



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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NINTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Rome, 1-5 December 2008
Agenda Item 14.0

FORMAT FOR FUTURE PARTY REPORTS

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

I. Background

1. Article VI, paragraph 3 of the Convention establishes that Parties which are Range States for migratory species listed in Appendix I and/or Appendix II should inform the Conference of the Parties through the Secretariat, at least six months prior to each ordinary meeting of the Conference, on measures that they are taking to implement the provisions of this Convention for these species. The reports provide the means by which Parties can assess the status of implementation of the Convention, and decide on future actions. They are also an indispensable source of information for other CMS Institutions, including the Scientific Council and the Secretariat.

2. During the Convention's first decade, the percentage of Parties providing reports averaged 50-55%. At COP.7 in 2002, the introduction of a standard format increased compliance to 65%. For the last COP in 2005 the final percentage of Parties submitting reports was similar – about 63%. Eight Reports arrived after the extended deadline of 31 August 2005 and could not be included in the analysis presented to the Parties at COP.8.

3. Resolution 8.24 on “National Reports” stressed the important role of national reports as vital indicators of the implementation of the Convention, and made a number of recommendations to encourage timely submission, analysis, harmonization and improved format of reports. A copy of the Resolution is at Annex 1.

II. Implementation of Resolution 8.24

4. A further 7 Parties submitted reports between the extended deadline of 31 August 2005 and 31 December 2005. UNEP/WCMC completed a comprehensive analysis for 107 Appendix I species based on all the reports received by 31 December.2005. The results were published on the CMS website in 2006. All the 2002-2005 Party Reports are also available as part of the CMS Information Management System (IMS) and can be found on the CMS website under < http://www.cms.int/bodies/cop/cop8/National_Reports.htm >.

5. The Secretariat gave detailed, written progress reports to the Standing Committee in 2006 and 2007 and submitted proposals for a new online National Report format which the Committee approved at its meeting in November 2007. The new format incorporates questions, which will allow objectives endorsed by Parties in the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan to be monitored.

6. The Secretariat posted the new format on the website and sent it to all Parties on 15 February 2008, setting a deadline of 31 May 2008 for receipt of reports, in accordance with Article VI paragraph 3 of the Convention. The deadline was extended to 15 June 2008. Reminders were included in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd invitation letters to COP.9 sent out by the Secretariat in the period of March – June 2008.

7. At the time this paper was written, 55 Parties (approximately 52 %) of the 107 eligible countries had submitted reports. The analysis and synthesis of National Reports will be contained in conference document UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.10. Parties that have not yet submitted reports are urged to do so as soon as possible so that their information can be included in the synthesis.

III. Online Reporting of Harmonisation

8. The amended format for national reports is designed to be filled in online, but can, if necessary, be downloaded and completed on a paper copy. In fact, all of the 55 reports received to date have been filled in and submitted electronically.

9. In accordance with Resolution 8.24, the Secretariat drew up plans for a full online reporting system, which would allow Parties to provide information online on an ongoing basis rather than by a specified deadline, and in a form which could be then easily analyzed and integrated with data from other sources. The pioneer system developed by one of the CMS Agreements (IOSEA) since 2003-4 will be one of the key models. A summary of the IOSEA system is at Annex 2. The full project proposal for the new system, named SONAR 2010 (System of Online National Reporting) was submitted to the Standing Committee in September 2006. The estimated cost of SONAR that time was €130.000 < http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/31st_stc_meeting/presession/english/Doc_08_Rev_01_National_Reports.pdf >. A copy of the proposal is also contained in UNEP/CMS/Inf.9.19 < http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/31st_stc_meeting/presession/english/Doc_08_Rev_01_National_Reports.pdf >. As there were no funds available in the regular CMS budget to finance SONAR, Parties were asked to provide the necessary financial support through donations. The Secretariat has continued to seek support for SONAR.

10. Since 2007 the Secretariat has been cooperating with a wider project on “Knowledge Management”, financed by UNEP using funds provided by Norway, and undertaken by UNEP-WCMC, to see if it can deliver all or some of SONAR’s objectives. The first stage of this project, covering CBD, CITES and Ramsar as well as CMS and several of its Agreements, focussed on delivering improved access to basic MEA information, including conference resolutions and strategies, by building a common web portal. This has been successfully achieved and can be sampled online at < www.inforMEA.org >. Phase II of the “Knowledge Management” Project, which is still under consideration by UNEP, may be able to incorporate further progress towards SONAR, although the Secretariat believes that a separate or specific sub-project will be required to introduce an IOSEA style online reporting system for CMS and other CMS Agreements.

