared in advance of the COP, which would allow the Secretariat to deliver on its mandate.
34. The Chair said that Parties with major arrears rather than the small payers with debts dating back many years should remain the main focus. He stressed that the livelihoods of the Secretariat staff were at stake, and while the Convention was not yet in dire straits, Parties had been alerted to the seriousness of the situation and remedial steps were needed.

#### **4. Process for the Appointment of Representatives to Subsidiary Bodies**

##### **4.1 Standing Committee**

35. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.16 and said that the composition of the StC was a constant feature of the COP agenda and the timing of the current meeting and the regional pre-COP meetings would allow the consultations to start.

36. A table showing the current membership of the StC was displayed on screen. The Resolution establishing the Committee included a provision limiting terms of office to two triennia and this meant that only three existing regional members were eligible for re-election. Germany as Host Government and depositary was a permanent member, the Philippines as Host of COP12 would leave the Committee to be replaced by India as Host of COP13 and the Hosts of COP14 would join as soon as the venue was confirmed. Eight members would have to be replaced at COP, two each from Africa, Asia, Europe and South and Central America and Caribbean region. Alternate members also had to be chosen, but they were not subject to term limits. Parties leaving the Committee were, however, eligible to be elected as alternates.
37. The appointments would be finalized at the COP during the regional meetings, when the elections would be held. The meeting was reminded that Parties three years or more in arrears were ineligible to stand.
38. The representative of Costa Rica pointed out that the South and Central America and Caribbean region had a relatively small pool of Parties from which to choose two members and two alternates and both of its current members had to stand down at COP13. The region wanted to play its full role and sought advice on how best to ensure that it was represented. The Secretariat said that with the accession of Trinidad and Tobago, the region's membership had grown, but conceded that it was unfortunate that both regional members had to rotate off the Committee. Consideration should be given to recreating the stagger so that only one member had to be replaced at future meetings of the COP.
39. The representative of South Africa said that despite Africa having three members and three alternates, there was only one representative present at the meeting. The Secretariat explained that Congo was in arrears and was therefore disqualified from receiving financial assistance, while the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania had encountered difficulties travelling and it had been too late to notify the alternates (Algeria, Kenya and Mali).
40. The representative of Australia noted that the number of seats on the StC allocated to each region reflected the number of Parties. She asked when Oceania, which currently had seven Parties, would qualify for a second seat.
41. The Secretariat said that there was no mathematical formula, and the composition of the StC was set out in Resolution 9.15. This Resolution could be revised if Parties so chose. The structure of the Sessional Committee was different, with each region having three places.

#### **4.2 Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council**

42. The Secretariat introduced document COP13/Doc.15.2 [Appointment of Members of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council](#) and explained that the membership of the Sessional Committee was made up of the nine COP-appointed Councillors and 15 Party-appointed Councillors (three from each of the five CMS regions). It had been intended that half of the members (i.e. 7 or 8) should be replaced at each meeting of the COP with staggered terms of two triennia. Each region was also to identify three alternates. It was pointed out that Ms Stankovic of Serbia, originally an alternate, had only recently become a full member of the Sessional Committee replacing Mr Poluda of Ukraine and was deemed therefore not to have served any terms. Having an identified alternate had expedited the process of replacing the retiring member of the Committee.

43. Several members of the Committee would complete their terms of two triennia. There was also a vacancy for the Asian region following the passing away of Lkhagvasuren Badamjav, the Party-appointed Councillor from Mongolia. At COP13, seven places would have to be filled, two each for Africa, Europe and Oceania and one for Asia. Regions should identify their candidates through a process coordinated by their StC representatives. The appointments would be confirmed by the COP.
44. Resolution 12.2 *Financial and Administrative Matters* prohibited Parties more than three years in arrears from holding office and funding was only available to support attendance of Party-appointed Councillors from eligible countries. It was noted that one member of the Committee had not been able to attend because her government had not been willing to meet the cost of participation.
45. Clarity was sought over the provisions for term limitation. The Party-appointed Councillor from the UK, who had served on the drafting committee and working group that had drawn up the rules for the Sessional Committee, said that the wording had been deliberately vague to allow some flexibility for the smaller regions, which might face more difficulties in finding enough candidates. It was the expectation that representatives from larger regions should step down on completion of their term.
46. The Chair said that the COP might have to consider amendments to the Resolution to clarify the wording. He urged Parties to consult regionally to identify candidates to serve on the StC and Sessional Committee.

