



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



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CMS INSTRUMENTS

Progress Report on Activities

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

I. BACKGROUND

1. This document is a progress report on activities related to all the existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and the agreements under development, since the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP10, Bergen, Nov. 2011). This progress report is an update of Document UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.9 (Progress in the implementation of Article IV agreements concluded, and development of new agreements). Further historical details of each of the agreements can be found in this document.

II. AGREEMENTS

2. The seven legally binding Agreements are the subject of separate progress reports submitted to the Standing Committee, and these can be found in Documents in the series UNEP/CMS/StC40/21.

III. MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

3. To date, 19 MOUs have been concluded under CMS Article IV. The CMS Secretariat is responsible for the administrative and depositary functions for 17 of the 19 MOUs. Three of these (IOSEA, Dugongs and Raptors) are based in CMS project offices in locations away from Bonn, supported by external funding. For the remaining 14 MOUs, the CMS Secretariat headquarters in Bonn provides secretariat services, within prevailing human and financial resource constraints. Finally, in the case of two MOUs (Ruddy-headed Goose and South Andean Huemul), the CMS Secretariat provides only depositary functions, with secretariat functions being fulfilled by the two Signatories (Argentina and Chile) on a rotational basis.

4. A comprehensive table showing which countries are signatories to which MOUs can be found at < http://www.cms.int/about/all_countries_eng.pdf >. The 19 MOUs have been grouped below, based on their habitat, i.e., aquatic species (mammals, reptiles and fish), avian species and terrestrial species.

AQUATIC SPECIES

AQUATIC MAMMALS

Dugong

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) and their Habitat throughout their Range

5. The CMS project office in Abu Dhabi provides the Secretariat, funded largely by the UAE government.

6. Sri Lanka signed the Dugong MOU on 31 January 2012, bringing the total number of Signatories to 21.

7. In June 2012, the Secretariat received approval from the GEF Secretariat to develop a full-size GEF project (the *Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project*), which builds on previous pilot scoping projects to trial dugong-friendly fisheries management, livelihood support and awareness raising. The seven country partners to the project are Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste and Vanuatu. During October and November 2012, initial National Meetings will be held in each country (excluding Vanuatu) to brief partners on the GEF process, and to discuss the development of country components for the full project document. The country partners, supporting partners and technical advisors will meet to discuss project preparation at the GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project Inception Workshop on 6-7 December 2012.

8. The Secretariat is developing a project entitled “Addressing Net Fishery Bycatch in the Gulf” along with various regional partners such as Emirates Wildlife Society - WWF, UNEP - ROWA, CMS/IOSEA, and the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi. An initial meeting was held on 30 April 2012. The project is envisaged as a phased process of in-country data collection, analysis and consideration of solutions, and final presentation to policy makers. The scope of the project will include by-catch of marine megafauna (turtles, elasmobranchs, in-shore cetaceans as well as dugongs) across the North-West Indian Ocean region.

9. Since CMS COP10, various meetings, events and workshops were organized:

- On 26 February 2012, an event called “S.O.S. - Save our Sirenians” took place in Abu Dhabi. This event saw the launch of the Dugongs, Seagrass and Coastal Communities Initiative to an audience of local business, academic and NGO invitees.
- The Dugong Programme Officer attended the Torres Strait Turtle and Dugong Workshop, 29 February – 1 March in Australia. The Officer also took part in the SPREP Review of the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme Action Plans, 8 – 14 March in Fiji.
- The Dugong MOU Technical Advisory Team met on 12 – 13 July 2012 to provide input and support into planning for the Second Meeting of Signatory States of the Dugong MOU and the GEF project.

10. The Second Meeting of Signatory States of the Dugong MOU will take place on 4-5 December 2012, in Manila, Philippines with the support of the Department of Environment and

Natural Resources (DENR)–Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), Philippines. The meeting will discuss the preliminary results of the dugong catch/incidental catch surveys which are progressing across 4 sub-regions (South West Indian Ocean, South Asia, South East Asia and Pacific Islands), in a total of 13 countries.

Mediterranean Monk Seal

Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Eastern Atlantic Populations of the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*)

11. The Government of Spain continues its coordination and funding role for the MOU, including:

- Coordination and implementation of the Monk Seal Recovery Plan in the Atlantic by the Spanish Ministry of Environment.
- Support to monk seal conservation projects and marine protected areas reinforcement in the African Atlantic range of the species through the Spain-UNEP Partnership for Protected Areas (LifeWeb).
- Support to monk seal conservation and social development projects in Mauritania and Morocco.

Pacific Islands Cetaceans

Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region

12. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU .

