CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

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THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE
Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES

Agenda Item 1: Welcoming remarks

1. Welcoming participants to Tashkent, Alexandr Grigoryants (Uzbekistan) said that it was an honour for his country to host the meeting which was dedicated to the conservation of a unique animal of the steppes, which had already roamed the plains during the last ice age together with mammoths. The saiga antelope was endangered and those wishing to conserve it faced many challenges.

2. Stefan Priesner (UNDP) added his words of welcome as the representatives of one of the organizations sponsoring the meeting. UNEP was a key player in implementing biodiversity policies. The meeting had a busy and challenging agenda with important decisions to be made. It was important that conservation policies were not overshadowed by other agendas. An impressive coalition had formed in support of saiga conservation to address a variety of threats from habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, overexploitation of the animal for meat, hide and horns, invasive species, climate change and disease.

3. Mr. Priesner said that when he had visited the Ustiurt Plateau [western Uzbekistan] he had not seen any saiga but knew that these antelopes were a key element of this arid environment. Conservation in the region was made even more complex as a result of the Aral Sea disaster.

4. The countries of the world had just agreed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), two of which related to biodiversity – one for the terrestrial environment and another for the marine. In Uzbekistan the SDGs were reflected in a 5-year framework agreed with the Government and formed the basis for the work of UNDP in the country. One UNDP project concerned reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with oil and gas operations. Twelve amendments to legislation had been proposed to help offset the effects of the oil industry, to enlarge a nature reserve and fund more conservation personnel. It was hoped that the Government would agree to these changes and accept the principle underlying offsetting, for example that an equivalent area to that which was degraded should be restored.

5. UNDP had played an active role in Uzbekistan, being involved in the designation of the first reserve set up since the country's independence and in developing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Strong partnerships had been established which could be of benefit to saiga conservation.

6. Marco Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) also welcomed the participants but noted that the meeting started on a sad note because of the negative developments with the catastrophic losses in the die-off of saigas in what had been the largest population, which had seen until that point some encouraging growth. This

population in central Kazakhstan was now also endangered. In addition, most of the stock at a captive breeding centre in the Russian Federation had also been lost.

7. Mr. Barbieri warmly thanked the hosts and co-organizers of the meeting, the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the sponsors without whom this large international saiga meeting would not have been possible: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety of Germany, Frankfurt Zoological Society, NABU, UNEP Regional Office for Europe, UNDP Uzbekistan and US Forestry Service.

8. CMS was one of the oldest biodiversity treaties having come into force in 1983. The saiga antelope was one of the species to which the Convention dedicated considerable attention, and was assisted by a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which made their expertise available. More had been discovered about the causes of the die-off, although what triggered the event was still unclear. The Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would also have to address other animal health issues as well as the effects of burgeoning infrastructure.

9. Thomas de Meulenaer (CITES Secretariat) added his welcome to the participants and said that CITES had an interest in both sustainable use and conservation. The Saiga MOU provided a forum where CMS and CITES could cooperate and both Conventions were committed to assisting their Parties with implementing policies agreed at the international level. Within CITES 180 Parties had adopted policies consistent with the aims of the MOU and the CITES COP in 2016 would doubtless adopt more. Mr. de Meulenaer looked forward to the adoption by the meeting of a coherent and pragmatic five-year Work Programme and hoped that the necessary political support would be forthcoming to ensure its implementation. He too thanked the donors and UNDP for their support.

Agenda Item 2: Election of officers

10. Mr. Barbieri said that it was customary at meetings of instruments of the CMS Family to offer the chair to the Host Government. This had been discussed and agreed at a meeting of the Heads of Delegation and Mr. Grigoryants had agreed to serve. The Heads of Delegation had also agreed that Kazakhstan should serve as Vice-Chair.

11. These proposals were accepted by the meeting and Mr. Grigoryants assumed the chair.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule

12. The agenda and schedule had been circulated in advance. There were no suggestions for any amendments so both were adopted as presented in Documents UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.1/Rev.2 and Doc.2/Rev.2.

Agenda Item 4: Opening statements

13. The representative of Kazakhstan expressed his thanks to the meeting for electing him Vice-Chair. Especially after the die-off in central Kazakhstan in spring 2015, the meeting was topical and saiga conservation was attracting a lot of attention.

14. Mongolia wanted to see the conservation status of the saiga improve and was taking action to achieve this. There were now 14,000 saigas in the Mongolian population and anti-poaching units had been established.

15. The Russian Federation said saiga conservation needed more attention. Saigas were unique animals and their numbers had been reduced by several human factors. The agenda of the meeting included items requiring different conservation approaches. The Russian Federation was already active and the saiga was listed in the red book of the Republic of Kalmykia and is intended to be listed in the national red book of the Russian Federation. It was recognized that organized criminal groups were now poaching saigas, and as well as combating this threat, efforts were being made to restore a larger proportion of the animals' habitat. Saiga conservation needed to be conducted at the international level and the involvement of NGOs and Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) was welcome.

16. China was pleased to be participating in the meeting and thanked the organizers. A great deal was being done in China to protect saigas, complementing the efforts of the Range States. Laws regarding trade were being rigorously enforced and China would support the Range States and monitor domestic trade.

17. The Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), speaking also on behalf of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), said that the meeting was particularly important in the light of the 2015 mass die-off and the Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) would serve as a vital guide to the actions of the Range States and cooperating organizations.

18. The representative of Flora and Fauna International (FFI) stressed his organization's determination to do all in its power to assist.

19. The Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA) also thanked the organizers, commenting that the technical workshop held on the previous two days had been productive. The challenges ahead were daunting but the Range States, China and the partner organizations had the energy and commitment to succeed.

20. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) thanked the organizers for their invitation and expressed its willingness to contribute to the work of the meeting and the implementation of its decisions.

21. WWF Russia also expressed its thanks to the organizers. WWF worked closely with the FZS and was working with local communities and particularly children to encourage more conservation activities and discourage unsustainable hunting. Some new information was emerging suggesting that in some areas saiga numbers had increased in comparison with the previous year. The die-off had however been a major set-back and it was vital to start the recuperation work.

Agenda Item 5: Summary of the Technical Meeting (26-27 October)

22. E.J. Milner-Gulland (SCA) said that the technical workshop had seen excellent discussions. Summaries of the specialist sessions had been compiled would soon be available in both English and Russian (see Annex 7). Participants were invited to comment on the summaries as soon as possible, with a view to their finalization.

23. The workshop had also reviewed the draft Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) for 2016-2020, and made a number of suggestions for its revision. Those proposed amendments will be presented to the meeting under Agenda Item 10. The MTIWP provided a 5-year plan of action and served as a guide to Governments, NGOs and IGOs setting out the priorities upon which to concentrate.

24. The new National Report Forms were targeted at the Range States and as they were the ones that had to complete the form, their comments were invited, in particular regarding the length of the form, its complexity and its relevance. The proposed amendments will be presented to the meeting under Agenda Item 9.

25. The Secretariat mentioned that it was collecting all the PPT presentations provided by the speakers with a view to making them available to the meeting participants. The presentations can be downloaded from the CMS website at http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/third-meeting-signatories-saiga-mou-mos3 .

Agenda Item 6: Report of the Secretariat

26. The Vice-Chair presiding over the meeting at this point invited the Secretariat to make its report. Mr. Barbieri explained that the report covered a number of sub-items and invited Natalya Yakusheva (CMS Secretariat) to make the presentation. She referred to a series of documents: UNEP/CMS/Saiga/ MOS3/Doc.4 *the Report of the Secretariat*, UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.6 *Overview report on conservation status*, UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.2 *Status of Signatures to the MOU*, UNEP/CMS/ Saiga/MOS3/Inf.6 *Designated National Contact Point Form*, UNEP/CMS/Saiga/ MOS3/Inf.7 *List of Designated National Contact Points*, UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.19 *Resolution 11.24 The Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) and Programme of Work (2014-2020)* and UNEP/CMS/ Saiga/MOS3/Inf.20 *Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia*.

27. Ms. Yakusheva said that a workshop on Traditional Chinese Medicine had been held in China in 2010 in collaboration with CITES. Two further workshops had been held in Kazakhstan; one in 2011 on the implementation and coordination of the Saiga Antelope MOU and other CMS instruments for migratory ungulates in Kazakhstan and another in 2013 just dealing with the Saiga MOU.

28. In May 2015 the CMS Secretariat had helped coordinate the emergency mission sent to Kazakhstan in response to the die-off in Betpak-dala upon request of the Ministry of Agriculture.

29. An updated Joint Work Programme (JWP) for 2015-2020 between CMS and CITES had been agreed. The CMS Standing Committee had endorsed the JWP at its 42nd meeting in 2014 (UNEP/CMS/StC42/Doc.6.1). A joint post had also been established to help coordinate the work of the two Conventions; the officer had been recruited and was based at the CMS offices in Bonn since July 2015.

Agenda Item 6.1: Status of signatures

30. All five Range States were Signatories to the MOU. There were also a total of eight cooperating organizations that had signed the MOU and the German NGO NABU (Naturschutzbund Deutschland - Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union) had applied to become a formal cooperating organization too, which would bring the total number to nine (see agenda item 11).

Agenda Item 6.2: List of designated national contact points

31. All five Range States had designated a National Contact Point; the list with contact details could be found on the CMS website.

Agenda Item 6.3: Presentation and discussion of Resolution 11.24 the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) and its Programme of Work (POW 2014-2020)

32. CMS COP11 had adopted Resolution 11.24 on the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) and its accompanying Programme of Work (POW). CMS Parties had at COP11 created a staff position to coordinate the CAMI, to be based at the Bonn duty station. CAMI covered 14 Range States and 15 species (13 ungulates and 2 cats) and was intended to provide a framework for coherent coordination for MOUs and Action Plans in the region, given that barriers to migration, wildlife crime, habitat degradation and climate change were threats common to all the species. The separate MOUs and Action Plans would continue to exist as self-

standing instruments but would benefit from greater synergies. Like the MOU, CAMI was not restricted to Range States but was also open to other stakeholders.

Agenda Item 6.4: Presentation of the Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia

33. CMS COP11 had endorsed the document *Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia* concerning the effects of linear infrastructure such as roads, railways, pipelines and electricity cables on animal migration, an issue that had been of concern to Parties since the Convention's inception and had been discussed at both the COP and the Scientific Council.

34. Mongolia had been the subject of a case study submitted to the Scientific Council in 2011 and had taken the lead in implementing the guidelines as the first country to transpose them into national legislation. The guidelines required a series of actions from mitigating the effects of infrastructure, improving the planning and design of projects, carrying out assessments, monitoring and evaluation and adjusting existing installations.

35. In addition to new roads and railways Kazakhstan had a border fence along the frontier with Uzbekistan which was impeding migration of saigas.

Agenda Item 6.5: Any other matters

36. A preview of a video to be used for outreach and fundraising was shown.

Agenda Item 7: Reports on MOU implementation

Agenda Item 7.1: National reporting

37. **Kazakhstan** was a Signatory to the MOU and Party to a 2007 bilateral agreement with Turkmenistan and another dating from 2010 with Uzbekistan. The Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan had also been formally cooperating with the Russian Federation's Ministry of Natural Resources since 2012.

38. In the 1950s there had been 1.5 million saigas but harsh winters, disease and large-scale poaching had brought saigas to the brink of extinction with possibly as few as 22,000 animals left at one point. The National Saiga Conservation Service worked in collaboration with local authorities operating from 15 sub-regional centres, with anti-poaching action as one of their priorities. The inspectorate was active 24 hours a day and were using modern technology such as satellite tracking and camera traps. There were 80 inspectors responsible for red book species covering an area of 7 million hectares.

39. Poachers also had specialized vehicles and had no compunction in defying the law. Saigas were still being targeted by organized and well-equipped gangs with all-terrain vehicles, an arsenal of modern weapons and hi-tech communications and poachers also tried to impede the work of the inspectors and were beginning to turn their attention to the Ural population in western Kazakhstan. There had been 33 poaching cases in 2012, 46 in 2013, 71 in 2014 and 63 up to October in 2015. There had been 814 cases filed for breaches of environmental regulations.

40. The authorities had to rethink their conservation policies in view of poaching and the die-off. Across the 22 Protected Areas, patrols had to continue and more proactive action taken when intelligence was received. Different teams were working together on some raids and GPS tracking helped communication.

41. Cross-agency liaison among ministries, customs and local authorities improved efficiency, but unfortunately the poachers not only were better organized themselves but also were prepared to use weapons. Organized crime had become involved and officials were being bribed. One of the people detained when two trucks were stopped by a patrol was a police major; one of the others was on probation after being convicted of wildlife crime. The trucks had false number plates, and rifles, ammunition and saiga horns had been confiscated.

42. The judiciary often seemed to see poaching as a misdemeanour rather than a crime. The court system was slow to respond, did not confiscate equipment and was content to prosecute one member of the gang and not pursue the rest of the team.

43. Kazakhstan took conservation seriously, recognizing its key role with regard to saigas and aware that the country's international image was at stake.

44. The representative of **Mongolia** outlined some of the key activities undertaken in his country in the period 2011-2015. These included monitoring the population and ecological research and a field study conducted from 2008 to 2012. Survival rates for calves were estimated at 50 per cent, with 95 per cent of deaths occurring in the first two months of life, with the primary cause being predators (including foxes and raptors). Females' choice of calving sites seemed to be driven by the proximity to water and the incline of the terrain. Horn and hair samples had been analysed at the University of Tübingen and the isotopes meant that it was possible to identify the origin of the saiga which would be a useful tool against those illegally trading saiga horn.

45. A study of population abundance and distribution conducted in the summer and winter of 2014 had counted 243 groups with 1738 animals and 148 groups with 1934 animals respectively. Extrapolated this produced an overall population estimate of 14,869, this being the average of the summer and winter figures. Eight saigas had been captured and fitted with satellite collars. The collar batteries had an expected life of one and a half years. The animals' movements had been tracked and plotted on a map with the route of a tarmacked road that was under construction superimposed, illustrating the potential impact. A genetic study by the University of Copenhagen would inform the continuing debate over saiga taxonomy.

46. **The Russian Federation** was using drones, satellites and groundwork to conduct surveys of the Pre-Caspian population. The information derived from this work was not comprehensive but the population was in a critical state and was declining. It had been inscribed in the red book of the Republic of Kalmykia. Protected Areas covered 40 per cent of the range but this was not enough to halt the decline and corridors needed to be established.

47. In 2012 a bilateral agreement had been signed with Kazakhstan (UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.21.1), *inter alia* setting up a working group for which a workshop had been organized.

48. Within the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Natural Resources was working with partners such as the All-Russian Research Institute, the Russian Academy of Science's Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution (IEE RAS) and the Stepnoi Sanctuary and at the regional level.

49. The saiga enjoyed total protection and hunting it was illegal. There was some illegal trade so it was necessary to work through CITES with other Range States and consumer countries. The first arrest under the new regulations had been made in September 2015 after 50 horns had been seized and the case was going to court.

50. There were three centres for captive breeding and awareness-raising programmes were being implemented to educate local communities.

51. The challenges were poaching and agreeing standards for monitoring methodologies and the priorities for the next five years were to employ rangers to protect the herds and developing monitoring techniques.

52. As there was no representative of **Turkmenistan** present, the Secretariat referred participants to the written report that had been submitted (UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10.4).

53. **Uzbekistan** reported that saiga was a transboundary migrant and was protected by a presidential decree. Bilateral arrangements had been negotiated with Kazakhstan and an agreement was in place between the relevant authorities of the two countries (UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.21.2). In Uzbekistan the specialist agency was the State Committee for Nature Protection whose inspectors were equipped with all-terrain vehicles for anti-poaching patrols. There was a strong regulatory framework and fines for poaching could reach US$2,500 for local people and double that for foreigners.

54. In the fight against illegal trade, various agencies were working together and had seized unregistered vehicles and weapons.

55. There were plans to extend the Saigachy reserve near the Aral Sea so that it would reach the border with Kazakhstan and cover over 1 million hectares.

56. The SCA was also active in the country and was cooperating closely with the Government on awareness-raising campaigns for local communities living near saiga habitat.

Agenda Item 7.2: Non-Signatory States reporting

57. In **China** the CITES management authority had organized a workshop with the Traditional Chinese Medicine industry in conjunction with both CMS and CITES Secretariats in 2010. The State Forestry Administration had established a fund for captive breeding and had obtained animals from zoos in Germany and the USA and there was now a stock of nearly 200 saigas at a captive breeding centre at Wuwei, Xinjiang.

58. The authorities were using a range of technologies to combat illegal trade, such as scanners and x-ray machines and were targeting suspect shipments. The State Forestry Administration had conducted several operations - Alarm Bell, Skynet, Swords and Cobra III – in cooperation with international partners.

59. Figures indicated that the domestic market for saiga products was declining but saiga horns were still being smuggled and there had been several confiscations of shipments originating from the Russian Federation and Singapore. The leading Chinese internet companies (the equivalents of Google and of Facebook) had signed a "zero tolerance" agreement to stop illegal trade on the internet and the State postal and parcel delivery services were cooperating, too.

60. A licensing system for the industry to allow thorough supervision and regulation and to manage the use of raw materials and set quotas for wildlife products entering the market was in place. Approved products received a special mark. A database had been set up for materials derived from endangered wildlife.

61. Law enforcement was being improved through the use of modern technology and effectiveness could be enhanced through cooperation with the Range States. It would be helpful if all those involved in conservation efforts could have the opportunity of swapping notes and exchanging ideas.

62. In China, questions were being asked about the fate of the horns of dead animals from the captive breeding centre and whether these might be made available. The Chinese Traditional Medicine industry was

willing to fund captive breeding but needed to have partners to contact to develop their proposals. The restrictions on the export of animal could be relaxed to allow new blood in the captive stock.

Agenda Item 7.3: Report of the CITES Secretariat

63. Thomas de Meulenaer (CITES Secretariat) said that two saiga species were recognized by CITES (as was also the case under CMS) and both were listed on Appendix II, meaning that international trade was allowed if it was legal, sustainable and traceable through CITES certification. Poaching had to be dealt with nationally.

64. The Range States had banned all export of saiga products (live animals, hides, horns, meat and blood samples), so now trade was restricted to consumer countries presumably using stockpiles. Only Turkmenistan among the Range States was not a Party to CITES and the Secretariat did not have contact details of the authority that would deal with the Convention.