11. SONAR's objectives would also make a major contribution towards the harmonisation of MEA reporting, by allowing countries which are Parties to CMS and Agreements (including MoUs) to submit information once, which could then be used by each relevant body (e.g. information on water birds would be relevant for CMS and AEWA; information on cetaceans would meet the needs of CMS, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS or the new MoUs in the Pacific and West Africa etc.).

Action Requested:

The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

- a. Note the progress made by the Secretariat since COP.8 in amending the national reporting format.
- b. Request UNEP to continue to seek opportunities to support the Convention through the "Knowledge Management" and related projects.

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RESOLUTION 8.24
NATIONAL REPORTS FOR THE EIGHT AND NINTH MEETINGS OF THE
CONFERENCE OF PARTIES

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its Eighth Meeting (Nairobi, 20-25 November 2005)

Pursuant to Article VI (3) of the Convention which obligates Parties to submit national reports on the measures they are taking to implement the provisions of the Convention;

Noting that 51 reports were submitted to the seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties out of 79 that were due;

Noting that by 31 August 2005, 50 reports had been submitted to the eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties as detailed in Conference Document 8.5;

Emphasising the important role of national reports as vital indicators of the implementation of the Convention; and

Underlining that reporting should be kept concise, focused, avoids duplication and be outcome orientated so that there is more time for the implementation of conservation measures;

The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

1. *Urges* all Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to submit at the earliest date, but no later than 31 December 2005, national reports for the triennium 2003-5;
2. *Instructs* the Secretariat to perform an analysis of the reports received by 31 December 2005 and to make the results available to the Parties, the members of the Standing Committee meeting and the Scientific Council by the end of March 2006, so that the findings can help inform their activities and decision-making;
3. *Urges* all Contracting Parties, in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Convention, to submit national reports for the triennium 2006-8 to the Secretariat at least six months before the ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
4. *Requests* the Secretariat to advise Contracting Parties of the date for submission of their national reports for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to issue reminders if the reports are not received by the said date; and
5. *Further requests* the Secretariat to adapt the national report format for reports to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to ensure Contracting Parties are able to report on-line on the outcomes of taking forward the measures set out in the Strategic Plan for 2006-11. This format, to be agreed by the Standing Committee in consultation with the Scientific Council, should also seek, via the framework of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and in consultation with UNEP-WCMC, to advance harmonization of reporting with other international biodiversity agreements through the development of common reporting modules.

Summary of IOSEA system

Introduction

The Online Reporting Facility of the IOSEA Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding allows users to browse the contents of all reports submitted by the Signatory States. The database presently contains reports from almost all of the 27 IOSEA Signatory States from across the Indian Ocean – South-East Asia region. Information from other countries will be added as they become signatories to the agreement.

Rationale

Many consider the preparation of national reports on the status of implementation of environmental agreements is to be an onerous task. The submission of a report is no guarantee that the contents will actually be used to draw meaningful conclusions and to generate practical recommendations for follow-up action.

For secretariats who receive such reports, compiling the information and presenting it in a uniform format to facilitate comparative analyses is time-consuming. All too often, because of late receipt of reports and resource limitations, reports are simply shelved and their contents remain largely inaccessible or unknown to those who might be able to make better use of the information.

The IOSEA Online Reporting Facility addresses these shortcomings by allowing Signatory States to submit and update information in a standardized format over the internet – anytime, anywhere. The system has sufficient flexibility to allow for in-depth responses, where necessary, and makes use of “tick-boxes” where appropriate to simplify data entry.

Scope of queries

The system is designed to generate reports on several levels. If a user is interested in a particular Signatory State, the full report of that country may be requested. Reports can also be produced in relation to any of the six objectives of the CMP, and any one of the CMP's specific activities (by country or sub-region or all Signatories). Printing out the results of a tailor-made query is as simple as hitting the print command of an internet browser.

What's new in the latest version?

The latest version of the IOSEA Online Reporting Facility incorporates many enhancements, in both the Viewer (accessible to all users) and the Editor (restricted by password to IOSEA Focal Points):

The menu system has been completely overhauled to allow for more flexible queries. For example, one can now generate reports for any grouping of countries for comparison purposes. Selecting and de-selecting countries from a query is easy. Moreover, queries are now “memorised” (retained) so that the user can return to the query page and adjust the original query, as necessary.

In addition to the original offering of full reports and reports by objective and activity, a new category of “thematic” reports has been added.

Several questions – notably those concerning fisheries interactions, economic uses/values, mitigation measures, and management issues – now incorporate informative, colour-coded matrices and bar-charts. These are all created “on the fly”, so that they always contain the latest information supplied by Signatory States.