#### COP-appointed Councillors

47. The representative of Australia, who had chaired a working group with the task of reviewing the subject areas of the COP-appointed Councillors, said that these posts were a unique feature of CMS. The Convention relied heavily on the expertise that they provided to perform its functions. The first COP-appointed Councillors had been chosen at COP1 in 1985. The subject areas had undergone minor revisions over the years but there had been virtually no changes since COP6 in 1999, with the exception of the creation of a ninth post for climate change agreed at COP10. It had been agreed to undertake a major review through the formation of a working group with one representative from each of the regions. Extensive consultations had been conducted and the paper had been online since September 2019.
48. The working group had tried to establish which areas of expertise were required and had examined the agenda and resolutions passed at the three most recent meetings of the COP. An assessment of future needs had been made based on the national reports submitted to COP12, the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS) and other international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Targets. Some horizon scanning was also done. It had been agreed that in future the review of the COP-appointed Councillors' subject areas would be undertaken more frequently, in order to react to changing circumstances.
49. The subject areas being proposed for the next triennium were: birds, terrestrial mammals, aquatic mammals and marine fish with regard to species, and climate change, connectivity/networks, marine pollution, bycatch and invasive alien species with regard to cross-cutting issues. It was recognized that comprehensive coverage was not possible, but the more frequent review of the subject areas would allow any gaps to be addressed.



50. The new suite of subject areas meant that four incumbents could continue if they were still available and willing to serve. A process would be established for identifying candidate experts to cover the new subject areas and the Secretariat would issue a Notification with a call for nominations. Initial soundings could start at the regional pre-COP meetings.
51. It had also been proposed that the Secretariat should maintain an Ex-officio Register of Expertise designed to capture former COP-appointed Councillors' expertise.
52. The representative of South Africa asked how geographic and gender balance would be assured, pointing out that there were no female COP-appointed Councillors. The Chair said that this was something for the Parties to bear in mind when making nominations.
53. The representative of Wild Migration recalled the discussions at the Sessional Committee the previous week and thanked Australia and the Working Group for their efforts. She stressed that science underpinned the policies of the Convention and a wide base of expertise was needed. The COP-appointed Councillors were essentially volunteers and provided an exceptional service.

## **5. Preparations for COP13**

### **5.1 Overview of COP13 elements and associated events**

### **5.2 Status of logistical preparations 5.3 Status of substantive preparations**

54. The Acting Executive Secretary introduced Mr Soumitra Dasgupta, representing the Government of India, the hosts of COP13.
55. Mr Dasgupta explained that the COP would be held in Gandhinagar, the capital of the State of Gujarat, from 17 to 22 February 2020, with a High-level Segment, stakeholder dialogue, Champion Night and StC taking place on the days before. Several dignitaries had indicated their intention to participate in the High-level Segment, but there were still some outstanding replies to invitations. A list of those ministers, executive secretaries and chief executive officers invited to participate would be circulated.
56. He said that India was the eighth most biodiverse country, accounting for 2.4 per cent of the land area but 8 per cent of the population with 1.3 billion inhabitants. Conservation efforts for the many species found in the country had to involve local communities. The country had four biodiversity hotspots and a long coastline and was host to the Asiatic Lion, Asian Rhinoceros, Asian Elephant, the Royal Bengal Tiger and the Great Indian Bustard, the last of which had been chosen as the Conference mascot. The Cheetah had become locally extinct, but efforts were under way to reintroduce it. Five per cent of India's area had some protected status, and the State of Gujarat had several key sites, including wetlands designated under the Ramsar Convention and Important Bird Areas. With its location on the west coast and given the time of year when the COP was being held, temperatures in the range 28-32°C could be expected.
57. Gujarat had good transportation connections to major cities such as Mumbai and Delhi and the Mahtma Mandir Convention Centre had excellent facilities, including a theatre and separate areas for side events and exhibitions. A number of 3-, 4- and 5-star hotels had been blocked for delegates.
58. The Conference slogan "Migratory species connect the planet and together we welcome them home", which reinforced the theme of connectivity, would be officially launched later that day at the evening reception hosted by the German Government.