65. CITES COP13 in 2004 agreed special measures for saiga and these measures complemented and supported the CMS MOU. COP14 in 2007 renewed the mandate as did the most recent COP in 2013 in Bangkok. Range States in implementing the MTIWP were meeting their obligations under both CMS and CITES and they were asked to communicate their needs to CITES as some funds were available. No requests had been received from saiga Range States. The CITES Secretariat had a mandate to assist.

66. China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Viet Nam as consumer states were also under an obligation to implement parts of the MTIWP and were required to report on the actions that they were taking. They had also been requested to contribute to *in situ* conservation, to reduce consumption and research into alternatives for saiga horn.

67. A workshop had been held in Urumqi, China, in September 2010 and funds had been provided for anti-poaching actions and work with local communities.

68. With regard to the question of what should be done with horns from animals that had died of natural causes, that decision rested with the Range States and the CITES Parties.

69. Mr. de Meulenaer noted that China monitored its stocks with a sophisticated system. Singapore had reported that it had 20 tonnes of horns in its stockpile and might be able to learn from China's experience.

70. UNEP/WCMC had been commissioned to do an analysis of published trade data and would report to the CITES Standing Committee and the COP in Johannesburg in 2016. The deadline for submission of documents to the COP was 27 April 2016.

71. Legal trade of saiga products had been declining according to the reports submitted to CITES. In the period 2000-2013 horns the equivalent of 118,000 animals had been recorded. The main importers were now China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, while the main exporters were Japan and the Hong Kong SAR. The majority of the trade was in whole horns, horn cuttings and medicines containing horns.

72. Mr. de Meulenaer requested details of the illegal trade mentioned in some of the oral reports as he had been unaware of some of them. Various seizures had taken place in Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia and Uzbekistan. In China seizures included one incident involving 296kg of saiga horn from Kazakhstan in 2014. In Japan five seizures included one of 11 horns from China in 2013.

73. With the revised MTIWP 2015-2020 Range States needed to demonstrate their commitment, and cooperation among the Range States and consumer countries was essential. The joint work being done by

China and Mongolia was a model that others might wish to follow. Trade had to be controlled, the stockpiles appropriately managed, and the methods of identification, sourcing and ageing of horn improved. One problem was that in medicine the horn was not readily identifiable, so it would probably be more fruitful to concentrate on raw horn. Another was that Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) had not found a suitable alternative to saiga horn from other wild or domestic animals and practitioners were reducing the dosage to the bare minimum to help conserve stocks. Patients were moving towards western-style medicines but even with a 10 per cent market share, TCM would have over 100 million customers.

Agenda Item 7.4: Reports of Co-operating Organizations

74. Paul Hotham (Flora and Fauna International) said that his organization was working on the Ustiurt Plateau on saigas in partnership with others. FFI had four main objectives: to improve ecological and social understanding; to reinforce the capacity of state agencies; to engage with and support local communities and improve their lives; and to engage with the private sector to mitigate the impact of its activities. To improve capacity a transboundary event had been held for rangers and an inter-school football tournament had been organized. A mobile environment resource centre (MERC) had toured the region and four sniffer dogs originally deployed against narcotics had been retrained to work on saiga horn, making their first detections after only two months. Progress had been made on transboundary work and a better understanding of saiga movements had been gained.

75. Five years – the period of the MTIWP – was not enough to cover the Ustiurt area given its vast size. The main issues to be tackled were the border fence and illegal trade, and there was no adequate policy framework for dealing with landscape-scale actions. More support from local communities was needed to address poaching which was causing the population to decline; it had fallen to 1,200 but this was still enough to make recovery possible.

76. FFI would continue to work with the Kazakh Government and the ACBK, maintain existing partnerships and develop new ones and provide trained sniffer dogs. It would also contact the business community to open their eyes to the damage they were doing.

77. Steffen Zuther (FZS) said that the organization had been active in Kazakhstan since 2002 and involved in the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI) since 2006, working with its local partner the ACBK. The ADCI was a long-term programme dealing with flora, fauna and people, and one of its concerns was to establish migration corridors, a new category recognized in national law, in the areas between the existing and planned Protected Areas in central Kazakhstan.

78. Training and equipment were being provided to the authorities, but unfortunately the poachers were keeping pace. FZS was also working on new options for wildlilfe-friendly railway crossings for saigas, improving aerial census techniques and deploying satellite telemetry. Work with local communities included visiting schools.

79. Looking to the future, FZS would continue its involvement with the ADCI, working with local people, encouraging better law enforcement, the sustainable use of wildlife and the deployment of telemetry.

80. Ms. Milner-Gulland (SCA) said that the Alliance, which was registered as a charity in the UK, had been a signatory of the MOU since 2010. It was one of the NGOs charged with technical coordination of the MOU (see agenda item 7.5).

81. The SCA had been running a small grants programme since 2008 and applicants had to follow a relatively straightforward process with short forms in both English and Russian. The eligibility criteria required projects to involve saigas in the wild and be related to the MTIWP. Grants were given in the range of US$2,000 to US$20,000, but this could not be put towards salaries and the grants could not be used as

matching or part funding. In total US$100,000 had been dispersed to 29 projects in 5 countries, covering research, education and animal protection.

82. Anti-poaching excellence awards were also given to recognize those in the frontline who would not often be seen at conferences or symposia. Another award was given to young conservation leaders as an encouragement to the next generation of activists. The winners of the awards were chosen by a jury made up of trustees of the Alliance and selected experts and the candidates had to be nominated. Choosing the winners was often difficult and the jurors took into account whether the nominee had overcome a particular challenge or had done something innovative.

83. SCA was working with children and local people with a focus on Uzbekistan, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan and it was planned to build a network of teachers and conservationists to work across borders. Material aimed at children included cartoons, stickers, posters and quizzes were distributed and at one school a mural had been painted.

84. Priority actions were devised for each country tailor-made for local needs. In Uzbekistan, the main activities were education, support for the government, conservation and research, an embroidery initiative providing alterative livelihoods for women and establishing local monitoring networks. In the Russian Federation the focus was on the Stepnoi/Tinguta Sanctuary, in Kazakhstan on working with the ACBK, in Mongolia helping young scientists and customs officers and in China on conducting market surveys and training.

85. The SCA and Imperial College London had been doing opinion and attitude surveys on and off since 2006. People were positive about saigas and did not want to lose them. It was generally agreed that poaching for horn was wrong but many people said that they would still eat saiga meat. The representative of Mongolia said that surveys conducted in that country had produced similar results, but children were pressurizing their parents not to kill saigas.

Agenda Item 7.5: MOU coordination

86. Carlyn Samuel (SCA) explained how the alliance and the ACBK were working on the Saiga Resource Centre (SRC) which was being funded by CMS and had been launched a few years previously. It was an online resource aimed specifically at conservation practitioners which appeared in four languages with comprehensive coverage in English and Russian (the Chinese and Kazakh pages were being built up). The SRC was a searchable repository and included an archive of Saiga News in six languages. The website was being constantly improving with bugs fixed, a better lay-out and Google analytics.

87. Alena Chukhatina (ACBK) described the specialist resource section of the SRC which was a platform for those working on saiga. She urged people to use it, to add further material and spread the word that the facility existed. Registration only took three minutes and login passwords would be generated. So far 300 documents had been loaded and more would follow. The education section was being built up, pages in Mongolian were being developed and the search function was being improved. The site would further improve with more people using and populating it. There were also plans to add an *Ask the Expert* section.

88. Elena Bykova (SCA) said that Saiga News was an e-publication which had started in 2005 and had gone from strength to strength and now had more pictures and a wealth of information. It was produced in six languages. The editorial board came from across the species' range and the UK. In some countries editions were printed for distribution and copies were taken to suitable conferences as a convenient means of highlighting the plight of saigas.

89. There was an area for comments and forums where arguments could be exchanged over issues of controversy or importance (such as the taxonomic split and the May 2015 die-off). Saiga News was also a

means for people to keep abreast of developments and stay in touch, given that the Meetings of the Signatories occurred only every five years.

90. A new rubric had been started – saiga heroes – with biographies of people playing a crucial role in saiga conservation or worked in schools or for the customs service. It also gave such people the opportunity of sharing their ideas and experiences. It also published the results of young scientists' research. Saiga News aimed to be a good quality publication, with high editorial standards and it was well received by its audience.

Agenda Item 8: Update and review of the conservation status of saiga within the agreement area

91. Mr. Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) called on Ms. Milner-Gulland to present the review, explaining that paragraph 6 of the MOU required the production and presentation of such a report. On this occasion, the Secretariat had received a voluntary contribution from Germany which had allowed the work to be contracted to the IUCN Species Survival Commission and SCA. The Secretariat's aim was to have the review, elements of which had been discussed in depth at the technical workshop, adopted by the Meeting.

Agenda Item 8.1: Saiga antelope conservation status within the agreement area

92. Ms. Milner-Gulland introduced that portion of the Overview Report addressing the conservation status of the saiga antelope. The relevant documents for this agenda item were: UNEP/CMS/Saiga/ MOS3/Doc.6 *Overview report on conservation status*, UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.14.1/Rev.2 *Compilation of Project Reports (English),* UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.14.2/Rev.1 *Compilation of Project Reports (Russian)* and UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.15 *Programme of the Saiga Antelope Technical Workshop.*

93. It was explained that although CMS and CITES used a taxonomic nomenclature recognizing *Saiga borealis* as a separate species [Wilson, D.E. & Reeder, D.M. (2005) Mammal species of the World. A taxonomic and geographic reference. 3rd ed. Johns Hopkins University Press], the authors had preferred to follow the taxonomy recognized by IUCN in the report.

94. Given the uncertainties about the estimates of the number of saiga that had died during the mass mortality event in May 2015 in the Betpak-dala population in central Kazakhstan, it was agreed to cite the lowest definite number known calculated from the carcasses buried. The figure included in paragraph 11 of the Overview Report would therefore be >150,044.

95. Table 1 which showed populations of saiga based on information collected for the 2015 CMS MOU meeting, compared with the same information for the previous two meetings was the most frequently cited element of the report. The footnote made clear that the years in the heading referred to the date of the Meeting of the Signatories and the figures in the columns were the most recent population estimates (hence Mongolia's 2014 census figures appeared under 2015).

96. Under the Ural population, a minor change was made to paragraph16 adding a reference to the Orenburg Reserve and paragraph 17 had been totally revised with details of the May 2010 die-off which claimed 11,920 animals and the smaller die-off the following year in the same location in which about 400 saiga died but 4,000 had been unaffected. The population had recovered by 2014 and had seen a further increase in 2015. In paragraph 18, figures for the number of animals kept at the small captive breeding facility linked to Zhangirzhan Agrarian-Technical University.

97. No changes had been proposed to the section concerning the Ustiurt population (paragraphs 19 to 23).

98. Regarding the Betpak-dala population, a reference was added to national NGOs (in addition to international ones), a new paragraph 26 was added concerning monitoring during the calving season. More text was added to former paragraph 26 regarding the near 100% mortality in the Turgai and Tengiz populations (and presumably also in the 11 other sites) with live animals seen presumed to belong to other unaffected groups.

99. Paragraph 28 had additional opening text stressing how unusual it was for there to be 100% mortality in such disease outbreaks suggesting a complex interplay of various factors, which might include anthropogenic influence or extraordinary environmental stressors.

100. For the Mongolia population/subspecies, mention was made of the annual population assessments that had been carried out since 2012 and the results of the isotope study confirming the distinctiveness of the population.

101. A reference was also made to the mobile anti-poaching unit that had been supported by NGOs but which had been forced to cease operations due to lack of resources.

Agenda Item 8.2: Status of implementation

102. In Section 3 on the implementation of the MTIWP, a correction was made to a passage suggesting that the Mongolian population had been excluded from a series of CITES-led meetings because of the taxonomic reference used by that Convention and CMS.

103. An additional paragraph was inserted referring to the first transboundary meeting of rangers from Range States with representatives from Kazakhstan, Mongolia and the Russian Federation which was held in 2014.

104. Minor changes were made correcting the reference to the number of sniffer dogs deployed and adding wording suggested by the Russian Federation concerning non-invasive counting method using high resolution satellite images.

105. In paragraph 52 (formerly 49) a reference was added to the 2014 seizure in China of 296 kg horn from Kazakhstan.

106. No or only minimal changes were made to the sections on captive breeding, threats, education and awareness, ecological studies and priority actions.

107. Overall, it appeared that there was generally a good understanding of the status of saigas and their conservation needs, a great deal of work was being done (some at the international level), poachers were being pursued and taken to court and more protected areas were being declared with ecological corridors being identified in Kazakhstan and the Saigachy Reserve in Uzbekistan.

108. On the negative side, poaching still occurred throughout the range, monitoring methods were inconsistent and their application sometimes of dubious quality, the Ustiurt and Pre-Caspian populations were still declining, infrastructure was preventing migration and disease could have devastating effects. Concerning captive breeding, time needed to be invested in developing best practice and stud books, and currently none of the centres had enough numbers to be viable. The transboundary populations also faced specific problems such as border fences.

109. Mr. Hotham (FFI) pointed out that before May 2015 the largest population (Betpak-dala, Kazakhstan) had been growing but the 2015 die-off had thrown conservation efforts back to square one. The strategy had been too dependent on one key population and it seemed that a broader approach should be adopted to spread

the risk. It was clear though that the conservation efforts at Betpak-dala were bearing fruit and other populations might benefit from similar attention.

110. Richard Kock (Royal Veterinary College) said that looking at the possible impacts of disease, each population was so small that a single outbreak could wipe out all the animals. The May 2015 die-off showed that one large population in a broad landscape could be lost.

111. The revised version of the Overview Report is attached to this report as Annex 4.

Agenda Item 9: Review of the updated National Report Format

112. Mr. Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) said that Ms. Milner-Gulland (SCA) and the IUCN Antelope Specialist Group had undertaken the revision of the National Report format. The format had been discussed at the second Meeting of the Signatories.

113. All Range States had completed the form for MOS3, so had experience of how easy it was to fill in. Comments regarding its coverage and appropriateness were invited. Ms Milner-Gulland pointed out the few changes that had been made. Suggestions that infrastructure should be a separate sub-item and not included under *others,* and adding a requirement to attach a CITES non-detriment finding if applicable and surveillance of diseases under monitoring were all agreed.

114. The revised version of the National Report Format is attached to this report as Annex 6.

Agenda Item 10: Review and adoption of 2016-2020 MTIWP

115. Mr. Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) said that the MTIWP had been reviewed in sections over the past two days in the technical workshop. The MTIWP had existed in conjunction with the MOU from the outset. He proposed that the meeting review the changes proposed and invited Ms Milner-Gulland to lead the process. Ms. Milner-Gulland requested that participants consider not just the content of the MTIWP but also reflect on the priority attached to each action, reminding the meeting that the timescale was categorized A for immediate and B for medium term and urgency was rated on a scale of 1: urgent, 2: important and 3: useful. It was also suggested that in the final version the actions would appear in order of importance.

116. Under implementation a change was made to action 1.4 adding reference to the organizations charged with coordinating the MOU, without specifying that this meant SCA and ACBK under current arrangements.

117. Under action 1.8 it was agreed to add a reference to protocols for routine monitoring for disease in addition to protocols for emergency actions in the event of an outbreak.

118. Two further actions were added, one relating to encouraging Range States to coordinate their research and monitoring to maximize synergies and another to ensure that all saiga populations had appropriate investment to ensure that overall goal of the MOU was achieved.

119. With regard to combating poaching, it was agreed that strategies should focus on the population level (including transboundary populations). As well as establishing new anti-poaching units, existing ones needed to be strengthened. It was also recognized that local inspectors might face pressures not to pursue cases and that their prestige and capacity to carry out their duties should be enhanced.

120. Under sustainable use, a reference was added to financial support in the final action regarding *in situ* conservation and the Asian medicine industry.

121. The title of the fourth section of the MTIWP was amended to *Work with Local People* (changed from *Human Factors*).

122. In action 4.1 a change was made adding that livelihood improvement projects should be linked to conservation and in action 4.3 a direct reference to industry was added to the stakeholders whose involvement should be strengthened. Livestock was added to the action point on sustainable rangeland use and cohabitation.

123. There was a discussion about whether to retain a proposed amendment from Stefan Michel (NABU) about examining the possibility for sustainably using some populations. It was pointed out that this was the long-term vision of the MTIWP (see Annex 5) and therefore it did not need to be reiterated under a specific point. Other opinions were that in the medium-term it was inconceivable that populations would have recovered sufficiently to consider any use to be sustainable. After a *tour de table* of the Range States it was apparent that none supported adding wording even about exploring the possibility of sustainable use.

124. Section 6 on Habitat was retitled *Habitat and environmental factors* which was done to encompass climate change, references to which was added in actions 6.1 and 6.2. Action 6.2 was also amended with the addition of remote sensing as an example of appropriate technology for monitoring movements. Under action 6.3 it was agreed to explore the possibility of using the SRC to facilitate archiving and exchange of information recorded on GIS. The potential for expanding Protected Areas was added to action 6.4. Reference was made to the internationally recognized standards IFC1 and IFC6 in supporting authorities to ensure that all infrastructure projects were subject to full impact assessment (Strategic Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Asessments). Action point 6.7 was amended to reflect the fact that it was unlikely that border fences would be removed but might be altered to allow wildlife to pass through more easily.

125. Under *Protected Areas* (Section 7) action 7.2 was amended slightly with the addition of a reference to saiga migration and a new action was added relating to the establishment of ecological corridors.

126. Under Section 8 (*Monitoring*) action 8.1 on carrying out annual population counts subsumed action point 8.4 on ensuring a time series and reference was made to modern non-invasive techniques. The need to harmonize methodologies had been covered in action 1.12. Action 8.2 was modified with the addition of mortality and movement patterns, age structure, predators and competitors. Amendments were also made to the final three actions in this section, all relatively minor.

127. The only changes to Section 9 (*Captive breeding*) were the addition of Uzbekistan to action point 9.2 and the additional wording relating to study tours in action 9.4 on the exchange of information.

128. Sections 10 to 14 dealt with population specific measures and concerned respectively the Pre-Caspian, the Ustiurt, the Ural, the Betpak-dala and Mongolian populations. A general point for consideration with regard to each population was whether there was a general applicability for any of the actions identified, bearing in mind that the level of priority might be different from one region to another. It was agreed that a more general action point be added to the implementation section at the beginning of the MTIWP.

<u>Pre-Caspian</u>

129. New actions were added regarding the setting up of a working group under the Ministry of Natural Resources and non-invasive monitoring and Russian Federation suggested downgrading the timescale from A to B. Text relating to the comparability of methodology was deleted from the action related to conducting regular, scientifically robust assessments of abundance and distribution.