13. The Signatories met in New Caledonia on 8 September 2012 for the third time. Supported by representatives of collaborating organizations and country observers, the Signatories endorsed a recovery plan for the endangered humpback whale populations in Oceania, and adopted a five-year Action Plan (2013-2017) for the MOU, outlining priorities for addressing threats, as well as increasing capacity and public awareness in the region. This Action Plan had already been endorsed by the SPREP members at their meeting on the preceding days, thus continuing to make use of the synergies in the region.

14. By means of a correspondence process, the Signatories will identify medium-term priorities for implementing the Action Plan. The meeting also endorsed the offer from WDCCS to continue its coordinating role for the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

15. A CMS Pacific Officer was recruited in January 2012, for one year, to assist CMS with the coordination of this and other MOUs, and to promote CMS recruitment in the Pacific Islands Region. The Officer is based at SPREP in Samoa and funded largely by CMS, but also supported by SPREP.

16. At the above meeting, Signatories stressed their appreciation to CMS and SPREP for the work undertaken to date. They made an urgent call to donors to allow the post to continue into 2013.

17. The USA signed the MOU on 27 September, 2012, bringing the number of signatories to 15.

Western African Aquatic Mammals

Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia

18. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU. Due to limited resources, no further action has been taken since COP10. The idea of establishing a Technical Advisory Group, along the lines of that operating under the PIC MOU, remains a possibility. The Secretariat is also considering whether the coordination arrangements for this MOU could be combined with that of the Atlantic marine turtles, mentioned below.

AQUATIC REPTILES AND FISH

Atlantic Turtles

Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa

19. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU, while, since October 2005, coordination services for the MOU had been provided by the Coordination Unit known by its French acronym URTOMA. However, owing to the lack of funds to continue supporting URTOMA, this arrangement was terminated in July 2012. The CMS Secretariat is currently seeking other coordination arrangements, including the possibility of combining with the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia, as mentioned above.

IOSEA Turtles

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU)

20. The IOSEA Secretariat is provided by CMS, in the UNEP offices in Bangkok, and is funded through voluntary contributions by Signatories.

21. The Sixth Meeting of the IOSEA Signatory States was held in Thailand, 23-27 January 2012, preceded by a two-day session of the IOSEA Advisory Committee. The meeting was originally scheduled for early December 2011, but severe flooding in and around Bangkok in the latter part of 2011 forced the meeting to be postponed. The organization of the meeting was supported by contributions from the Governments of France and the United States.

22. One of the highlights of the meeting was the finalization of a proposal to create a Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles in the IOSEA region. A successful network will optimize use of limited resources through better coordination of activities, and help to diffuse adverse socio-economic impacts over a wider geographical scale. Delegates fine-tuned the contents of the proposal, before adopting a resolution that sets out a schedule for finalizing the selection criteria for the network, soliciting site nominations from Signatories and proceeding with the formal launch of the network at the next Meeting of Signatory States, which is scheduled to take place in the first half of 2014.

23. The meeting also reviewed the working relationship that had been developed with various

intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations operating in the region, such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystems Project (BOBLME). It was noted that there was still scope for greater collaboration, to the extent that Secretariat capacity allowed, as well as greater reciprocal participation in IOSEA meetings by partner organizations.

24. The Secretariat presented a report on IOSEA's financial situation, which had shown some improvement over the past three years, thanks to continued voluntary contributions from traditional donors, as well as new support from several other Signatory States. The meeting endorsed the proposed budget for 2012-2014, together with an indicative scale of contributions, with the understanding that all financial support remained voluntary.

25. Generally, it can be said that the Secretariat has fully recovered from the months of disruption caused by severe flooding in Thailand in the latter part of 2011 – the effects of which were felt well into the first half of 2012.

Sharks

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks

26. The CMS Secretariat has provided the Interim Secretariat to the Sharks MOU since its entry into effect in 2010.

27. The First Meeting of Signatories took place in Bonn, Germany from 24-27 September 2012, attended by 20 of the 25 Signatories, and approximately 80 other Range States and observers. The meeting:

- adopted the Conservation Plan for Migratory Sharks;
- agreed to continue the interim Secretariat arrangement in Bonn, with a three-year budget to be funded by voluntary contributions, and placed in a Trust Fund to be established;
- established an Advisory Committee, with agreed Terms of Reference and 8 of the 10 members nominated; and
- adopted a procedure for amending the MOU, including the species list (Annex 1).

28. There are currently 25 Signatories to the MOU. The most recent being the United Kingdom, which signed in June 2012. The Syrian Arab Republic recently expressed its intention to sign.

29. Two NGOs, the Humane Society International – US and the Humane Society International - Australia, signed the MOU as Cooperating Partners during the first Meeting of Signatories.

30. The CMS Secretariat together with its outpost offices in Washington (USA) and Apia (Samoa), Abu Dhabi (UAE) and Bangkok (Thailand) is active in recruitment efforts to increase membership in the MOU.