59. The Indian Government's website for COP13 could be accessed at [www.cmscop13india.nic.in](http://www.cmscop13india.nic.in).
60. Visas, customs clearance and security were being overseen by a dedicated team in the Ministry and information on visas could be found on the Government website: [www.indiavisaonline.gov.in](http://www.indiavisaonline.gov.in). In response to an enquiry about delegates from countries without Indian diplomatic missions, Mr Dasgupta said that issuing visas on arrival would not be possible, but this had not proved to be a problem for recent international events in India. The CMS Secretariat was liaising with colleagues in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which had just held its COP in Delhi, to see what lessons could be learned.
61. The Indian Government had established a committee to deal with outreach, which included ministry representatives and NGOs. Neighbouring countries that were not yet Parties, such as Bhutan and Nepal were being encouraged to attend and contact was being made through regional organizations such as the [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation](#), the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the East Asian Summit.
62. A second visit from the Secretariat would take place from 2 to 6 December, involving the Acting Executive Secretary and representatives of the Conference Service and the Communications Teams.
63. Four possible excursions in the vicinity of Gandhinagar had been identified, including a bird sanctuary, the Little Rann of Kutch, where Wild Ass could be seen, an archaeological site and a city heritage tour.
64. The Acting Executive Secretary reported that Ambassadors from the Philippines and Honduras had visited the Secretariat and had promised to help with recruitment in their regions. She also said that document production was progressing well with most online and available for examination by the Sessional Committee, StC and the pre-COP meetings. Notification 2019/003 *Call Financial Support to CMS and its 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties* had requested Parties to consider making voluntary contributions to fund the participation of eligible delegates, and Germany, India, Monaco, the Netherlands and Norway had responded, and half the required amount had been pledged.
65. The representative of Zimbabwe said that as well as seeking synergies with other MEAs such as CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Ramsar Convention, collaboration should be sought with local communities and he asked whether steps to ensure local involvement in the COP were being made. The representative of India said that the secretariats of all conventions participating in the Biodiversity Liaison Group had been invited to the COP and the need to enlist local communities' support was recognized.
66. The observer from the UK asked about the logistics of the COP and what plans there were for parallel working groups. This information would help preparations for national delegations. The Secretariat said that the conference venue provided more space than ever, with separate areas for working groups and exhibitions/side events. It was envisaged that there would be three taxonomic working groups, the budget and credentials committees and daily meetings for the five regions. If deemed necessary, working groups for other subjects, such as institutional/legal matters would be convened.