130. Protected Areas were removed from action 10.3 as these were covered elsewhere, meaning that this action only referred to breeding centres and other institutions. The creation of new centres was foreseen and methods should be developed for reintroducing and acclimatizing saigas to the wild.

131. The action point regarding improving the effectiveness of law enforcement was amended with the addition of the use of modern methods, and two new actions were added, one on research into the distribution, migration, population structure, genetic variation, habitat and monitoring of saigas and another on optimizing the network of federal and regional Protected Areas taking into account future saiga population expansion and changes to the range.

Ustiurt

132. Under action 12.1 inspectors and customs officers were added to the list of those who should be involved in transboundary cooperation. In recognition that research into the seasonal distribution of saigas had been carried out, the action point was amended to urge that this work should continue. Turkmenistan was added to the countries affected.

133. The proposed amendment to action 12.3 to add exploring the possibility of sustainable use of saiga by local communities to provide additional incentives for conservation was deleted in the light of the earlier discussion (see *Work with Local People* above) with participants pointing out that the population level was too low. Poachers could still drive populations to extinction despite the best conservation efforts, and it was necessary to persuade local communities to come on board. This approach worked with other species in other parts of the world and the concept was also covered in section 4 of the MTIWP (see action 4.1).

134. In action 12.4 ecological connectivity was added with the southern Ustiurt mentioned as an example, in action 12.5 existing multilateral cooperation agreements should be strengthened, in action 12.6 the public should be granted access to information on planning and implement measures for mitigation and compensation and developers should be required to carry out mitigation measures under action 12.7.

Ural

135. A new action point was added regarding carrying out research into factors predisposing the population to mass mortality from disease.

Betpak-dala

136. In action 13.1 agricultural development was added to the list of factors with a bearing on the future needs of saigas. Incentives for rangers and higher fines for poaching were added to action 13.2.. Action 13.5 was amended and now referred to the development and implementation of a long-term research programme on saiga diseases and an action point on continuing and extending the monitoring of the health of the population (especially at calving time) was added.

Mongolia

137. The wording of action 14.5 was amended with the addition of a reference to the updated range, genetics and saiga health and the priority category increased from 2B to 1A.

138. It was agreed to reorder the numbering of all measures within the MTIWP 2016-2020, sorted by timescale and then urgency. The final version of the MTIWP 2016-2020 is attached to this report as Annex 5.

Agenda Item 11: Signing ceremony

139. Mr. Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) invited Christiane Röttger (NABU) to the podium. He explained that the MOU was not confined to Range States but had a provision that allowed NGOs to sign as cooperating organizations. These organizations commit themselves to actively supporting the implementation of the saiga MOU in the long-term. The German NGO, NABU, had expressed an interest in signing and the Range States had been informed, as their consent was required as a new cooperating organization signing the MOU constituted a material change to the instrument that required the consensus of all Signatory States. None of the Range States had objected so NABU was welcomed to sign.

140. Ms. Röttger (NABU) after thanking the hosts and the other organizers of the meeting, explained that NABU was doing a great deal of education work in the region in cooperation with Governments. Magazines with cartoons were being produced for children living near saiga habitat and work was also being done to combat the poaching of snow leopards, to encourage transboundary cooperation and to foster sustainable landscape management. NABU wished to step up its work on saigas, hence its desire to sign the MOU. Ms Röttger promised that NABU would be active in meetings and in the field, using its network of partners and donors.

Agenda Item 12: Date and venue of the next Meeting of the Signatories

141. The Chair said that three of the five Range States, namely Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan, had already hosted a Meeting of the Signatories and as Turkmenistan was not present, he invited the Russian Federation to take the floor.

142. Dmitri Belanovich, the head of the Russian delegation, suggested that the 4th Meeting of the Signatories be held in Astrakhan in 2020 to coincide with the Day of the Caspian Sea and the Russian-Kazakhstan bilateral meeting.

143. This invitation was greeted with enthusiasm by the meeting.

Agenda Item 13: Any other business

144. The Chair invited comments on the format of the meeting and in particular the practice of holding the Meeting of the Signatories in conjunction with a technical workshop.

145. Mr. Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) explained that this had been the format adopted since the MOU started, but if any changes were thought desirable, the Secretariat suggested that agreeing revisions should be done in advance of planning the next meeting. The Technical Workshop served the role normally played by an advisory committee, as no such body had been established under the MOU. The timing of the Technical Workshop corresponded to the former practice of the parent Convention, the Scientific Council of which used to meet immediately before the Conference of the Parties. There seemed to be some confusion regarding the roles of the Technical Workshop and the Meeting of the Signatories, also triggered by the fact that participants in the two meetings were mostly the same in Tashkent. While this resulted in a degree of duplication, however essentially the arrangements seemed to work.

146. Til Dieterich (Baku State University) said that given the need for an interdisciplinary approach to saiga conservation he would have preferred more scientific content in the technical workshop, especially in the light of the die-off. It was suggested from the Russian delegation that there should be a dedicated scientific session before the technical workshop.

147. Mr. Kock (Royal Veterinary College) agreed and said that the technical workshop could provide a forum for comparing notes and agreeing standardized protocols.

148. Anna Lushchekina (Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences) suggested that the CMS Secretariat should circulate a questionnaire through National Contact Points to seek proposals on how to improve meetings and conservation work with feedback from Range States and consumer countries.

149. Yingjie Qiu (China Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine) suggested that other consumer countries such as Japan, Singapore and Vietnam should be invited to future meetings. The Secretariat pointed out that these and other consumer countries had been invited, but only China had accepted. The other countries would continue to be invited and they might also be approached through other channels such as the CITES Secretariat. The Chair suggested that Signatories use their own diplomatic representation to try to persuade other consumer countries to participate.

150. Ms. Milner-Gulland (SCA) considered the technical workshop to be very useful and a fundamental component contributing to the success of the MOU.

151. Uzbekistan said that the theories needed to be backed up with practical work which lay at the heart of conservation efforts.

152. The Secretariat noted the comments, in particular the idea of having a scientific session, although the resource implications of extending the meeting would have to be considered, and of circulating a questionnaire. It was however clear that participants thought that the technical workshop was useful, although some adjustments might be necessary to reduce duplication.

153. An animated film was shown emphasizing the need to balance development with conservation. The film had soundtracks in English, Russian, Uzbek and Karakalpak and could be viewed on the SCA Youtube account.

Agenda Item 14: Closure of the Meeting

154. Mr. Barbieri (CMS Secretariat) noted that the three main objectives of the meeting, namely the adoption of the overview report, agreement on the revised format of the National reports and approval of the revised MTIWP, had been accomplished. The next task was to implement as much of the Plan as possible in the intervening five years before the 4th Meeting of the Signatories in 2020 in Astrakhan.

155. He expressed his sincere thanks to Ms. Milner-Gulland, who had made a major contribution to the technical documents tabled at the meeting and who had taken charge of revising the drafts, to the hosts, to the sponsors, to other organizations that had assisted, to the interpreters and to the local support staff.

156. Ms. Yakusheva (CMS Secretariat) said that the final versions of all the main documents would be posted on the Saiga MOU pages of the CMS website in English and Russian as soon as possible.

157. The Chair said that the past four days had been fruitful and produced good outcomes. After adding his thanks, he declared the meeting closed.

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CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

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Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

AGENDA

1. Welcoming remarks

2. Election of officers

3. Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule

4. Opening statements

5. Summary of the Technical Meeting (26-27 October)

6. Report of the Secretariat
   - 6.1. Status of signatures
   - 6.2. List of designated national contact points
   - 6.3. Presentation and discussion of Resolution 11.24 The Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) and its Programme of Work (POW 2014-2020)
   - 6.4. Presentation of the Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia
   - 6.5. Any other matters

7. Reports on MOU implementation
   - 7.1. National reporting
   - 7.2. Non-Signatory States reporting
   - 7.3. Report of the CITES Secretariat
   - 7.4. Reports of Co-operating Organizations
   - 7.5. MOU coordination

8. Update and review of the conservation status of saiga within the agreement area
   - 8.1. Saiga antelope conservation status within the agreement area
   - 8.2. Status of implementation

9. Review of the updated National Report Format

10. Review and adoption of 2016-2020 MTIWP

11. Signing ceremony

12. Next Meeting of the Signatories

13. Any other business

14. Closure of the meeting

CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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FINAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.1/Rev.2		Agenda
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.2/Rev.2		Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.3/Rev.4		List of Documents
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.4		Report of the Secretariat
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.6		Overview report on conservation status
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.7/Rev.1		Draft Medium Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope (2016-2020)
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Doc.8/Rev.1		Draft updated National Report Format
Information Documents		
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.1		Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.2		Status of Signatures to the Memorandum of Understanding on Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.3		National Report Format
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.4		Project Reporting Template
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.5		Sample Letter of Credentials
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.6		Designated National Contact Point Form
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.7		List of Designated National Contact Points
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.8		Report of the Second Meeting of the Signatories, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 7-10 September 2010
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.9		Medium Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope (2011-2015)
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10		National Reports from Signatories
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10.1/Rev .1		National Report from Kazakhstan
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10.2		National Report from Mongolia
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10.3		National Report from the Russian Federation
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10.4		National Report Turkmenistan

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.10.5		National Report from Uzbekistan
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.13		Reports from Co-operating Organizations
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.13.1		Report from ACBK
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.13.2		Report from SCA
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.14.1/Rev.2		Compilation of Project Reports (English only)
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.14.2/Rev.1		Compilation of Project Reports (Russian only)
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.15		Programme of the Saiga Antelope Technical Workshop
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.17		CMS Convention Text
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.18		CMS Appendices
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.19		Resolution 11.24 The Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) and Programme of Work (2014-2020)
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.20		Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.21		Bilateral agreements between saiga range states
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.21.1		Bilateral agreement between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.21.2		Bilateral agreement between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.22		Reports from consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.22.1		Report from Japan
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.22.2		Reports from Malaysia
UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Inf.22.3		Report from Singapore

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Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

State Delegations
Range states

KAZAKHSTAN

Mr. Askar Abdrakhmanov
Chief Expert
Wildlife Management and Hunting
Committee of Forestry and Fauna
Orynbor 8, 010000 Astana
Republic of Kazakhstan
Tel: (+7 7172) 749922
Mobile: (+7 70) 12991205
E-mail: askar3110@gmail.comz;

Mr. Yuriy Grachyov
Leading Researcher
Institute of Zoology
Ministry of Education and Science
93, Al-Farabi, Almaty
Republic of Kazakhstan
Tel: (+7 727) 2935768
Mobile: (+7 70) 12257295
E-mail: institut_zoology@mail.ru

MONGOLIA

Mr. Bayasgalan Amgalan
Species Officer
Environment and Natural Resources Administration Department
Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism
Government building-II, United Nation's Street 5/2
Ulaanbaatar-210646, Mongolia
Tel: (+976 5) 1266426
Mobile: (+976 9) 9124640
E-mail: bayasgalan@mne.gov.mn;
bayasgalana@gmail.com;

Mr. Badamjav Lkhagvasuren
CMS Scientific Councilor
Mammalian Ecology Laboratory
Institute of Biology
Jukov ave. 77, Ulaanbaatar 201351
Mongolia
Tel: (+976) 11453583
Fax: (+976 9) 9167922
E-mail: lkhagvazeer@gmail.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Dmitry Belanovich
Head of Department
Department of State Politics and Regulation Environment
Ministry of natural resources and environment,
4/6 B.Gruzinskaya st, 123995Moscow,
Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 499) 2545992
E-mail: belanovich@mnr.gov.ru;

Ms Olga Kharkova
Deputy Head of Department
Department of Regulation of the forestry and land relations in the field of protected areas and wildlife conservation
Ministry of natural resources and environment
4/6 B.Gruzinskaya st., 123995, Moscow
Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 499) 7242952
Mobile: (+7 9) 096376589
E-mail: olga-kharkova@yandex.ru;

Mr. Anton Mezhnev
Advisor
State Policy and Regulation of Hunting Management / Hunting Management
Ministry of natural resources and environment
4/6 B.Gruzinskaya str., 123995Moscow
Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 499) 254 11 29
Mobile: (+7 9) 194118554
E-mail: amezhnev@mail.ru;

Mr. Rozhnov Viacheslav
Director
Laboratory of Behaviour and Behavioural Ecology of Mammals
A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution RAS
33 Leninsky prosp., Moscow, 119071,
Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 495) 9547305
Mobile: (+7 9) 161378661
E-mail: rozhnov.v@gmail.com

UZBEKISTAN

Mr. Alexandr Grigoriants
Chair of the MOS3
State Inspection of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guards and Rational Use of Animal and Vegetative World (Gosbiokontrol)
State Committee for Nature Protection
21-a, Choshtepinskay str, Tashkent City, 700149
Republic of Uzbekistan
E-mail: a.grigor50@mail.ru;

Mr. Genady Goncharov
Chief of the Department of animal world
State Inspection of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guards and Rational Use of Animal and Vegetative World (Gosbiokontrol)
State Committee for Nature Protection
21-a, Choshtepinskay str, Tashkent City, 700149
Republic of Uzbekistan
Tel/Fax: (+998 71) 22157936
E-mail: gosbiocontrol-uz@mail.ru

Other State Delegations

CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF

Mr. Jinxing He
Program Officer
Department of Law enforcement
CITES Management Authority of China
State Forestry Administration
Hepingli dongjie Street, Beijing
People's Republic of China
Tel: (+86 10) 84239001
Mobile: (+86 15) 001290237
jinxing_he@sina.cn

Mr. Dayi Yu
Officer
Department of Fauna
CITES Management Authority of China
State Forestry Administration
Hepingli dongjie Street, Beijing
People's Republic of China
Tel: (+86 10) 84239001
Mobile: (+86 13) 910739387
E-mail: Yu_dayi@sina.com;

Observers

Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations

Association for Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK)

Ms Alyona Chukhatina
Site conservation specialist
18, Beibytshilik St., 406 office,
Astana, 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan
Tel: (+7 7172) 910044
Mobile: (+7 70) 13697146
alyona.chukhatina@acbk.kz;

Mr. Albert Salemgareyev
Technical coordinator of Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative
18, Beibytshilik St., 406 office,
Astana, 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan
Tel: (+7 7172) 910044
Mobile: (+7 70) 12213317
albert.salemgareev@acbk.kz;

Mr. Steffen Zuther
Acting Chief Executive of Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative
18, Beibytshilik St., 406 office,
Astana, 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan
Tel: (+7 7172) 910044
Mobile: (+7 70) 15435743
E-mail: steffen.zuther@acbk.kz

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat

Mr. Thomas De Meulenaer
Chief, Scientific Support Unit
CITES Secretariat
11-13 Chemin des Anemones
1219 Chatelaine-Geneve, Switzerland
Tel: (+41 22) 9178131
E-mail: tom.de-meulenaer@cites.org;

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Mr. Sergei Khomenko
Disease Ecologist / Wildlife Expert
FAO / AGAH
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome, 00153, Italy
Tel: (+39 06) 577056493
Mobile: (+39 3) 0678037041
E-mail: sergei.khomenko@fao.org;

Fauna & Flora International (FFI)

Mr. Paul Hotham
Regional Director
Eurasia Program
4th Floor, Jupiter House, Station Road
Cambridge, CB1 2JD, United Kingdom
Tel: (+ 44 1223) 1763407
E-mail: paul.hotham@fauna-flora.org;

Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS)

Mr. Michael Brombacher
Head of Europe Department
Bernhard-Grzimek-Allee 1, 60316 Frankfurt, Germany
Tel: (+49 69) 94344633
Mobile: (+49) 1725926424
E-mail: brombacher@zgf.de;

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Ms. Anna Filippova
Campaigner
Smolenskaya ploschad,3, entrance 2, floor 6
Moscow 121099, Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 495) 9378386
E-mail: afilippova@ifaw.org;

Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU)

Ms. Christiane Röttger
Officer for Snow Leopard Conservation
NABU International, Berlin
Germany
Tel. (+ 49 30).2849841125
christiane.roettger@nabu.de

Mr. Stefan Michel
Freelance consultant, BAG Eurasien
516 S Wilson ave, Bozeman, 59715, MT, USA
Tel: (+1) 4065776769
stefan.michel.de@gmail.com;

Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA)

Ms. Elena Bykova
Executive Secretary
Shota Rustaveli str., 144-34,
100059, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Tel:(+998 71) 2501144
Mobile: (+998 9) 01857414
E-mail: ebykova67@mail.ru;

Mr. Alexander Esipov
Member of Steering Committee
Bogishamol str., 232,
100053, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Tel: (+998 71) 2501144
Mobile: (+998 9) 51953091
E.mail: esipov@xnet.uz;

Ms Olga Esipova
Assistant, educational program
Shota Rustaveli str., 144-34,
100059, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Tel: (+998 71) 2501144
Mobile: (+998 9) 09533574
E-mail: esipovaolya@gmail.com;

Ms. E.J. Milner-Gulland
Chair
Saiga Conservation Alliance/University of Oxford
Garden Cottage, Park Corner, Nettlebed,
Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6DR
United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 1491 641653
Mobile: (+44 7) 528369932
E-mail: e.j.milner-gulland@imperial.ac.uk

Ms Carlyn Samuel
Administrative Assistant
53 Barfields Bletchingley, RH1 4RA,
United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 7971011870
Mobile: (+44 7) 971011870
E-mail: carlynmg@gmail.com;

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Russian Federation

Mr Evgeny Kuznetsov
Project Manager
UNDP/GEF/Minprirody RF Steppe project
Profsoyuznaya st., 116-1-36, Moscow 117437,
Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 495) 3308981
Mobile: (+7 9) 16 5335104
E-mail: eak1955@list.ru;

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Uzbekistan

Mr. Abduvakkos Abdurahmanov
Head of Environment and Energy Unit
41/3 Mirabad Street, Tashkent 100015
Uzbekistan
E-mail: abduvakkos.abdurahmanov@undp.org

Mr. Abbos Akhadov
Natural Resources Management Specialist
41/3 Mirabad Street, Tashkent 100015
Uzbekistan
E-mail: abbos.akhadov@undp.org

Mr. Tulkin Farmanov
Project Manager
41/3 Mirabad Street, Tashkent 100015
Uzbekistan
E-mail: tulkin.farmanov@undp.org

Mr. Stefan Priesner
Resident Representative
41/3 Mirabad Street, Tashkent 100015
Uzbekistan
Tel: (+998 71) 120 34 50
Fax: (+998 71) 120 34 85
E-mail: stefan.priesner@undp.org;

Mr. Khalilulla Sherimbetov
Project Manager
41/3 Mirabad Street, Tashkent 100015
Uzbekistan
E-mail: khalilulla.sherimbetov@undp.org

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Mr. Buuveibaatar Bayarbaatar
Lead for Conservation Science
Mongolia Program
San Business Center 201, Amar street 29,
Small ring road 14200, Sukhbaatar district,
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Tel: (+976) 11323719
E-mail: buuveibaatar@wcs.org;

Ms. Amanda Fine
Associate Director Asia
Wildlife Health and Health Policy Program
2300 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY, 10460,
USA
Tel: (+1) 7182205100
E-mail: afine@wcs.org;

Ms. Denise McAloose
Head, Pathology Department
2300 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY, 10460,
USA
Tel : (+1) 7182207105
E-mail : dmcaloose@wcs.org;

Mr. Dale Miquelle
Director
Russian Representative Office
Tel: (+7 9) 242436080
Mobile: (+7 9) 242436080
E-mail: dmiquelle@wcs.org;

Mr. Stéphane Ostrowski
EcoHealth Manager
Wildlife Health and Health Policy Program
14 rue Abbe Hua, 78200 Mantes la Jolie,
France
Tel: (+33) 761477388
E-mail: sostrowski@wcs.org;

Ms. Yelizaveta Protas
Independent Researcher, Consultant
3431 81st Street A23
New York, USA
Tel: (+1) 9176429669
lizzaprotas@hotmail.com;

Mr. Peter Zahler
Regional Director
Asia Program
2300 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY, 10460,
USA
Tel: (+1) 5187949940
pzahler@wcs.org;

WWF Mongolia

Mr. Batsaikhan Baljinnyam
Saiga ranger leader, Conservation Dpt
4th Bag, Sutai 7-4, Darvi soum,
Gobi-Altai province, Mongolia
Tel: (+976) 99866602
E-mail: batsaikhan_0104@yahoo.com

Mr. Sergelen Erdenebaatar
Biologist, Khovd field office
WWF khovd, Jargalant soum, Khovd province,
Mongolia
Tel: (+976 7) 0434100
Mobile: (+976 9) 8909484
E-mail: sergelen_200@yahoo.com;

WWF Russian Federation

Ms Olga Pereladova
Head of WWF Central Asian Programme
19, bd.3, Nikoloyamskaya str., 109240,
Moscow, Russian Federation
Tel: (+7 495) 7270939
Mobile: (+7 9) 163301183
E-mail: opereladova@wwf.ru;

Observers

Other Organizations and Institutions

Baku State University

Mr. Til Dieterich
Biodiversity and Conservation Expert
Faculty of Ecology and Soil Science, NABU
Eurasian Working Group
Tel : (+49) 3834318500
E-mail : til.dieterich@web.de;

Center for Wild Animals Kalmykia

Mr. Yuriy Arylov
Director
36, Tchkalova Street, Elista, 358000
Republic of Kalmykia, Russian Federation
Tel: (+7) 8472228840
E-mail: kalmsaiga@mail.ru

Chatkal Biosphere Nature Reserve

Mr. Dmitry Golovtsov
Senior Researcher, Science Dpt
Geophyzika 66-40, Kibrai dstr.,
Tashkent province, Uzbekistan
Tel : (+998 7) 12648221
E-mail : dimagolovtsov@mail.ru;

China Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Mr. Yingjie Qiu
Secretary General
Department of Medicinal materials circulation
Dongjiu Builiding, Xizhaosi Street, Beijing, China
Tel : (+86 10) 13804976171
E-mail : 13804976171@163.com;

Ecocenter "Djeyran"

Mr. Valentin Soldatov
Researcher
Uzbekistan State Committee for the nature protection
Kadyrova str-7/54, 100124, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Tel : (+998 9) 46721229
soldatovval@list.ru;

Ecological Resource Center EKOMAKTAB

Ms Natalya Shivaldova
Executive Director
Ecological Resource Center
Yunusabad 16/18/52, Tashkent, 100180, Uzbekistan
Tel : (+998 9) 08084654
E-mail : nshivaldova@mail.ru;

Imperial College London

Ms Sarah Robinson
Research Associate, Ecology and Evolution
La Cousteille, Saurat, 09400, France
Tel : (+33) 561059442,
Mobile : (+33) 780359360
E-mail : sarah.robinson09@gmail.com;

Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences

Ms. Anna Lushchekina
Leading researcher
Laboratory of conservation and use of bioresources
33, Leninskyi prospect, Moscow. 119071
Russian Federation
Tel : (+7 499) 7242515
E-mail : saigak@hotmail.com;

Ms Anna Yachmennikova
Researcher
Laboratory of behavior and behavioral ecology of mammals
33, Leninskyi prospect, Moscow. 119071
Russian Federation
Tel : (+7 495) 9547553
E-mail : felis.melanes@gmail.com;

Institute of the Gene Pool of Plants and Animals,Uzbek Academy of Sciences

Ms Mariya Gritsina
Senior scientist, Zoological collection
Bogishamol str. 232,Tashkent, 100053, Uzbekistan
Tel : (+998 71) 2890465
Mobile : (+998 9) 33383966
E-mail : marigmaforever@yahoo.com;

Irgiz-Turgaiskiy State Nature Reservat

Mr. Mereke Zhubaniyaz
Zhurgenova st. 155
030400 Irgiz
Kazakhstan
E-mail : irgiz-turgai_gpr@mail.ru;

Michael Succow Foundation for the Protection of Nature

Mr. Rustam Murzakhanov
National Representative for Uzbekistan
Chilanzar, 9-38-9, Tashkent, 100097
Uzbekistan
Tel : (+998 9) 03546963
rustam.murzakhanov@succow-stiftung.de;

National Police Agency, Mongolia

Mr. Enkhbat Enkhjargal
Investigator, Environmental Dpt
Chingeltei District, 4 khoroo,Sambuu street-8,
Ulaanbaatar , Mongolia
Tel : (+976 9) 7000626
Mobile : (+976 8) 8009688
E-mail : e.mgl09@yahoo.com;

Qulong Education Ltd.

Mr. Guihong Zhang
CEO
#714,Guangxin Plaza, Rongchang Road,
Longyou, 324400 China
Tel : (+86 570) 7023855
Mobile : (+ 86 13) 587108726
guihongzhang@foxmail.com;

Research Institut for Game Management and Fur Farming, All Russian Federation

Mr. Anatoly Maximuk
Director, Moscow branch
Zagorievskaya st., 12-1-115, Moscow 115598,
Russian Federation
Tel : (+7) 4953291485
E-mail : vniioz-moskow@bk.ru;

Royal Veterinary College London

Ms Wendy Beauvais
PhD Student
Veterinary Epidemiology Economics and
Public Health Group
5, The Terrace Bury, Huntingdon,PE262N, UK
Tel: (+44) 07983 622912
E-mail: wbeauvais@rvc.ac.uk;

Mr. Richard Kock
Professor
Wildlife Health and Emerging Diseases
Pathology and Pathogen Biology
Hawkshead Lane North Mymms Hatfield
Herts AL97TA , UK
Tel: (+44) 1707666396
Mobile: (+44) 7903392359
E-mail: rkock@rvc.ac.uk;

Russian State Agrarian University -

Mr. Sergey Sidorov
Senior Scientific Staff Member
Interdepartmental scientific training center of
biology and animal husbandry
Timiryazevskaya, Moscow, 127550
Russian Federation
Tel: (+8) 4956790892
Mobile: (+8) 9169895914
E-mail: in.for_sidorov@list.ru;

State Committee for the Nature protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Ms. Xoniya Asilbekova
Head
Information department
Toy Tepa str. 2A, Tashkent, 100047
Uzbekistan
Tel: +998 712360225
Email: h.asilbekova@uznature.uz

Ms Hilola Ahmedova

Mr. Shodiyov Azizov

Ms Pokiza Ibragimova

Mr. Hojizkbar Mahmudov

Mr. Doniyor Tursunbayev

State Inspection of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guards and Rational use of animal and vegetative world (Gosbiocontrol)

Mr. Timur Abduraupov
Specialist 1 Category
Monitoring the status of biological resources
21-a, Choshtepa str. Tashkent city, 100149, Uzbekistan
Tel : (+998 71) 2157936
Mobile : (+998 9) 15324866
E-mail : timur.abduraupov@gmail.com;

Mr Denis Nuridjanov
Leading Specialist
Department of rational use of wildlife
21-a, Choshtepa str. Tashkent city, 100149, Uzbekistan
Tel: (+998 71) 2158063
Mobile: (+998 9) 35702105
E-mail: nuridjanov@mail.ru;

Mr. Makcet Kosbergenov
Head
Amurdarya branch
Tel: (+998 71) 222-48-06
Mobile: (+998 90) 728-60-56
E-mail: gosbiocontrol-uz@mail.ru

State Biosphere Reserve "Chernye Zemli"

Mr. Baatr Ubushaev
Director
Nekrasova Str., d. 31, pos. Komsomolsky,
Republic of Kalmykia, 359240
Russian Federation
Tel: (+8) 8474391254
Mobile: (+8) 9276461919
Ubushaevbatr@mail.ru;

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Mr. Navinder Singh
Associate Professor
Department of Wildlife, Fish and Environmental Studies
Skogsmarksgränd 5, 90183, Umeå, Sweden
Tel: (+46 7) 06760103
E-mail: navinder.singh@slu.se;

University College London

Mr. Antony Dancer
PhD Researcher, UCL, and Trustee, SCA
Centre for Biodiversity & Environment Research
1-9 Northwood Hall, Hornsey Lane
LondonN6 5PG, United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 7968836451
E-mail: anthony.dancer@ucl.ac.uk;

University of Bristol

Mr. Eric Morgan
Reader in Veterinary Parasitology
Veterinary Science
Life Sciences, Building24,
Tyndall Avenue BS8 1TQ Bristol, UK
Tel: (+44) 7982260332
eric.morgan@bristol.ac.uk;

Zhangir khan West Kazakhstan agrarian-technical University

Ms. Bibigul Sarsenova
Researcher, Scientific Research Institute
Zhangir khan st., 51, Uralsk, 090009, Kazakhstan
Tel: (+8 7112) 516542
E-mail: (+8 705) 1431146
Sarsenovab@mail.ru

Zoological Society, Uzbekistan

Ms Natalya Marmazinskaya
Expert on Mammals, Academy of Science
Al Horezmi str. 254/35140134 Samarkand, Uzbekistan
Tel: (+998 66) 23425 0
Mobile: (+998 9) 33529033
n-marmazinskaya@rambler.ru;

Secretariat

Mr. Marco Barbieri
Scientific Adviser
UNEP/CMS Secretariat
United Nations Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
Tel: (+49 228) 815 2498
Fax: (+49 228) 815 2449
E-mail: marco.barbieri@cms.int

Ms. Natalya Yakusheva
Coordinator of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)
UNEP/CMS Secretariat
United Nations Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
Mobile: (+46 7) 62255899
E-mail: yakushn@gmail.com;

Mr. Robert Vagg
Report Writer
UNEP/CMS Secretariat
United Nations Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
Tel: (+49 228) 815 2476
E-mail: robert.vagg@cms.int;

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CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

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THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE
Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

OVERVIEW REPORT ON CONSERVATION STATUS AND MOU IMPLEMENTATION

Prepared by IUCN/SSC Antelope Specialist Group & the Saiga Conservation Alliance on behalf of the CMS Secretariat

1.0 Introduction

1. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Secretariat shall prepare an overview report compiled on the basis of information at its disposal pertaining to the saiga (*Saiga* spp).

2. National reports by the Signatories are a primary source of information for the overview report. The Secretariat provided the official MOU reporting templates to all MOU Signatories, Cooperating Organizations having signed the MOU and other organizations concerned with saiga conservation. Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have all submitted national reports to the Secretariat. Twenty-four project report forms were returned. Other information available to the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) and the Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA) was also used. This included project reports submitted to CMS and the Saiga Resource Centre, published materials from various sources, and *Saiga News*, which was recognized as a key mechanism for information exchange and coordination of the CMS MOU at the Second Meeting of Signatories (MOS2) in 2010, and by the Parties to CITES at COP16.

3. Pursuant to CITES Decision 16.100, the CITES Secretariat invited major saiga consumer and trading countries to provide information on the measures and activities undertaken to implement the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope (2011-2015). Japan, Malaysia and Singapore submitted reports to the CITES Secretariat.

4. Additional information was provided by the participants of the Saiga Technical Workshop (26-27 October 2015) that precedes the MOU Meeting.

5. The structure of this report follows the national report format endorsed by the First Meeting of the Signatories to the MOU in 2006. This report does not repeat the information provided in the national reports. It only summarizes the main issues.

2.0 Conservation Status of the Saiga

6. The status of the species is assessed here on the basis of the information available to IUCN/SSC and SCA.

7. At COP9 in 2008 CMS Parties adopted Wilson & Reeder (3rd edition, 2005, Mammal Species of the World) as the taxonomic reference for terrestrial mammals, which lists two saiga species: *Saiga tatarica* (equivalent to IUCN's *Saiga tatarica tatarica*) and *Saiga borealis* (equivalent to IUCN's *Saiga tatarica mongolica*). CITES has also adopted this taxonomy. However, since the best available genetic evidence (presented in Kholodova et al. 2006, *Oryx* 40, 103-107) supports the IUCN nomenclature, and most experts also apply this nomenclature, this document will use the names of the sub-species used by IUCN.

8. Saigas occur in five populations: Four are *S.t. tatarica*; north-west Pre-Caspian (Russian Federation), Ural (Kazakhstan, Russia), Ustiurt (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan), Betpak-dala (Kazakhstan). One is *S. t. mongolica* (Mongolia). These populations are depicted in the map at Figure 1. A sixth population of *Saiga tatarica tatarica* in northwest China and adjacent areas of SW Mongolia became extinct by the 1960s.

9. National reports indicate latest numbers at the country level as: around 5,000 in the Russian Federation and declining; around 84,270 in Kazakhstan and an underlying upward trend; around 1,000 resident or seasonally present in Uzbekistan, and declining. No saigas have been observed in Turkmenistan for the last 15 years. The distinctive Mongolian subspecies was estimated to number 14,869 in 2014, and to be increasing. Although total numbers must be treated with caution (see paragraph 9), the best estimate of the global saiga population in 2015 is a minimum of 100,000 animals.

10. The extensive area of distribution, large differences between seasonal ranges, the saiga's nomadic way of life, and natural population fluctuations make accurate population estimates difficult to obtain and obscure population trends. Counts made using appropriate methods (aerial surveys with strip sampling in Kazakhstan, ground surveys with distance sampling in Mongolia) enable precision of the count to be estimated, and reduce (but do not eliminate) bias. Expert assessments, as carried out in the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan, are prone to unquantifiable levels of bias. For wide-ranging ungulates such as the saiga, even well-conducted counts are likely to be underestimates, and the degree of underestimation increases as the population gets smaller and more fragmented, because the animals are harder to detect. This means that population declines may appear worse and increases faster than they really are.

11. As illustrated by the mass die-offs which occurred in Ural in 2010 (estimated mortality 12,000 animals), and to a greater degree in Betpak-dala in 2015 (estimated mortality >150,044 animals), underlying trends of population recovery can be reversed very quickly in this species. This highlights the importance of ensuring that all saiga populations are large enough to withstand sudden catastrophic declines (whether from disease or other factors such as climate, new infrastructure or an upsurge in poaching). The total global population size is therefore, not a good measure of the overall conservation status of the species; that is more accurately portrayed by considering the status and trends in individual populations.

12. The status of saigas varies substantially between populations. Overall, however, the status of *Saiga* spp. has not improved since the Second Meeting of Signatories (MOS2) in 2010. Between 2011 and 2014, three out of five populations reportedly increased (Mongolia, Ural and Betpak-dala), and two declined (Russia and Ustiurt). Sadly in 2015, the Betpak-dala population suffered a substantial die-off, bringing numbers down to the 2008

level. This means that only two populations (Mongolia, Ural) have an improved status since MOS2.

Table 1. Populations of Saiga based on information collected for the 2015 CMS MOU meeting, compared with the same information for the previous two MOU meetings. The figures are not directly comparable between years and populations because of variations in survey effort and methodology.

Population	2006	2010	2015	Trend
NW Pre-Caspian[1] [RU]	15,000-20,000	10,000-20,000	4,500-5,000	Decreasing
Ural [KZ, RU][2]	12,900	27,140[3]	51,700	Increasing
Ustiurt [KZ, TM, UZ][2]	17,800	4,900	1,270	Decreasing
Betpak-dala [KZ][2]	18,300	53,440	31,300[4]	N/A
Mongolia [MN]	3,169	8016±1656	14,869[5]	Increasing
Total	67,169-72,169	103,496-113,496	103,639-104,139	

[1] Based on expert judgement rather than a population survey
[2] Numbers from Kazakhstan aerial survey (does not include resident populations in other countries [UZ particularly] or those outside survey area [Betpak-dala particularly]).
[3] 39,060 estimated in April 2010, 11,920 estimated died in disease outbreak May 2010
[4] Result of an aerial survey in June, counting adults only, not calves. The estimated population size in April 2015 was 242,500. This suggests that 211,200 adult saigas died in the disease outbreak in May 2015 [but see paragraphs 10 and 27]
[5] 2014 estimate based on a ground survey.

2.1 Summary of the status of the species by population

North-west Pre-Caspian population

13. The North-west Pre-Caspian population is centred around the Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve and Stepnoi/Tinguta Sanctuary. Its range covers two administrative regions of the Russian Federation; the Republic of Kalmykia and Astrakhan province, with sporadic occurrences in neighbouring regions.

14. The population's status is currently rather unclear due to the lack of a systematic range-wide monitoring programme. Monitoring is carried out by rangers of the Department of Animal Conservation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kalmykia, with participation of experts from the governmental agency "Tsenterokhotkontrol", as well as additional information from rangers in the two protected areas collected in the course of their duties. There have also been pilot participatory monitoring programmes during the period 2008-12, extending the geographic range of saiga observations and engaging local people.

15. The population appears to have declined substantially since 2010, with an official estimate (based on expert assessment) of 4,500-5,000 individuals in 2014. This prompted the inclusion of the species on the Red List of the Autonomous Republic of Kalmykia in 2014. The Russian Federation is considering whether to put the species on the Federal Red List. Analysis of the participatory monitoring data suggested a sharp decrease in observed herd size in 2012 compared to previous years. There has been substantial public awareness and engagement activity and the protected areas are effectively patrolled, according to the National Report. However poaching appears to be continuing at a relatively high level; a

study in 2014 suggested that 34% ±9% of people in some villages in the saiga's range had eaten saiga meat over the previous six months.