## 6. CMS Input to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

67. The Acting Executive Secretary said that there had been many discussions over the past eight days building on the momentum of the dedicated working group, and the Sessional Committee had been apprised of progress.
68. The Secretariat had attended a series of events including meetings of Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (Nairobi), the Trondheim Biodiversity Conference in July, and a meeting organized by the CBD Secretariat for the Biodiversity Liaison Group (Bern). The Acting Executive Secretary would shortly attend the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSSTA) in Montreal. Regarding the Post-2020 Framework, she noted that it was important for the MEAs to support each other and promote an agreed line. It appeared that CMS was among the best prepared MEAs. COP13 would probably adopt a resolution with a declaration and a message to the Open-ended Working Group.
69. The Secretariat had prepared a series of fact sheets, which provided a useful summary of the background and the priorities of the CMS Family, particularly promoting the concept of ecological connectivity. Formal submissions had been made various forums, and momentum was building to have connectivity accepted as a stand-alone theme and/or a cross-cutting issue in the framework. The IUCN had a task force looking beyond the Aichi Targets and 800 experts on connectivity had been brought together under IUCN Protected Areas Working Group. Significantly agreement had been reached on a definition of ecological connectivity ('the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth'). It had been pointed out that connectivity implied international cooperation, but strangely, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans were silent on this, whereas they could reflect countries' commitments to implement MEAs. As few CMS National Focal Points were also involved in CBD, they needed to communicate with their colleagues to ensure that CMS interests were defended at the SBSTTA.
70. The representative of South Africa referred to the upcoming Global Biodiversity Outlook 5. She suggested that a list of sources of information should be compiled to include the IPBES assessment and reports from MEAs. The CMS Family should feed information into Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 as this would help shape the post-2020 framework.
71. The Acting Executive Secretary confirmed that the Secretariat had sent documents to the author of the Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Scientific Adviser was in contact with him. The draft Global Biodiversity Outlook report would be circulated for comment in due course.
72. The representative of Germany supported the aim of having CMS priorities reflected in the process. He said that it appeared that an assumption had been made that any future CMS Strategic Plan would mirror the new framework and questioned whether CMS would adopt a new Strategic Plan in the conventional sense. Other options were the CITES model of a strategic vision. Previously, the CMS Family had invested time and resources following the Aichi Targets and Parties might ask whether the effort had been worthwhile.
73. The Acting Executive Secretary agreed that the outcome of the post-2020 process was uncertain and therefore it was impossible to know how to align future CMS strategies. She also agreed that there were other models. She did not have direct experience of the previous process to draw up the SPMS but was aware that it had been complicated.

## **7. Decisions Directed to the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Standing Committee**

74. The Secretariat explained that there were many Decisions adopted at COP12 directed to the StC. At the time, it had not been known that COP13 would be held so early in 2020, so the time available for implementing the Decisions had been reduced. As many COP documents had been prepared in time for submission to the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council, there had been no time to consult the StC before these were finalized.
75. A table was presented on screen listing all relevant Decisions, the text directed to the StC and the current status. Since the table had been prepared, comments from the Sessional Committee had been received and these had been added to revised version on screen.
76. The Sessional Committee recommended that Decision 12.11 relating to Resolutions 7.18 concerning the Dugong, 6.3 concerning Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and 8.16 concerning sharks should be repealed.
77. There had not been enough time to address the Decisions 12.47 to 12.49 on the live capture of cetaceans and the Sessional Committee had recommended extending the deadline.
78. The Sessional Committee had recommended adoption of the Joint CMS/CITES African Carnivore Initiative (ACI) with some amendments. The separate measures relating to the Cheetah and Lion were being subsumed within the ACI.
79. The Secretariat had been mandated to undertake an analysis of the issue of wild meat. It was recommended that the deadlines be extended into the next triennium.
80. Progress had been made on Transfrontier Conservation Areas for Migratory Species, and the Sessional Committee recommended the draft resolution for adoption noting the scope for enhancing South-South cooperation.
81. No funding had been available for progressing work on an assessment of community participation, so the Decision would roll over into the next triennium.
82. The representative of Wild Migration raised Decision 12.98 (b) on the compilation of best practice case studies relating to livelihoods. Little progress had been achieved under CMS, but there were developments in other forums such as the UNFCCC and its Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform. The Chair suggested that the COP rather than this StC would be the most appropriate place to raise the issue.
83. The representative of Germany announced that the selection process for a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) to be assigned to the CMS Secretariat to work on issues including the ACI was reaching a conclusion and the successful candidate would be probably be able to start work at the Secretariat in early 2020.
84. The Acting Executive Secretary pointed out that the JPO programme benefitted the employing Secretariats and the individuals, giving them a grounding in the workings of international institutions. She added that a further member of staff working on the transfrontier conservation area issue would also be starting work shortly, based at the UNEP offices in Nairobi.

85. The representative of South Africa thanked Germany for its support of conservation in Africa and said that basing staff at Nairobi would raise their awareness of different cultures.
86. The Chair urged more Parties to assist the Convention by providing JPOs and other in-kind support.