Ural population

16. The Ural population is in the far west of Kazakhstan (West Kazakhstan province), between the Volga and Ural Rivers. It is a transboundary population, with some parts extending seasonally into Russia (Astrakhan province). Aerial surveys are carried out annually within Kazakhstan. *Okhotzooprom* and state rangers have an on-the-ground presence. A relatively small proportion of the population uses the Bogdinsko-Basgunchakskii reserve and Orenburg reserve in Russia (Astrakhan province), but there is no protected area in Kazakhstan.

17. A disease outbreak occurred in this population in May 2010, resulting in the death of 11,920 saiga over the course of ten days (with a peak over four days), estimated at about 30% of the adult population. This was followed by a die-off in 2011 in exactly the same location over 2-3 days, affecting about 400 animals; the remaining 4,000 animals calving in other areas were unaffected. Laboratory examination identified the presence of *Pasteurella multocida* and *Clostridium perfringens* in tissues collected. The cause of death was reported officially as pasteurellosis but the pathology was not adequately investigated to allow differentiation between pneumonic pasteurellosis or haemorrhagic septicaemia and/or Clostridial enterotoxaemia or other causes. There was evidence that a form of pasture-related toxicosis might have been a co-factor in the disease events even if a fulminating pasteurellosis was terminal. However, since then, the population has recovered, and by 2014 had reached its pre-die-off level, with a further increase in 2015.

18. Public engagement activities have been carried out since 2010 in Kazakhstan, including work with schools, some participatory monitoring and the opening of a small captive breeding facility linked to Zhangirzhan agrarian-technical university, where currently 14 saigas are kept, of which 6 were born in 2015.

Ustiurt population

19. The Ustiurt population occurs west of the Aral Sea (Aktobe and Mangystau provinces), and is a transboundary population. Most of the population is in Kazakhstan for most of the year, moving into Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan Autonomous Region) in the winter. In the past, a proportion of the population migrated south through Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan. There is a small resident population year-round in Uzbekistan, including around a thousand in the region of Vozhrozhdeniye peninsula (Aral Sea) and the neighbouring Aral Sea coast.

20. Within the current range, the only protected area is the Saigachy State Sanctuary in Uzbekistan (1,000,000 ha). This reserve is in the process of being extended and re-designated to a higher level of protection. There are several protected areas within the recent range of this population (Kazakhstan: Buzachinskiy Wildlife Reserve; Turkmenistan: Kaplankyr State Reserve; Sarykamysh Sanctuary).

21. The Ustiurt population is in continuing decline, and has been since 1998. Estimated numbers in the Kazakhstan aerial survey (carried out in the spring, when the migratory part of the population is in Kazakhstan) have declined by 74% since 2010. Poaching is continuing in both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

22. The population's range has large-scale transport routes (roads and railways) and pipelines passing through it, and the construction of a railway is being finalized, which further fragments the Kazakhstan part of the range. In 2011-12, a border fence was erected between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and there is evidence from satellite-collared individuals that this has impeded migrations. It is also thought to facilitate poaching by channelling saigas into a few crossing points. The transboundary nature of the population leads to associated problems including implementation of protection, for example when poachers come into one country from the other and then return to evade enforcement. It also hampers monitoring, causing difficulties such as coordinating surveys at the same time and in the same manner to obtain a total population estimate.

23. Recent interventions have included social engagement projects in Uzbekistan, including education, a programme about alterative livelihoods aimed at women and a participatory monitoring programme. Some social engagement has also taken place in the Kazakhstan part of the range. Aerial and ground monitoring is carried out annually in spring in the Kazakhstan part of the range, and anti-poaching patrols operate in both countries, but with inadequate capacity for the large area which requires patrolling.

Betpak-dala population

24. The Betpak-dala population's historical range covers a large area of Central Kazakhstan, approximately from the Moinkum Sands/Chu River in the south (Zhambyl and south Kazakhstan provinces), to Lake Tengiz and the Karaganda region in the north (Karaganda and Akmola provinces). The Betpak-dala population suffered particularly badly from poaching in the late 1990s, due to its location comparatively close to Almaty, other large settlements and the Chinese border. However, the population has been increasing rapidly over recent years. Improved monitoring, social engagement, public awareness and law enforcement have had a positive effect on reducing poaching, although poachers are still being apprehended.

25. This population has had substantial investment in development of protected area networks by the Government of Kazakhstan, international and national NGOs and intergovernmental organizations. Many projects are currently underway, encompassing scientific research, anti-poaching, education and awareness. Aerial and ground monitoring is carried out annually, and there is a programme of satellite tracking of individual animals. Protected areas in the population's range cover a substantial area (particularly the Altyn Dala and Irgiz-Turgai reserves), and the first ecological corridor connecting key protected areas was designated in 2014.

26. During 2012-2014 the core calving population was closely monitored, including transects in 2014 to identify and weigh calves, estimate calf population and determine cause of any mortality. Background mortality was substantial, involving many hundreds and perhaps thousands of animals, including adults and calves from birth-related trauma (dystokia), weather changes leading to hypothermia in calves and some predation.

27. In May 2015, the population suffered a very large mass mortality event. Aerial surveys were carried out both before and after the event, and the resulting population estimates suggest an 88% population reduction from this die-off. However this figure needs to be interpreted with some caution because the post-die-off aerial survey was partial, and downward biases in population estimates are more likely in the summer when herds are

smaller and more scattered. Therefore it may be that more animals survived than this estimate suggests. However, the aggregations in Turgai (>60,000 adults) and Tengiz (>8,000 adults) which were closely monitored during these events showed an apparent 100% mortality, including calves; this is likely to have been the case in the other eleven die-off sites. Any surviving saiga antelopes that were detected during subsequent monitoring were probably from unaffected groups.

28. The mortality rate observed is virtually unprecedented in free-ranging ungulate communities and suggests deviation from biological norms, suggesting a complex interplay of various factors, which may be anthropogenic influence and or extraordinary environmental stressors. The proximate cause of death has been given as haemorrhagic septicaemia caused by opportunistic infection with *Pasteurella multocida serotype B*, but there is also evidence that about half the animals were also co-infected with *Clostridium perfringens* (another opportunist commensal parasite), causing an enterotoxaemia. Underlying predisposing factors are still under investigation. The Government of Kazakhstan has established a working group to investigate the disease outbreak and plans to allocate funding for research and monitoring. An international research team is working with the government to elucidate the causes of the mortality and explore possible responses.

Mongolian subspecies

29. Distribution of the Mongolian sub-species, *Saiga tatarica mongolica*, is centred on the Shargiin Gobi, Huisiin Gobi and Dorgon Steppe in western Mongolia. It comprises two sub-populations; the main population and a small northern sub-population (around 50 animals) which has been recorded consistently since 2013. This sub-population is potentially threatened with isolation due to planned road/rail construction. The nominate subspecies (*S. t. tatarica*) formerly occurred in southwest Mongolia but is now extirpated.

30. The population of Mongolian Saiga was estimated at 8016 ±1656 in 2010, using an aerial count. A population assessment has been carried out every year since 2012, focussed on distributions. In 2014, a ground count estimated the population at 14,869 with a 15% coefficient of variation. The two methods are not comparable, but it appears that the population is doing well. There has been a reported 13% increase in saiga range extent since 1998. Research carried out since 2012 has included calving site selection, calf mortality and migration, using radio-collaring. Genetic studies are also ongoing. An isotope study published in 2015 has confirmed the distinctiveness of the Mongolian population.

31. Sharga-Mankhan Nature Reserve (390,000 ha) was established in 1993 to protect populations of Mongolian saiga. The proposed Darvi mountain reserve would also cover the saiga range. Pasture reserves (in which habitat disturbance is prohibited, particularly mining) have been implemented over 35% of the saiga's range.

32. A national strategy on saiga conservation is under development. A mobile anti-poaching unit was working until 2013, but was halted due to lack of funding. A saiga ranger network has been set up to further support the governmental patrols. Substantial investment in public awareness includes educational programmes in the schools in the saiga range. There have also been initiatives to tackle cross-border trade with China, including capacity-building of customs officers.

Saigas in China

33. In China, *Saiga tatarica tatarica* formerly occurred in the Dzungarian Gobi of Xinjiang, northwest China, but they became extinct by the 1960s. There have been a few subsequent reports of saiga from this area that probably relate to wandering individuals from Kazakhstan. Reintroduction remains a future aim but there is no detailed implementation schedule at present. There is a successful captive breeding centre in Gansu province, under the Ministry of Forestry, currently numbering around 170 individuals.

3.0 Implementation of the Medium-Term International Work Programme (2011-2015)

34. This section provides a brief summary of information on progress towards the implementation of the MOU and Medium-Term International Work Programme (2011-2015). It starts with the summary of the implementation of international actions, and then summarize actions at the national level according to the format of the National Reports.

International Actions.

35. Since 2002 both CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have been working in close cooperation, with saiga antelopes as one of their joint target species. The CMS CITES Joint Work Programme 2015-2020, adopted at the 42nd meeting of the CMS Standing Committee (UNEP/CMS/StC42/Doc.6.1) and the 65th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC65 Doc.16.2), outlines the current joint activities on saiga antelopes. These focus on the implementation of the Medium-Term International Work Programme associated with the MOU, joint meetings and fundraising efforts. Since 2015 a Joint CITES-CMS Programme Officer has been appointed, thanks to funding from the Government of Germany to strengthen implementation of the above-mentioned Work Programme between the two treaties. Capacity is further strengthened through the creation of a coordinator position for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), which was adopted at CMS COP11 in 2014 (Resolutions 11.1 and 11.24).

36. Within the framework of the CMS and the Saiga MOU, there have been a number of relevant international meetings during the reporting period. A meeting to discuss trade in saiga horn and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) took place in Urumqi, China, in September 2010, under the auspices of both CITES and CMS, from which recommendations emerged directed particularly at consumer States. At CITES COP16 in March 2013, Decisions 14.91 (Rev. COP16), 14.93 (Rev. COP16) & 16.95 to 16.101 were passed, related to *Saiga* spp. These directed relevant Parties to collaborate to implement the MTIWP for 2011-15, and consumer and trading countries to support these actions financially. All relevant States were asked to provide information on their activities to the CITES Standing Committee and CMS, also via the Saiga Resource Centre and associated databases.

37. In February 2011, a CMS workshop was held in Kazakhstan on the implementation and technical coordination of the CMS Saiga MOU and other CMS mandates targeting large mammals in Central Asia. Participants included representatives from the various agencies responsible for managing saiga antelopes in Kazakhstan, as well as NGOs and experts. Saiga conservation priorities for Kazakhstan were discussed and the two organizations given the task of the technical coordination of the MOU, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) and the SCA reported on progress made. A number of recommendations emerged in order to enhance the implementation of the priorities of the

MTIWP, including the need to capacity building in the wildlife health sector to prevent and better manage mass mortality events and extending the programme for satellite-collaring of saigas.

38. The CITES Secretariat provided an overview of seizures of saiga parts and derivatives in the period from 2007 to 2012 to the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in document COP16 Doc.Inf.4.

39. In June 2013 a workshop to review progress in implementing the Saiga MOU MTIWP was held in Astana, Kazakhstan. Participants included MOU contact points and experts from all signatory countries except for Turkmenistan, as well as additional international experts. The impact of infrastructure on saiga antelopes and its mitigation were discussed, specifically the border fence between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and the growing rail and road network across Central Asia. The guidelines on appropriate border fence design: Saiga Crossing Options: Guidelines and Recommendations to Mitigate Barrier Effects of Border Fencing and Railroad Corridors on Saiga Antelope in Kazakhstan, were presented and mitigation measures agreed. CITES Secretariat presented relevant outcomes of COP16, the Ustiurt Plateau Conservation Initiative was presented and coordination of the MOU discussed, including a more detailed discussion on the Saiga Resource Centre.

40. A first transboundary meeting of Range State rangers (with representatives from Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia, and from all saiga populations) took place in Kazakhstan in 2014, providing an opportunity for rangers focused on each saiga population to share common problems, issues, and experiences in anti-poaching.

41. In November 2014, CMS COP 11 adopted the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), which is a regional initiative including a programme of work to integrate and build upon existing mandates under CMS for large mammals in the region. The CAMI programme of work includes saigas and tackles key threats, including poaching and linear infrastructure (Resolution 11.24). CAMI development benefitted from intensive stakeholder negotiations in 2014, including a regional meeting in September 2014 (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan), to develop the programme of work. COP11 further adopted Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia (Resolution 11.24), which are also directly relevant to saiga conservation and legally binding for all CMS Parties, including Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The CMS Saiga MOU.

42. A proposal to amend the MOU to cover all saiga species (as defined by CMS; see paragraph 6) rather than just relating to *Saiga tatarica* was agreed by the Signatories at the 2010 meeting and Mongolia formally signed the MOU as a full Signatory on 10 September 2010. The MOU title was amended to "Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.)". This means that all current *Saiga* spp. Range States are formal Signatories of the MOU and part of the international forum it creates. This significantly enhances conservation efforts regionally and globally.

43. At the 2010 MOS2, it was also agreed that some technical coordination responsibilities for the MOU would be undertaken by the Saiga Conservation Alliance and Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan in close collaboration with the CMS Secretariat.

International trade in Saiga and products, parts and derivatives thereof

44. Trade in saigas and their parts and derivatives is authorized but strictly regulated under the terms of CITES. Following very high levels of trade in the early 2000s, reported levels of international trade in derivatives and horns have declined substantially; however, trade has continued during the reporting period, predominately in horns, albeit at low levels (Table 2). Information for the period 2011-2013 suggests that main exporters globally were China and Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region, while Japan and Hong Kong were the main importers.

Table 2: Data on reported trade in saiga parts and derivatives, from the official CITES trade database held by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Data are only available up to 2013. Under Appendix 2 of CITES (where saigas are listed) both the importer and the exporter should report trade; discrepancies between the Importer and Exporter columns reflect incomplete reporting.

Product	Reported by	2011	2012	2013
Derivatives (items)	Importer	194		
	Exporter			
Derivatives (kg)	Importer	139		
	Exporter	17	12	
Horns (kg)	Importer	465	316	308
	Exporter	462	463	100

45. Several projects have been carried out during the reporting period in order to improve cross-border cooperation and capacity to intercept saiga horn shipments. These include joint training between Mongolian and Chinese border guards and customs officials, and training of border guards and officials in Kazakhstan. The recruitment of four sniffer dogs in 2014 has improved capacity to detect wildlife products including saiga horn passing through Kazakhstan's border. In China, market surveys have continued to observe saiga horn and saiga products on sale.

Population monitoring.

46. Kazakhstan has a comprehensive monitoring programme, covering nearly all of the country's range area. It comprises aerial surveys in all three populations, and monitoring of birth areas in Betpak-dala. In the Russian Federation, there have not been any aerial surveys during the period covered by this report, but ground-based monitoring by staff of the Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve and Stepnoi/Tinguta Sanctuary has provided expert assessments, supplemented by participatory monitoring to give information on distribution and herd size outside these reserves. Russia has also tested a non-invasive method for counting saigas using high resolution satellite images. In Mongolia, a comprehensive ground-based survey using distance sampling was carried out in 2014, but there is still no time-series of counts using comparable methods. In Uzbekistan, a combination of participatory monitoring using motorbike transects and ground surveys gives a general impression of population change. Please see paragraph 10 for discussion of the issues which affect the current monitoring programme.

Habitat and Protected Areas

47. Range State reports indicate moderate levels of habitat loss or degradation. Pasture quality is likely to have remained relatively high over the period covered by this report in most locations due to pressure from livestock grazing remaining low. In Mongolia, however,

livestock grazing pressure is high, there is more of an issue with competition for grazing, and habitat is reported as severely fragmented. Protected areas coverage is improving, especially for the Betpak-dala population in Kazakhstan. Table 2 lists protected areas containing saigas.

Populations shared between Range States.

48. There are two transboundary populations; Ural and Ustiurt. An agreement on conservation, restoration and sustainable development of the Ustiurt saiga population was signed by the Government of Kazakhstan and the Government of Uzbekistan on 17 March 2010 and ratified by Uzbekistan on 20 August 2010.

49. On 19 September 2012, an agreement on the conservation, restoration and use of the Ural population was signed by the Governments of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, and since then there has been annual exchange of information between the two on transboundary saiga movements. In 2015, the first meeting of the working group to coordinate activities under this agreement was held in Kazakhstan.

Laws, Institutions and illegal activities.

50. The saiga is legally protected in all countries of its breeding range; Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and in former Range State, China. In Mongolia and Uzbekistan it is a Red List species for which hunting is strictly prohibited. In the Russian Federation it is still listed as a game species overall, but in 2014, the Autonomous Republic of Kalmykia moved the saiga to a Red List species, meaning that any hunting is illegal. The saiga was added to Turkmenistan's Red List in 2011. In Kazakhstan, it remains as a game species, but in July 2012 the moratorium on the use of saigas and its derivatives was extended to 2020. Legal frameworks are generally adequate but increased patrolling and more stringent enforcement are needed for these to be fully effective.

51. Between 2010 and 2014, 224 incidents of illegal saiga hunting were recorded in Kazakhstan, and 8,594 horns were confiscated. In 2014 in Kazakhstan, 2,927 raids were carried out by law enforcement officials to verify compliance with environmental rules. In Uzbekistan in 2011, there was one case of confiscation of horns and one prosecution for poaching. A number of incidents of saiga horn trade have been detected in Mongolia, one of which (in 2014) led to a prosecution. No incidents were reported by Russia.

52. On 5 September 2013 a very large seizure of 4,470 antelope horns was made in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region which borders Kyrgyzstan, but the species is not currently identified. In 2014, 296 kg of horns from Kazakhstan was seized in China. Japan reported five seizures of saiga parts and derivatives between 2012 and 2014. Of these, one seizure consisted of 100 horns and horn cuttings and four seizures consisted of medicinal products. Four of the shipments intercepted came from China and one from Korea.

53. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the number of shipments of saiga parts and derivatives which were seized due to concerns about their legal status is declining (Table 3). Almost all the shipments intercepted came from China, consisted of medicinal products, and were seized in Europe and the United States. It is impossible, to extrapolate to how many individual saigas these seizures equate, as it is extremely difficult to know how many saiga parts go into a medicinal product.

Table 3. Number of seizures of saiga parts and derivatives by year, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Year	Number
2010	100
2011	83
2012	74
2013	47
2014	46
2015 (to date)	1

Captive Breeding.

54. Captive breeding is being carried out in three centres in Russia, and two in Kazakhstan, with a total captive population currently numbering fewer than 200. In 2014, the Yahskul' saiga breeding centre in Russia suffered catastrophic mortality (cause still undetermined), dropping from 95 to 4 individuals over a few weeks in the summer. It remains closed until institutional issues are resolved. A captive breeding herd, currently numbering 170 animals, is also kept at the Wuwei Endangered Animal Breeding Center, Gansu Province, China. There is also a captive herd in semi-wild conditions at Askania Nova, Ukraine.

Threats.

55. National reports listed the following main threats:

	Nil	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Unknown
Hunting for meat		Mn,Tm		Ru	Kz,Uz	
Hunting for horns/trade	Tm			Mn	Kz, Ru,Uz	
Habitat loss		Uz,Tm	Kz, Ru	Mn		
Livestock competition	Uz	Ru,Tm		Mn		Kz
Disease	Uz	Mn		Kz		Ru,Tm
Climate		Kz,Uz	Ru,Mn,Tm			
Predation		Uz,Mn	Ru,Tm			Kz
Fragmentation	Tm	Ru,Mn	Kz,Uz			
Demographic factors		Uz,Tm	Mn	Ru		Kz
Barriers to migration		Mn	Ru,Tm	Kz,Uz		
Other (Please specify)						

There is agreement between Range States about what the main threat is; hunting for trade is seen as the major threat range-wide, and hunting for meat is also highlighted by three of the Range States.

56. However, there are also discrepancies which reflect the different threats facing each population. As expected, Kazakhstan rates disease as a major threat, while Russia is

concerned about demographic factors and Mongolia about livestock competition and habitat loss. The threat from barriers to migration is of high concern in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In Turkmenistan the threats are generally low. There are some factors for which knowledge is lacking, but these tend to be factors of less immediate concern to the Range States.

Education and awareness.

57. Education and awareness activities have been carried out in all of the Range States, and increasingly these are coordinated, with collaboration to develop materials and share best practice (for example Steppe Wildlife Clubs and Saiga Days in Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan). The wide range of materials developed includes videos, cartoon books, posters, leaflets and murals. Much of the activity is directed towards children and is run in conjunction with schools. The Saiga Resource Centre is an online repository for materials including photos, videos, educational resources and literature.

Ecological studies.

58. In Kazakhstan, ecological studies have centred on monitoring of saiga birth areas in Betpak-dala, in order to understand factors influencing population productivity. In Mongolia, detailed studies of population parameters have been carried out during the reporting period including calf mortality and movement. Studies of individual movements using GPS collars have been carried out in Kazakhstan, in all three populations, providing information on the effect of the border fence, railways, and other factors on migration. Studies on habitat use, and its determinants, have been carried out using species distribution models for all of the populations.

Priority Actions.

59. Priority actions listed in the Range State reports are:

Kazakhstan: Carry out research on the causes, drivers and triggers of the 2015 mass mortality in the Betpak-dala population and take measures to combat mass mortalities in the future.

Russian Federation: Reform specialist mobile anti-poaching patrols; improve law enforcement measures, including anti-poaching; broaden monitoring, including carrying out aerial surveys; develop modern monitoring methods, including ground-based distance sampling and GPS tracking; control wolf numbers; continue to develop saiga ranching techniques; develop rapid methods for distinguishing the country of origin of saiga products; improve cooperation with saiga Range States and consumer countries and with CITES.

Uzbekistan: Carry out monitoring of population abundance and threats; strengthen protected areas (specifically the Saigachy sanctuary); work with local people to improve environmental awareness and participatory conservation actions; improve cooperation with oil and gas companies; improve transboundary collaboration with Kazakhstan on saiga conservation and particularly mitigating barriers to migration; increase international collaboration on conservation and research.

Mongolia: Strengthen law enforcement through improving the Saiga Ranger Network and develop other law enforcement measures; ensure smooth implementation and monitoring of pasture management plans at the soum level; maintain support for Eco Clubs in key saiga habitats.

Turkmenistan: Organize conservation actions in the event of saiga migrations into the country.

4.0 Evaluation

60. Based on the synthesis of the national reports and other available information the following achievements can be recognized:

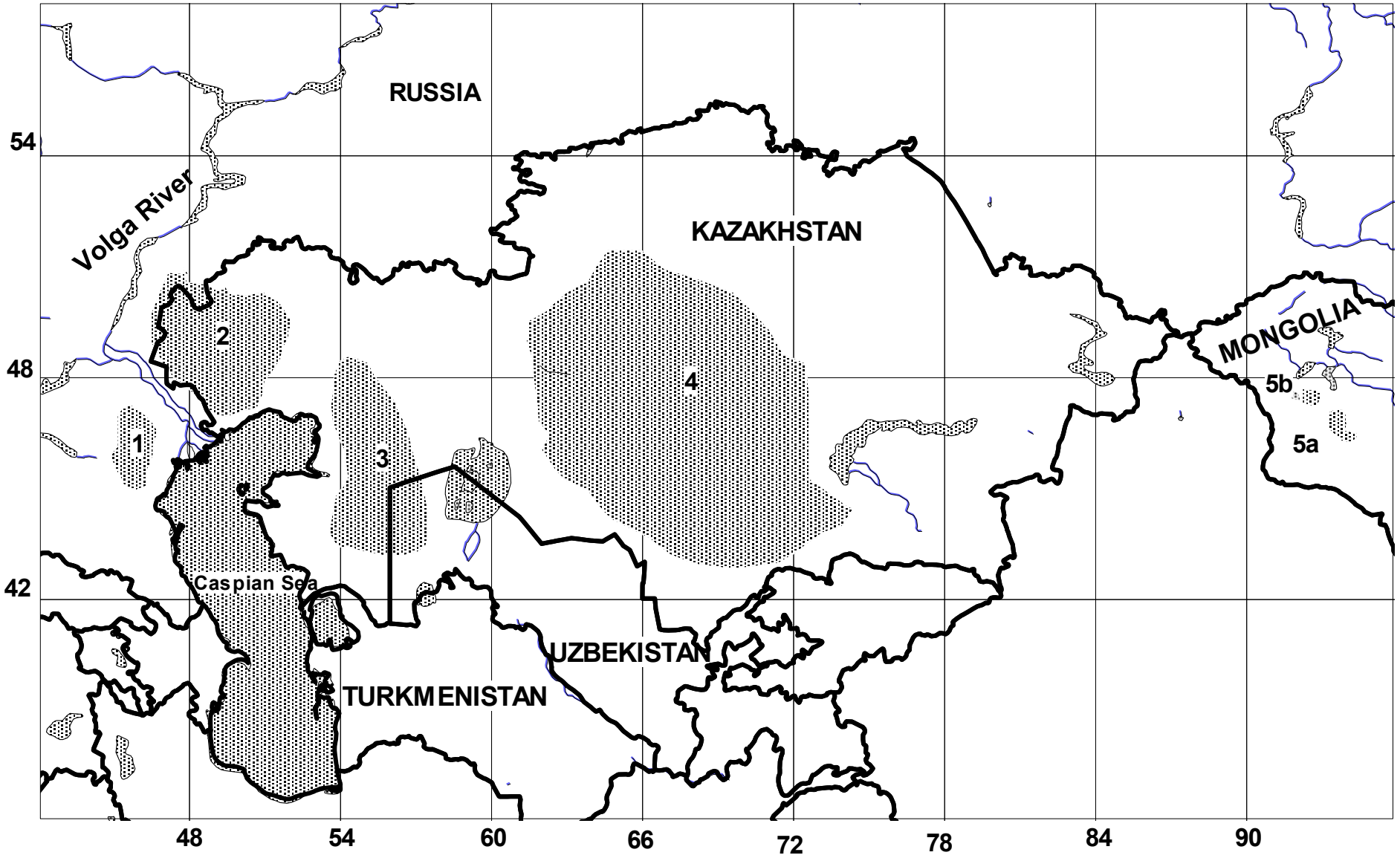
- The **status of the saiga and its conservation needs** are generally well understood at the international and national levels.
- A wide range of **conservation interventions** are being carried out by governmental and non-governmental organizations, covering the full range of priorities set out in the 2011-15 MTIWP.
- There is **collaboration and sharing of experience** between NGOs and other international and national actors, for example on social awareness raising, training of customs officials, and MOU coordination.
- There have been **arrests and successful prosecutions** of saiga poachers and traders in some parts of the range.
- There has been continuing investment in **improved monitoring** methods, particularly in Kazakhstan and Mongolia.
- **Protected Area coverage** has improved and new initiatives are underway (such as ecological corridors in Kazakhstan and the Saigachy reserve in Uzbekistan).
- Engagement has been initiated with the **private sector**, aimed at ensuring that their developments are sensitive to the conservation needs of saigas.
- **Public awareness** campaigns have been effective in improving knowledge of the saiga's conservation needs and the laws pertaining to hunting and trading of saigas.
- There has been a lot of energy and enthusiasm generated among young people and their teachers range-wide from schools-based **educational initiatives**.
- **International awareness** of the saiga has increased, and there is more information on the species and how to get involved in its conservation online via a range of social media and other outlets.
- The Government of China has expressed its commitment to **control trade** in saiga products and has expressed interest in contributing to international conservation efforts within the Range States.

61. Less progress has been achieved in the following areas:

- Anti-poaching efforts have intensified but **poaching** is still happening throughout the range, suggesting a need for further investment in improving effectiveness.
- **Monitoring** of trends in abundance is still inconsistent in quality, method and frequency between and within populations. Consistent annual monitoring is only being done in Kazakhstan.
- **Trends in abundance** are of severe concern in two populations (north-west pre-Caspian and Ustuirt), apparently principally as a result of ongoing high levels of poaching.
- **Linear infrastructure** (including railways, roads, pipelines, and a border fence) are currently impacting some populations, particularly Ustiurt and Betpak-dala, and will continue to affect populations unless mitigation is implemented.
- Since 2010, mass mortality from **disease** has affected both the Ural and Betpak-dala populations; in both cases, this reversed impressive increases in population size which had happened over the preceding several years. This highlights the importance of ensuring that all populations are large and resilient enough to withstand catastrophic events, the need better to understand the causes and drivers of mass mortality in saigas, and the need for continued capacity building in the wildlife health sector.

- Investment has been **unbalanced between populations**, such that the vast majority of the improvement in saiga status was due to one population, Betpak-dala. This means that the risk of loss of other populations (whether due to disease, poaching or other threats) has been masked by the apparent overall population increase. The mass mortality in the Betpak-dala population in 2015 demonstrates that a very large proportion of the global population can be lost very rapidly in these circumstances. Assessments of conservation progress need to be cognizant of population-level trends rather than just trends in overall abundance.
- **Evaluation** of the success of conservation interventions, sharing of best practice, and increased cooperation and information sharing are crucial now that programmes have been running for several years.
- **Captive breeding** is expanding, but there is a lack of agreed guidelines for husbandry, genetic management, studbook management and reintroduction. There is no captive herd within the current saiga range which is large enough to be viable in the medium term, and no captive population of the Mongolian sub-species.
- There is still **limited cooperation** between governments in managing shared transboundary populations, and between range states, consumer countries and the Traditional Chinese Medicine communities in supporting in situ conservation.

FIGURE 1: RANGE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE



Source: Milner-Gulland et al. (2001), Oryx

Table 2. Saiga Occurrence in Protected Areas						
Name	**Area (ha)**	**Category**	**Months Saiga present**	**Rut**	**Calving**	**Numbers**
Russian Federation						
Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve	121,115	Federal	Year-round	Yes	Yes	
Stepnoi Sanctuary	108,000	Regional	Year-round	Yes	Yes	
Tinguta Sanctuary	197,800	Regional	Year-round	Yes	Yes	
Mekletinskiy Sanctuary	102,500	Federal	Varies	Insignificant	Rarely	
Bogdinsko-Basgunchakskii Reserve	18,525	Federal	Rarely			
Bogdinsko-Basgunchakskii Sanctuary	53,700	Regional	Rarely			
Sarpinskiy Sanctuary	163,900	Federal	Rarely, in June			
Kharbinskiy Sanctuary	195,500	Federal	Very rare			
Kazakhstan						
Irgiz-Turgai Rezervat	763,549	VI	Spring-autumn, small groups in winter	Yes	Yes	c.500 (post die-off)
Korgalzhyn Reserve	543,171	Ia	Year-round	Yes	Yes	c.470 (post die-off)
Altyn Dala Rezervat	489,776	VI	Spring to autumn		Yes	
Naurzum Reserve	191,381	Ia	Summer	No	No	2-300 (2014)
Barsakelmes Reserve	160,826	1a	Year-round	?	?	A few 10s
Uzbekistan						
Saigachy Sanctuary	1,000,000	IV	October - May	November	May	100
Proposed						
Saigachy Sanctuary (redesignated)	1,080,800	1b	October - May	November	May	100
Mongolia						
Sharga-Mankhan	396,291		Year-round	Yes	Yes	14,000
Proposed						
Darvi mountain	45,000		Year-round	Possibly	Possibly	8,000
Turkmenistan						
Kaplankiyrskiy Reserve	275,735	Ia	December-March	No	No	Rarely observed
Sarykamysh Sanctuary	541,466	IV	December-March	No	No	Rarely observed

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CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

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THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE
Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

MEDIUM-TERM INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (2016-2020)

(To support the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga spp.*)*

MEDIUM-TERM INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (2016-2020)

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE CMS SECRETARIAT

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.), Signatories to the MOU are to implement the provisions of the Action Plan as a basis for conserving all populations of *Saiga* spp.

2. At each Meeting of the Signatories to date a Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) has been adopted for the next five years to support the implementation of the MOU and Action Plan. The MTIWP is intended to focus the work and resources of the Range States, the consumer countries, non-governmental organizations, as well as the saiga research and conservation community by agreeing areas of highest conservation concern that require urgent intervention. The MTIWP is further envisioned to form the basis for targeted fundraising nationally and internationally and should provide a guiding context for donor decisions. The MTIWP (2011-2015) was approved at the Second Meeting of the MOU Signatories (Ulaanbaatar 2010) and has now reached its end.

3. CITES Resolutions 14.91 (Rev. CoP16) and 16.96 request Range States and consumer countries to implement the work programme, while 14.93 (Rev CoP 16) and 16.98 request Range States and consumer countries respectively to provide information on their implementation actions to the online databases coordinated under the CMS MOU. Resolution 16.95 encourages Range States to communicate their priorities to the CMS and CITES Secretariats and to potential donors. Consuming and trading nations are encouraged in 16.97 to contribute financially to saiga conservation in the Range States, and in 16.99 to reduce consumption of saiga products and implement the recommendations of the Urumqi workshop on the conservation and sustainable use of saigas (September 2010).

4. The standard term of the MTIWP is five years. As with all action planning documents, regular review is an integral component, and activities are being updated periodically by the MOU's Meeting of the Signatories as the need arises to reflect new information or developments.

5. Each meeting of the MOU Signatories is expected to review implementation of the work programme to gauge progress made. Prior to each meeting, Range States, cooperating organizations and others in the saiga research and conservation community are asked to report on their activities as part of the national reporting and/or the project reporting processes using reporting templates endorsed by the First Meeting of the MOU Signatories in 2006.

6. Signatories to the MOU, cooperating organizations and others engaged in saiga conservation are also asked to upload information about activities relevant to the MOU, including photos and other media, to the online Saiga Resource Centre (SRC). The SRC also includes a database of saiga experts. The SRC is a key coordination mechanism for the MOU, as agreed at the Second Meeting of the Signatories in 2010, and highlighted in CITES decisions 14.93 (Rev CoP 16) and 16.98.

7. This draft revised version of the work programme has been produced by the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Antelope Specialist Group and the Saiga Conservation Alliance at the request of the CMS Secretariat. It is intended as a basis for the work of the Third Meeting of the Signatories to the MOU aimed at producing a revised version of the work programme for the period 2016-2020. Proposed changes with respect to the work programme for 2011-2015 are mostly based on an assessment of the current status of the species and individual populations, and of the implementation of the individual measures listed in the work programme since the Second Meeting of the Signatories in 2010. In this regard, it is recommended to examine the present document in conjunction with the Overview Report on conservation status and MOU implementation (UNEP/CMS/saiga/MOS3/Doc.6).

Action requested:

(a) Review the draft Medium-Term International Work Programme, taking into account the MOU's provisions and national circumstances, and provide comments on how it could be improved if necessary.

(b) Endorse the work programme and urge its implementation at national and international level.

(c) Urge interested intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations to support its implementation where possible through financial and in-kind contributions.

MEDIUM-TERM INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (2016-2020) TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE SAIGA ANTELOPE (*SAIGA* SPP.)

Long-term vision: To restore saiga populations to the point that sustainable use can again be envisioned.
Overall goal: That all saiga populations show an increasing trend or their decline is halted over the next five years.

Achievement of this goal is to be assessed through a time-series of population estimates made using appropriate methods, accompanied by an estimate of the associated uncertainty.

	Measures to be taken	**Urgency[1]**	**Timescale[2]**
	Range-wide measures		
1.0	**Implementation**		
1.1	In order to minimise risks to the global saiga population, ensure that all saiga populations have appropriate investment towards achieving the MOU's goal.	1	A
1.2	Agree and approve protocols for routine monitoring and for emergency action in the case of a disease outbreak or mass mortality episode.	1	A
1.3	Encourage all potential partner and cooperating organizations to support the CMS MOU by contributing to the implementation of the Medium-Term International Work Programme.	2	A
1.4	Encourage the saiga research and conservation community to regularly exchange project information and progress reports through the e-bulletin *Saiga News* and the online Saiga Resource Centre, through representatives of the organizations implementing the coordination of the CMS MOU.	2	A
1.5	Encourage additional trading and consumer countries to engage in and support the CMS MOU.	2	A
1.6	Resolve the issue of genetic distinctiveness of different populations.	2	A
1.7	Develop national saiga conservation Action Plans, integrate them into NBSAPs and share them with others through the CMS MOU coordination mechanisms.	3	A

[1] Urgency: 1 - Urgent (crucial for preventing population extirpation). 2 - Important (necessary for stabilisation of numbers). 3 - Useful (will contribute to population restoration).
[2] Timescale: A - Immediate (1-2 years). B - Medium-term (5 years).