## **8. Report of the Chair of the Scientific Council**

87. Fernando Spina, Chair of the Scientific Council (ScC), participating remotely, gave an account of progress made on implementing Decisions addressed to the ScC that required reporting to the StC.

### Cooperation between the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and CMS

88. Decision 12.13 requested the ScC, subject to available funds, to undertake a review of needs and opportunities for improving the interface between science and policy in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species. While this could not be undertaken due to lack of funds, in a related activity the ScC supported the Secretariat in providing input to the process for the development of the IPBES second Work Programme for 2020-2030. In particular, members of the Scientific Council provided inputs to a proposal for an assessment on connectivity.

### Sustainable Boat-Based Marine Wildlife Watching

89. Decision 12.79 requested the ScC to collaborate with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Mediterranean and Black Seas and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and the Standing Working Group on Whale Watching established under the Conservation Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to develop a joint IWC-CMS Whale Watching Handbook providing guidance to the Parties on management of activities related to vessel-based cetacean watching. With financial support from the Government of the Principality of Monaco under the Migratory Species Champion Programme a joint IWC-CMS Whale Watching Handbook has been developed as a free online resource.

### Concerted and Cooperative Actions

90. In the context of the consolidation of the Concerted Action and Cooperative Action processes, Decision 12.103 requested the ScC to review the projects and initiatives already begun as Cooperative Actions under earlier COP decisions to determine whether the Cooperative Actions had been completed or should continue within the terms of the unified Concerted Actions mechanism.
91. The ScC had addressed the review at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of its Sessional Committee (ScC-SC3). The Sessional Committee noted that for the great majority of species designated for Cooperative Actions up until COP11, the designation had not been accompanied by an identification of conservation objectives and expected outcomes, and a timeframe for their achievement. After considerable debate, ScC-SC3 considered it impossible to undertake any meaningful review of the implementation of Cooperative Actions. It also noted that similar considerations were equally applicable for species designated for Concerted Actions before COP12. For all species designated for Concerted or Cooperative Actions before COP12, the Sessional Committee recommended that only those for which a Concerted Action proposal had been developed according to the guidelines provided by Resolution 12.28 and then endorsed by COP13 should be retained on the list of species designated for Concerted Actions for the triennium 2021-2023. The Sessional Committee's recommendations had been implemented in the run-up to COP13.

92. The Chair of the Scientific Council explained that he had also presented the views of the CMS constituency for consideration at the IPBES Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and had secured funding allowing the first workshop on animal culture to be held in Parma. He was hopeful that further support would be forthcoming to allow a second workshop to take place in 2020.
93. He concluded his comments by thanking the Chair of the StC, fellow Scientific Councillors and the Secretariat for their support during his period in office.

#### **9. Dates and Venue of Future Meetings of the Standing Committee**

94. The Acting Executive Secretary said that the timing of the intersessional meetings of the StC during the next triennium would be discussed at the COP. Because of the unusual circumstances of COP13 being held early in the year, some of the 2020 budget had been used in 2019. There were also a large number of meetings already scheduled for 2020. It was hoped that COP14 in 2023 would revert to the more usual timing of the fourth quarter. Consideration would be given to electronic meetings and a range of options would be presented to the COP.
95. The Chair suggested leaving open the possibility of holding back-to-back meetings of different bodies to reduce travel.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

96. The representative of France said that the European Union would be contacting Brazil with a view to merging the two proposals for adding the Smooth Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*) to Appendix II of the Convention.
97. The representative of South Africa pointed out that countries had different financial years, and this had implications for the timing of making payments when Parties were requested to pay their contributions in the first quarter of the year. She asked for the contact details of the appropriate person in the Secretariat to discuss the issuing of invoices.
98. Germany made an announcement regarding arrangements for that evening's reception at the premises of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety.

#### **11. Concluding Remarks**

99. After the customary expression of thanks to all those that had contributed to the successful organization and execution of the meeting, proceedings were declared closed at 17:10.