	Measures to be taken	**Urgency[1]**	**Timescale[2]**
1.8	Encourage Range States and the conservation community to engage with the international coordination mechanism for the CMS MOU, including national reporting to CMS and the Saiga Resource Centre, to support implementation.	3	A
1.9	Encourage national CMS MOU contact points and CITES Management Authorities, responsible for liaison with counterparts in other Range States and cooperating organizations, to exchange information and technical expertise on saiga conservation.	3	A
1.10	Coordinate conservation efforts and promote cooperation between all stakeholders in Range States and ensure sustainable funding.	1	B
1.11	Encourage all Range States to join CMS.	1	B
1.12	Encourage the Signatories, China and other consumer countries, to conclude and implement bilateral cooperative agreements on matters of mutual interest to support the MOU's implementation.	2	B
1.13	Encourage Range States to coordinate their research and monitoring efforts in order to maximize the synergies between them, where appropriate using standardized, comparable, internationally recognized methods.	2	B
2.0	**Anti-poaching**		
2.1	Develop and update national anti-poaching strategies, with a focus at the population level (including transboundary populations), in order to maximize effectiveness of patrol deployment and intelligence-gathering.	1	A
2.2	Strengthen anti-poaching units, and where needed establish more, for the protection of all saiga populations in all Range States.	1	A
2.3	Strengthen national capacity and legislation to support improvements in detection, processing and prosecution of offenders, including measures to avoid conflicts of interest.	2	A
2.4	Improve the prestige, capacity and coordination of, and provide relevant training for, local and national law enforcement and nature protection officers and other officials, at all levels, where appropriate.	2	A
3.0	**Sustainable Use and Trade**		
3.1	Encourage research aiming to reduce the quantity of saiga horn used in traditional Asian medicines, including market surveys, both on the ground and online, in Range States, consumer and trading countries.	1	A
3.2	Encourage Range States and consumer countries to comply with CITES decisions and recommendations.	2	A

	Measures to be taken	Urgency[1]	Timescale[2]
3.3	Encourage all Signatories to report seizures or confiscations through appropriate channels and encourage trading partners to do the same.	2	A
3.4	All Range States that are members of CITES are encouraged to achieve a Category 1 rating for their CITES-related legislation.	2	A
3.5	Encourage countries trading in saiga products to establish internal market controls for saiga parts e.g., registration of stockpiles, labelling of parts and products and registration of manufacturers and traders, learning from experiences in China.	2	A
3.6	Seek opportunities for training and cross-border cooperation in CITES implementation, identification of saiga products and techniques for countering illegal trade.	2	A
3.7	Where feasible, include saiga conservation and trade issues into higher political agendas in order to raise the awareness of policy makers and ensure higher level political support for the implementation of the MOU and Medium-Term International Work Programme.	2	A
3.8	Encourage cooperation between in-situ conservation and the Asian medicine industry for promotion of saiga conservation and sustainable use, including information sharing and financial support.	2	B
3.9	Encourage all Range States to join CITES.	3	B
4.0	**Work with local people**		
4.1	Expand current incentive-based and conservation-linked livelihood-improvement projects and develop new programmes in all appropriate parts of the saiga's range.	1	A
4.2	Monitor attitudes to saiga conservation activities and evidence of poaching and trade using local-level social research including participatory community monitoring.	2	A
4.3	Strengthen the involvement of different stakeholders, including industry, in saiga conservation and encourage local involvement in, and support for, saiga protection.	2	A
4.4	Promote sustainable rangeland use to enable the cohabitation of people, livestock and saigas.	2	A
4.5	Ensure national contact points are responsible for integration of human factors and public awareness into policy implementation.	2	B
4.6	Build on pilots of saiga-based photo-tourism and promote this as a useful approach to increase local engagement in conservation.	2	B

	Measures to be taken	Urgency[1]	Timescale[2]
5.0	**Awareness**		
5.1	Continue an objective high-profile mass-media campaign at regional, national and local levels in both Range States and consumer countries, addressing saiga conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and explaining the relevant challenges, with a particular focus on local media outlets.	2	A
5.2	Continue to widely distribute information and educational materials on saiga biology and conservation aimed at local people, school children and decision-makers.	2	B
5.3	Support and regularly update existing web-sites about saiga conservation, restoration and sustainable use, including the creation and maintenance of the official CMS Saiga MOU website, and support of the online Saiga Resource Centre.	2	B
5.4	Expand the distribution and profile of *Saiga News*, both in hard copy at a local level and through other media, nationally and internationally.	2	B
6.0	**Habitat and environmental factors**		
6.1	Remove barriers impeding the movement of saiga antelopes or, if not possible, alter fences, roads, railways and other linear infrastructure to allow saigas to pass freely, in line with CMS Guidelines on Mitigating the Impact of Linear Infrastructure and Related Disturbance on Mammals in Central Asia (Resolution 11.24).	1	A
6.2	Support appropriate authorities and developers (industry, government) to ensure that all infrastructural and other development likely to impact saigas has a full impact assessment prior to implementation (including EIA and SEA), and that steps are taken to address any impacts on saigas, following best practice and a mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimise, restore, offset), including producing saiga-specific guidance documents, following the internationally recognized standards IFC1 and IFC6.	1	A
6.3	Carry out research on saiga movement using appropriate technology (including satellite tracking and remote sensing), with a particular focus on improving understanding of the impacts of infrastructure and climate change.	1	A
6.4	Analyse range use based on this information, and make conservation recommendations accordingly, including for the potential expansion of protected areas.	1	A
6.5	Analyse scenarios of likely future change in saiga distribution, abundance, demography and threats in the light of climate change, infrastructure and human factors, and develop a plan for conservation interventions accordingly.	1	B
6.6	Collate and analyse information on saiga habitat and range use, present and past; identify key features, including habitat types used and the effects of anthropogenic disturbance, including climate change.	2	B

	Measures to be taken	**Urgency[1]**	**Timescale[2]**
6.7	Develop a system for archiving and exchange of information recorded on GIS, and explore the possibility of using the Saiga Resource Centre to facilitate this.	2	B
7.0	**Protected areas**		
7.1	Expand and enhance national protected area networks to benefit saiga, with particular emphasis on protecting key areas (birthing and rutting) and migration corridors, based on the recommendations from 6.5.	1	B
7.2	Establish trans-frontier protected areas where appropriate, in the light of saiga distributions, based on the results of a full feasibility study.	2	B
7.3	Establish a network of ecological corridors in order to protect saiga populations during migration	2	B
8.0	**Monitoring**		
8.1	Carry out annual population counts using appropriate methods, including modern non-invasive techniques, in order to obtain a time series that has adequate power to detect whether the Goal has been met.	1	A
8.2	Carry out scientific monitoring of saiga populations, their demographic parameters, health and their wider environment, including trends in sex ratio, mortality patterns, reproductive success, movement patterns, age structure, predators and competitors.	1	A
8.3	Review different monitoring techniques, and adopt 'best practice' methodologies for reliable counting of saiga populations. Identify appropriate sample sizes, timing, and frequency of counts to provide reliable baseline population data. Provide training in standard monitoring techniques as appropriate.	1	A
8.4	Carry out inter-disciplinary ecological research to inform mitigation, control and action in the event of a disease outbreak or mass mortality episode.	1	A
8.5	Disseminate protocols and processes for taking environmental data at the landscape scale and biological samples from individual saigas, sample storage and clinical diagnostics, including training and capacity-building as required.	1	A
8.6	Encourage use of comparable techniques and reporting standards in all Range States, and joint analysis in the case of transboundary populations.	2	B

	Measures to be taken	Urgency[1]	Timescale[2]
9.0	**Captive breeding**		
9.1	Determine the role of captive breeding and other ex situ methods for genetic preservation or reintroduction, and set guidelines on best practice, including approved facilities and reintroductions.	2	A
9.2	Maintain a central database or studbook for all captive populations and create structures and leadership for the database.	2	A
9.3	Promote the exchange of expertise in captive breeding, including study tours between captive breeding centres and research into existing issues and best practices.	2	A
9.4	Establish captive breeding facilities in Mongolia, Uzbekistan and other parts of the saiga range where appropriate, and support existing facilities in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and China.	2	B
	Population-specific measures		
10.0	**North-West Pre-Caspian region population**		
10.1	Develop and officially endorse a long-term programme and action plan to restore and protect the population	1	A
10.2	Improve the function and effectiveness of law enforcement and anti-poaching activities, using modern methods.	1	A
10.3	Create a Working Group under the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation on saiga conservation and research.	1	A
10.4	Develop and implement a programme of saiga research, on issues including the current distribution, migration routes, population structure, genetic variation, habitat assessment and monitoring methods.	1	A
10.5	On the basis of the methodology mandated below conduct regular, scientifically robust, assessments of saiga population abundance and distributions.	1	A
10.6	Strengthen and expand public participation in restoration and protection of saigas, such as visitor centres at captive breeding centres and protected areas, participatory monitoring, education and sustainable livelihoods.	1	A
10.7	Improve the institutional capacity and effectiveness of the national and regional authorities responsible for saiga management, and strengthen their links with the CMS contact point, CITES Management Authority and other administrative units of the Russian Federation and internationally.	2	A

	Measures to be taken	Urgency[1]	Timescale[2]
10.8	Implement activities to restore and protect saigas by supporting and improving the work of existing breeding centres and other institutions, and creating new ones; including developing methods for saiga reintroduction and acclimatisation to the wild.	2	A
10.9	Develop a methodology for non-invasive monitoring of saigas, including methods for censuses, evaluation of population structure and habitats, as well as the impact of predators.	1	B
10.10	Work with local and federal authorities to optimize the network of federal and regional protected areas located in the saiga range, taking into account the current situation, and future environmental change and population shifts.	2	B
11.0	**Ural population**		
11.1	Improve the function and effectiveness of law enforcement and anti-poaching activities.	1	A
11.2	Carry out research into the factors predisposing the population to mass mortality from disease including transmissible diseases from livestock, and implement mitigating measures based on the findings.	1	A
11.3	Strengthen public awareness and engagement activities	2	A
11.4	Build up an information base about saiga distribution, population structure and threats, to act as a foundation for conservation planning and taking into account the trans-boundary nature of the population.	2	A
11.5	Strengthen cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan for management of this transboundary population	2	B
12.0	**Ustiurt population**		
12.1	Strengthen anti-poaching activity in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, including national and transfrontier cooperation between relevant agencies such as inspectors, border guards, customs officers and police.	1	A
12.2	Establish new protected areas based on the results of 12.2, respecting ecological connectivity (for example in southern Ustiurt), and complete the reorganization of the Saigachy reserve in Uzbekistan.	1	A
12.3	Based on 12.2, require developers to carry out mitigation measures to minimise the impact on the population of barriers to movement, particularly the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan border fence, as well as disturbance from infrastructure.	1	A
12.4	Continue research on the seasonal distribution and numbers of saigas and the status of their habitat, with a particular emphasis on the role of infrastructure and border fencing in constraining movement, and on the locations of, abundance and threats to resident populations in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.	1	A

	Measures to be taken	Urgency[1]	Timescale[2]
12.5	Strengthen the implementation of the existing bilateral and/or trilateral cooperation agreements between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to ensure coordinated action	1	A
12.6	Develop and expand public engagement activities, including education, public awareness and conservation-related income-generating enterprises.	2	A
12.7	Ensure public access to information on planning, and implement mitigation measures and compensation for saiga and habitat conservation, in collaboration with infrastructural developers (including oil and gas companies and road/rail developers).	2	A
13.0	**Betpak-Dala population**		
13.1	Strengthen anti-poaching efforts, targeting areas where saigas are particularly vulnerable. Ensure that existing anti-poaching initiatives are funded as necessary and that they operate effectively, including offering an incentive scheme for rangers. Consider higher fines for poaching as a reaction to the mass die-off event in May 2015.	1	A
13.2	Ensure that transport and infrastructural development is carried out with due regard to saiga conservation.	1	A
13.3	Develop and implement a long-term research programme on saiga diseases including national and international expertise, and communicate results to local people and rangers as well as to the general public nationally and internationally.	1	A
13.4	Continue and extend the monitoring of the health status of the Betpak-Dala population, especially at calving time.	1	A
13.5	Institute public engagement activities, including livelihood enhancement, awareness-raising and involvement in saiga conservation, population-wide, building on the activities already under way.	2	A
13.6	Continue to implement protected areas and develop ecological corridors to ensure that the protected area network is relevant to the saiga's current and particularly its future needs, including in the light of climate change, agricultural and infrastructural development.	2	B
14.0	**Mongolia population**		
14.1	Strengthen protection, including adequate funding for anti-poaching patrols, improved protected area management and identifying and implementing grazing reserves.	1	A
14.2	Build local engagement in saiga conservation through livelihood enhancement and public awareness activities, including community rangers, educational initiatives and ecotourism.	1	A

	Measures to be taken	**Urgency[1]**	**Timescale[2]**
14.3	Continue research into the seasonal distribution, with the updated range, migration, reproduction, genetics and mortality of saigas, in order to inform conservation planning, with a particular emphasis on grazing overlap, competition, saiga health and disease transmission between saigas and livestock.	1	A
14.4	Build on progress in developing robust approaches to population monitoring, so as to develop an ongoing monitoring programme that can detect population trends over time.	2	A
14.5	Establish a captive breeding facility to support reintroduction in historical ranges and to ensure that the genetic diversity of the population is preserved.	2	B
14.6	Carry out research into potential threats to population viability in the future, including possible impacts of infrastructural and other development and climate change, in order to inform conservation planning and mitigation.	2	B

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CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

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THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE
Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

NATIONAL REPORT FORMAT
FOR THE CMS SAIGA ANTELOPE MOU AND REPORTING UNDER CITES

This format is used to gather and summarize information on implementation of the Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) for the Saiga Antelope under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.), adopted under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Based on the reports of the Signatories, progress will be assessed and measures updated to ensure the achievement of the MTIWP targets. The reporting period is 1 November 2015 to [MOS4].

Please complete as appropriate and **return to the CMS Secretariat (cms.secretariat@cms.int) stating "Saiga MOU national report" in the subject line**, keeping in mind that not all sections are relevant to each country.

Please report only activities implemented by the relevant government agencies. Supporting activities implemented by other organizations are reported to CMS through Project Reports.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Country name:	
1.2. Is your country a Range State of the saiga?	☐ Yes ☐ No
1.3. Designated Contact Point with responsibility to coordinate MOU implementation (full contact details):	
1.4. Designated CMS Focal Point (for non-CMS Parties please state appropriate contact person):	
1.5. Designated CITES Management Authority: (for non-CITES Parties please state appropriate competent authority):	
1.6. National report submitted by (if different to 1.2):	
1.7. Date submitted:	
1.8. Period covered by the report:	From to
1.9. List of other agencies or organizations that have provided input to this report:	

2. LAW & INSTITUTIONS

2.1. List national policy instruments relevant to saiga conservation (e.g. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan):	
2.2. List any bilateral/international agreements with other Saiga MOU Signatories relevant to the MOU:	
2.3. Has a national strategy or action plan for saiga been developed?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If “yes”, please provide details and attach the Plan:	
2.4. What is the legal status of saiga (e.g. listed in the Red Data Book)?	
2.5. Have there been any changes in the legal status of saiga during the reporting period? Please give details of the change and the reference for the new law/policy.	

2.6. Please provide a brief summary of the provisions of the current legislation with respect to the following activities:	
Hunting of saiga	
Keeping and breeding of saiga	
Possession of saiga parts and derivatives	
Domestic trade in saiga parts and derivatives	
Import, export and re-export of saiga parts and derivatives, and live animals	
Reporting and controlling wildlife disease	
Infrastructure development	
Other	
2.7. Which agencies or departments are in charge of enforcing the legislation?	
Hunting of saiga	
Keeping and breeding of saiga	
Possession of saiga parts and derivatives	
Domestic trade in saiga parts and derivatives	
Import, and (re-) export of saiga parts and derivatives, and live animals	
Reporting and controlling wildlife disease	
Infrastructure development	
Other	
2.8. What penalties are applicable for infringements of the legislation?	
Hunting of saiga	
Keeping and breeding of saiga	
Possession of saiga parts and derivatives	
Domestic trade in saiga parts and derivatives	
Import, and (re-) export of saiga parts and derivatives, and live animals	
Reporting and controlling wildlife disease	
Infrastructure development	
Other	

3. ENFORCEMENT & TRADE

3.1. Do stocks of horns or other saiga products exist in your country?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details on:	
Size and nature of the stocks	
Source of the stocks	
Age (i.e when the stock was constituted)	
Owners of the stocks	
Stock registration and monitoring system	
Controls of these stocks	
3.2. Have any saiga parts and/or derivatives and/or live animals been legally **imported** into your country during the reporting period that are not reflected in the CITES annual reports submitted?	☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, provide details in the following table:

Specimen (i.e. live, part or derivative)	Quantity	Unit of measure	Date	Origin	Country of last re-export	Source	Purpose

3.3. Have any saiga specimens been legally **exported or re-exported** from your country during the reporting period that are not reflected in the CITES annual reports submitted?	☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, provide details in the following table:

Specimen (i.e. live, part or derivative)	Quantity	Unit of measure	Date	Origin	Country of last re-export	Source	Purpose

3.4. Are there any mechanisms in place at the national level to facilitate inter-agency cooperation in combating wildlife crime, for example to facilitate joint investigations, intelligence-gathering and sharing, and to support CITES enforcement?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details:	

3.5. Has your country collaborated with other countries or participated in any international operations aimed at combating the illegal trade in saiga parts and derivatives?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details:	
3.6. What type of support do you believe could improve:	
a) the detection of illegally traded saigas?	
b) the enforcement of related legislation in your country?	
3.7. What happens to confiscated parts and derivatives?	☐ Destroyed ☐ Sold ☐ Stored ☐ Other
Please provide details:	
3.8. Has there been any training undertaken for customs and other law enforcement officers concerning saiga during the reporting period?	
Please provide details:	
3.9. Do rangers **inside** the protected areas (PAs) have the power of arrest?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide details of the arrests undertaken during the reporting period:	
3.10. Which authorities have the power of arrest outside of PAs?	
Please provide name of the authorities and details of the arrests undertaken during the reporting period:	

3.11. What was the funding provided from government sources for saiga-related law enforcement and anti-poaching activities during the reporting period (by year)?	
Customs	
PA rangers	
Authorities outside PAs	
Training	
Equipment	
Other	
Total:	

3.12. Provide details of any **legal off take and trade** in saiga and saiga products during the reporting period, including the making of a non-detriment finding in the case of export from a Range State (please attach the documentation for this finding):

Action	Number, weight and type of saiga products	Responsible Agency	Comments
Domestic Trade			
Taking from the wild			
(Please add more rows as necessary)			

3.13. Have any saiga specimens been seized in your country during the reporting period?	☐ Yes ☐ No

If "yes", please provide the following information for each seizure separately, and to the extent possible:

	Year	Horns/meat/live specimen	Quantity (number of horns, kg of meat or number of carcasses)	Date of the seizure	Country of origin	Country(ies) of transit	Final destination
A							
B							
C							

3.14. In connection with the seizures listed above, please provide, for each case (referring to the same letter as above), the following information:

	Means of transport	Method of concealment	Location of incident	Detecting agency
A				
B				
C				

3.15. In connection with the seizures listed above, please provide also for each case (referring to the same letter), the following information about prosecutions and criminal convictions:

	Number of persons arrested	Number of persons prosecuted	Criminal offence (e.g. poaching, illegal possession, attempted illegal export, illegal sale, etc.)	Number of persons convicted	Penalties
A					
B					
C					

(Please add more rows as necessary for each table)

4. SAIGA POPULATION STATUS*

*** IMPORTANT: Please fill in this section of the report for each saiga population in your country**

4.1. Please name the population(s) in your country and, if possible, provide a map of each population's distribution around the country:		
4.2. Population status:		
Estimated total size during the reporting period (please list when and how this was estimated, e.g. aerial survey)	Estimated % of observed adult males (date and method of estimation)	Estimated trend during reporting period (increasing, decreasing or stable)
4.3. Please estimate how the land covered by the saiga population is used (please indicate on the map):		
% under human settlement	Indicate on the map and name extraction sites (e.g. gas, minerals)	Other land use modes (e.g. % agricultural land, major infrastructure sites)
4.4. List any significant physical barriers - current and planned - in saiga habitat: (e.g. pipelines, roads, railways, canals), and indicate on the map:		
4.5. What conservation measures have been undertaken to mitigate impacts from infrastructure (e.g. planned or established PAs, off-setting)?		

4.6. List and map all existing PAs in the population range:

	Name	Size (km²)	National category	Number of rangers	Number of cars	Number of motorbikes
A						
B						
C						

(Please add more rows as necessary)

4.7. Are **calving areas** covered by existing PAs (if yes indicate which ones, if not indicate areas where the calving occurs)?	
4.8. Are **rutting areas** covered by existing PAs (if yes indicate which ones, if not indicate on the map areas where the rut occurs)?	
4.9. Does patrolling of saiga habitat occur outside PAs?	☐ Yes

	☐ No
Please provide details (name of organization(s) undertaking patrols, frequency, capacity (how many vehicles)):	
4.10. What are the main constraints to effectiveness of these patrols?	

4.11. Rate the impact of the main current threats to this saiga population in your country:

	Zero	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Unknown
Hunting for meat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hunting for horns/trade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Habitat loss	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Livestock competition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Disease	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Climate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Predation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fragmentation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demographic factors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Barriers to migration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.12. Have there been any major disease outbreaks identified in a saiga population in your country during the reporting period?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details and attach reports:	
4.13. Have there been any extreme events reported over the reporting period with a negative impact on saiga (e.g. climatic)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details:	

Please put repeats of this section of the report for each saiga population in your country

5. MONITORING OF SAIGA POPULATIONS

5.1. Is there a national monitoring system for saigas?	☐ Yes ☐ No
5.2. Name of agency/agencies carrying out monitoring:	
5.3. Is there a national database of the results of saiga monitoring?	☐ Yes ☐ No
5.4. Name of agency/agencies maintaining database (including contact person and full contact details, or link to the database):	
5.5. What monitoring methods are used? (Please add implementing agency and period to each entry)	

Population	Aerial survey	Ground survey	Participatory monitoring	Satellite monitoring (collaring)	Expert opinion	Disease surveillance	Other (specify)

5.6. Are there any standard monitoring protocols?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please attach as an annex:	
5.7. What measures have been taken to standardize monitoring methodology with other countries?	
5.8. Please attach the reports of monitoring exercises during the reporting period as an annex to this document	
☐ Attached	
5.9. What are the possible improvements of the monitoring of the saiga population?	
5.10. Is there a need for further capacity-building for the monitoring of the saiga population?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details on needs for capacity-building:	

6. CAPTIVE BREEDING

6.1. Does your country operate captive breeding facilities for saigas (including zoos)?	☐ Yes ☐ No

6.2. List existing captive breeding facilities:

Captive breeding establishments (name, locality, managing agency)	Size	Males	Females	Calves	Origin of the stock (which wild population it has been taken from and when)

6.3. Give details of any cooperation with captive breeding facilities, including in other countries?	
Please provide details:	
6.4. Have any captive-bred animals been transferred to other countries during the reporting period?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details:	

6.5. How many wild animals have been caught for captive breeding during the reporting period?					
Number	Age/sex	When	Where	Where transferred to	Agency/organization leading operation

6.6. Have any captive-bred animals been released into the wild during the reporting period and if so, how?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide following details, number/sex/date/locality:	
6.7. Are any releases planned in the future?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If "yes", please provide details:	
6.8. Are any new captive breeding centres planned?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If 'yes", please provide following details:	

7. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

7.1. Please provide details and attach examples of educational and publicity materials and programmes that have been taking place, e.g. target audiences, type of material:	
7.2. Is any information available on the Internet?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide links:	
7.3. List any surveys carried out to assess public attitudes to saiga over the reporting period:	
Please provide following details: date; organization; brief results :	

8. **RESEARCH**

8.1 Please provide a list of references of the scientific research on saiga related issues conducted over the reporting period (if available attach the copy or link to the publications):	
8.2 Which areas from Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) have been addressed through this research?	
Implementation	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Anti-poaching	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Sustainable Use and Trade	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Human Factors	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Awareness	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Habitat	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Protected Areas	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Monitoring	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Captive breeding	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please provide brief overview of relevance:	
Other	☐ Yes ☐ No
Please indicate topics:	

9. ACTION

Which priority measures to conserve or restore saigas does your country wish to take in the future?

10. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Please list all the attached documents:

UNEP

CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

Distr: General

UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS3/Report Annex 7

7 December 2015

Original: English

THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE
Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26-29 October 2015

SUMMARY REPORTS OF SESSIONS AT THE TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

I. Summary of the CMS saiga MOU technical meeting on disease

1. The delegates to the technical meeting heard a range of talks on the background to the 2015 mass die-off, and on the programme of work being undertaken to understand the causes of the die-off, and develop potential mitigation strategies for the future. The delegates agreed on the following observations:

The need for ongoing monitoring

2. The reason why the 2015 mass mortality was discovered quickly, and why high quality samples could be taken to help with diagnosis, was the presence of a scientific monitoring team in the field at the time that the disease started. This underlines the need for continued investment in a programme of ongoing scientific monitoring of all saiga populations, even in the absence of disease. This monitoring should include routine collection of samples from individual animals where appropriate (i.e. where this activity does not risk the animal's life or welfare), as well as ecological monitoring on distribution, abundance and vital rates.

3. Monitoring and surveillance gives valuable information for saiga conservation and scientific research, even if there is no disease detected. It is also important to monitor the interactions between livestock populations and saigas, both in terms of disease transmission and habitat use.

Estimating mortality

4. It is challenging to estimate the mortality in mass mortality events, even when there is a high level of monitoring beforehand, as was the case in 2015. The number of corpses collected and buried was 150,044. The difference between the number of saigas in the Betpak-dala population, estimated from aerial surveys before and after the die-off, was 211,200 individuals. Both of these figures relate to adult saigas; a similar number of calves will also have died.

5. It is clear that the estimate based on carcass counts was an under-estimate, because further areas were found during a field expedition in June, containing a substantial additional number of dead saigas. It is unavoidable that the difference between estimates from aerial surveys will be biased, but the degree and direction of that bias is not easily estimable.

6. We therefore agree that the minimum number of adult saigas which died in the mass mortality event was 150,044, but the actual mortality was higher.

The need for controls

7. It is important that monitoring takes place both in sites where die-offs are occurring, and in areas which are unaffected, in order to make proper scientific inferences about the factors which may have caused the die-offs.

The need for inter-disciplinary research

8. It is vital that investigations into mass die-offs include a range of scientific expertise. This could include, for example, veterinarians, ecologists, epidemiologists, climate scientists, rangeland scientists, botanists, physiologists, toxicologists, remote sensing experts, pathologists, microbiologists, parasitologists, metereologists, social scientists, conservationists, landscape ecologists, wildlife biologists.

Capacity-building

9. There is a need to build on the progress made in the last few years towards building capacity for wildlife disease monitoring, diagnosis and response. This will ensure that there is a highly trained cadre of professional personnel (scientists, field teams) and decision-makers, with access to the required equipment, who are able to respond to disease outbreaks and to carry out long-term monitoring. There is a particular need to focus capacity-building on field teams, and to work within established institutional structures.

Emergency response

10. Agreed protocols, following international best practice, should be developed and followed in the event of a disease outbreak. Funding and capacity are required in order to mount effective emergency responses. Emergency responses should be additional to, not instead of, routine monitoring of all saiga populations.

Characteristics of the 2015 event

11. Every year saigas die from disease in healthy populations, sometimes in large numbers. This is particularly the case for saigas during the birth period, which is highly stressful in this species due to their particular life history strategy. Mass mortality events are distinguished by their very high proportional mortality.

12. In 2015, mortality in affected herds reached close to 100%, which is biologically highly unusual and concerning. This is the key distinguishing factor which makes it critical to understand this event, for effective conservation planning for the species.

13. The proximate cause of the 2015 mortality event is clear, haemorraghic septicaemia, caused, in the majority, by opportunistic infection with the commensal parasite of saiga, *Pasteurella multocida* serotype B. In addition there is evidence of clostridial enterotoxaemia perhaps in half the cases, also a disease caused by an opportunist *Clostridium perfringens*. These bacteria are latent in the animal in healthy populations. However the triggers and drivers affecting either or both the host and parasite are not yet clear, although there are strong indicators of a potential climatic factor acting at a population or landscape level.

II. Summary of the CMS saiga MOU Technical Meeting on infrastructure

14. The delegates to the Technical Meeting heard a range of talks on the policy processes around infrastructure development internationally, the implementation of the CMS guidelines in Mongolia, and the effects of infrastructure on saigas in Kazakhstan. Following this, two break-out groups were formed, looking at the border fence between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and linear infrastructure. The delegates agreed on the following observations:

Implementing international best practice

15. It is vital that all developments (mineral resource extraction infrastructure, pipelines, roads, railways, fences) adhere to international standards and guidelines on best practice. These include implementing the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimise, restore, offset) in order to compensate for impacts on biodiversity of developments. Developers should be expected to pay not only for mitigation, but for monitoring to assess its effectiveness. International standards and guidelines such as IFC1 and IFC6 already exist to do this, including the CMS Guidelines for Addressing the Impact of Linear Infrastructure on Large Migratory Mammals in Central Asia that was adopted by CMS parties at COP11 and other recommendations and guidelines commissioned by CMS. The application of these guidelines is binding for parties to the Convention and shall be promoted within governments but also to developers and national and international funding agencies. It is particularly important to implement landscape-wide conservation and protection of migration corridors for wide-ranging species such as saigas.

International cooperation on the border fence

16. The bilateral Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan on saiga conservation signed between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which is legally recognized by CMS, requires better and more active implementation. This could include improving communications and exchange of information, for example by holding regular meetings of both government officials and scientists. It is important to continue to push to implement already-agreed mitigation actions over the entire length of the fence, because at the moment this has not been done. This could include engaging with the Eurasian Economic Union regarding the intended function and necessity of the fence.

Engaging scientists in planning decisions

17. It is critical to ensure that the planning process is scientifically based, also decisions made about infrastructure and development. This will reduce risk to wildlife, human and livestock health and the environment more generally. This should be a formal requirement of Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments, but currently is not adequately done. This includes taking scientific advice during development planning, while implementing the development and mitigation, and carrying out scientific monitoring of the impacts of the development and mitigation on wildlife. It also includes retrospective evaluation of impacts of existing developments.

Raising the profile of nature conservation within government

18. It is important that Natural Resources and Agriculture Ministries are involved in discussions with other Ministries on land use and planning, for example, infrastructure, natural resource use, border control, and that they are included in government meetings with companies and developers at an early stage. Taking government and industry officials on visits to

mitigation sites and then holding meetings to explain the aims and outcomes of the mitigation is a good way to raise the profile of nature conservation at the national level. Governments should pay attention to filling the gaps in legislation identified by the CMS's recent reports.

Monitoring impacts on nature

19. It is important to include scientific monitoring of the impact of any developments and associated mitigation. Monitoring pre- and post-construction can give information on the effectiveness of different forms of mitigation, and promote learning and improvement in mitigation methods. This includes monitoring of direct mortality, behavioural changes and distributional changes, as well as of the processes leading to these impacts (such as volume of traffic). Non-invasive monitoring techniques should be used where possible. Satellite-tagging of individuals should be prioritised, as a particularly valuable source of information. This monitoring should lead to action to mitigate impacts.

20. Monitoring can also be carried out cost-efficiently at the border fence to observe injuries and deaths, to see how long carcasses remain before disappearing, and to record signs of poaching. It would be particularly useful to engage with border guards, who are monitoring anyway for other incursions, and could be very helpful, for example in setting and maintaining camera traps and reporting observations in a consistent standard format. This is particularly the case because this is a security zone, so routine monitoring by scientists is difficult.

Interactions between infrastructures

21. There are likely to be synergistic effects of infrastructure developments, which worsen their impacts, and need to be monitored and mitigated. For example, it seems likely from satellite collaring data that migration in the Ustiurt has been heavily impacted by the new railway, which therefore represents an additional barrier to migration as well as the border fence. In Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia the policy is generally to build new roads alongside railways, which could form a double barrier; an assessment of the individual and synergistic impacts of infrastructure is required during planning for mitigation. Flexible approaches to mitigation such as temporary openings at key times should be considered.

The importance of roads

22. Roads need to be more emphasized as potential sources of impact, whether tarmacked or not, because they can act both as barriers and access routes for poachers. Some roads have iron crash barriers which can form a substantial impediment to movement. Potentially damaging roads are particularly associated with mining sites in Mongolia. Evidence from satellite collared animals in Karaganda suggests that saigas are avoiding a new road.

New settlements

23. It is important to engage with people living in new settlements associated with infrastructure to minimise the risk of additional poaching. They will also bring livestock which may compete with saigas for grazing, act as a disease risk, and change access to water. These threats require monitoring and mitigation as part of the planning process.

III. Summary of the CMS saiga MOU Technical Meeting on poaching and trade

24. The delegates to the Technical Meeting were reminded that Saiga spp. Is included in CITES Appendix II, and that as such, international trade in saiga specimens is allowed provided that it is legal, sustainable and traceable through CITES permits. Range states have however decided not to allow exports. Most legal trade registered under CITES is therefore between Asian consumer countries. Overall, legal international trade seems to decline since 2010, while also the number of seizures that involve international trade in saiga has dropped.

25. The delegates then heard a talk about the use of the SMART monitoring system in the Russian Far East. Following this there was an open discussion of the issues around poaching and trade. The delegates made the following observations:

Improving effectiveness of anti-poaching and trade controls

26. Saiga range states have a number of different institutional structures and agencies with responsibility for anti-poaching activities. In order to improve the effectiveness of anti-poaching activities, there needs to be good communication and interaction between these different agencies. For example in Kazakhstan, all law enforcement agencies have annual meetings to discuss collaboration and joint work; and in China, a regional platform brings together police, customs and related authorities to coordinate and improve combating illegal wildlife trade. China proposes to create similar local-to-local platforms, under the CITES framework, with relevant agencies in neighbouring countries to more successfully address illegal trade in saigas. As well as the more traditional wildlife and nature protection authorities, it has proven to be very useful to include other authorities, such as the police, customs and border authorities. Approaches such as the use of sniffer dogs at borders seem particularly effective. Also it is important to use intelligence to improve efficiency of law enforcement actions.

27. SMART, and similar systems, are useful for improving the effectiveness of anti-poaching patrols and collecting information to monitor spatial and temporal trends in observations of poaching signs and wildlife. Incentivising anti-poaching personnel through bonuses can also be useful. These personnel also require proper resourcing and training in order to carry out their work effectively.

28. All range States have strong penalties in place for poaching offences. It is important to investigate and prosecute, rather than just arrest people or confiscate items, in order to strongly disincentivise poachers and illegal traders, understand illegal trade chains, and dismantle smuggling rings where they exist.

29. Online trade in saiga products and derivatives is an emerging trend, which needs to be monitored and tackled in case illegal specimens are offered, using new approaches.

International cooperation

30. There has been some good international cooperation in recent years, for example joint training events for Mongolian and Chinese inspectors and customs officers. Conventions such as CITES and international non-governmental organizations can be very helpful in supporting and promoting this cooperation. It is vital to extend and deepen transboundary cooperation and joint training in order to improve the effectiveness of trade controls. One option for improving international understanding would be to have exchange visits between neighbouring countries, and between range states and consumer states, so that officers can better understand each other's

procedures and priorities.

31. The effect of the Eurasian Customs Union on trade in wildlife products has been analysed by CITES, and the identified challenges need to be dealt with and opportunities need to be identified.

Poaching prevalence

32. Poaching is rife in some populations of saigas, for example in the pre-Caspian population. However there is also hope for improving the situation. In Mongolia, for example, a mixture of engagement with local people, improved anti-poaching and dedicated support from NGOs seems to have led to a major decline in wildlife poaching, which can be seen in the improved conservation status of the saiga population.

Engagement with people

33. Law enforcement needs to be complemented by education and awareness-raising (including for children), livelihoods-focussed interventions, and engagement with local people to change their view on poaching and reduce incentives for illegal killing. During the reporting period, there has been a lot of work done in all countries to engage with people. One innovative approach, from China, is that everyone going abroad gets a text message telling them not to buy illegal wildlife products. In the range states, NGOs have worked hard to engage with local people who may hunt, consume saiga meat, or ignore poaching, and to raise the awareness of children and their parents of the importance and conservation status of saigas.

Integrated approaches

34. The complexity of the issue of poaching and illegal trade requires an integrated approach which includes: monitoring of trade, poaching and markets (physical and online); awareness raising of consumers and hunters about both the laws and conservation status of the species using a range of approaches targeted to different groups; and cooperative work between agencies. Conservation planning needs to take place at an appropriate scale to ensure the conservation of a population, which may be transboundary or between provinces.