AVIAN SPECIES

Aquatic Warbler

Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler

(*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

31. While the CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU, BirdLife International, through its UK partner, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) continues to provide coordination services. This arrangement covers administration of the MOU; Aquatic Warbler data management; facilitating communications across the species range; supporting existing conservation projects; monitoring; direct active conservation work and research and development of new conservation and research projects, including fundraising.

Birds of Prey (Raptors)

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia

32. The CMS Office in Abu Dhabi provides the Interim Coordinating Unit (ICU), funded largely by the UAE government.

33. COP10 listed the Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) on CMS Appendix I and established the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) through Resolution 10.28. The inaugural meeting of the STF took place on 29 March 2012 in Abu Dhabi. The objective of this meeting was to bring together key stakeholders to finalize Terms of Reference for the STF and to agree on its Work Plan for 2012–2014, including the adoption of a protocol for an international Single Species Action Plan for the Saker Falcon. The Meeting Report was published in July 2012 together with the Revised Work Plan.

34. At COP10, the following seven countries and REIO signed the MOU: Belgium, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Monaco and Romania. In May 2012, France and the Slovak Republic also signed, bringing the total to 40 Signatories. In addition, the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey signed the MOU as a Cooperating Partner in December 2011.

35. A number of projects and initiatives have been identified that offer real potential synergies with the Raptors MOU.

- The Interim Coordinating Unit has recently agreed a contract with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) to develop enhanced field capacity in Chad, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan, to gather critical information on the wintering ecology of Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*).
- The first Pan African Vulture Summit (PAVS) was convened by the Vulture Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission in Kenya, on 16-20 April 2012. One outcome of the summit was the adoption of a Resolution urging African governments to conserve and reduce threats to vultures across the continent.
- Plans are underway to commission a Species Coordinator for the Sooty Falcon (*Falco concolor*) to work with Range States and other interested parties to develop a Conservation Action Plan covering its breeding and wintering grounds, as well as the species' extensive flyway.

36. Awareness-raising efforts have included: the publication of a bi-lingual leaflet about the Raptors MOU, its mission and function in May 2012; the organization of a highly successful 'Bird Migration Watch Day' at Pointe de Grave in Western France on World Migratory Bird Day in May 2012; and the issuance of a press release on the importance of vultures for the International Vulture

Awareness Day in September 2012.

37. The 1st Meeting of Signatories is scheduled for 9-11 December 2012 in Abu Dhabi. It represents the first opportunity to bring together representatives from the 40 Signatories and 3 Co-operating Partners to the Raptors MOU, since it came into effect in 2008. The meeting will review the implementation of the Raptors MOU Action Plan and identify future policies and priorities.

Grassland Birds

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats

38. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU.

39. The First Meeting of Signatories took place in Paraguay in 2010. The Second Meeting of Signatories had been proposed for 2012. However, due to a lack of funding and capacity, the meeting was postponed and no decision has been made regarding rescheduling.

40. The Working Group on Grassland Birds in South America, established in 2009, has recently published a paper on “Ecology & conservation of grassland birds in south-eastern South America: a review” in the Journal of Field Ornithology (September 2012).

41. The paper addresses the needs of threatened migratory grassland birds that cross international borders in southern South America. More precisely, it aims to analyze the factors affecting south-eastern South America (SESA) grassland birds and declining populations, knowledge and gaps, current bird conservation initiatives and proposed conservation measures. The paper calls for governments of the SESA countries to provide much-needed funding to implement the specific measures detailed in the CMS action plan adopted during the First Meeting of Signatories in Paraguay in December 2010.

Great Bustard

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

42. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU.

43. At the Second Meeting of Signatories (November 2008, Ukraine) it was acknowledged that Great Bustard population trends were improving in Germany, Austria and Hungary. However there was a concern that the population trend might be negative in Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Romania. Romania took action in 2012 to avoid the construction of wind turbines in prime Great Bustard habitat. Until recently there had been plans for the construction of a wind farm within and around a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Natura 2000 site in the Salonta region, Bihor County, Romania, which provides important wintering habitat for the Great Bustard. In July 2012 the CMS Secretariat received confirmation from the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests that it will ensure that the wind farm will be built at an alternative site, thereby limiting conflict with Great Bustards, as well as Saker Falcons (*Falco cherrug*), White-tailed Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Eastern Imperial Eagles (*Aquila heliaca*). The conflict between the Great Bustard and infrastructure will be high on the agenda of the Third Meeting of Signatories.

44. The Third Meeting of Signatories was scheduled for 2012, when the Medium-Term

International Work Programme expires. The Government of Hungary, offered to host this meeting, but the Secretariat was unable to organize it, owing to the workload of other initiatives. Planning between the Government of Hungary and the Secretariat is underway to hold the meeting in early 2013, providing Signatories think there is enough progress to warrant it.

High Andean Flamingos

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of High Andean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus andinus* and *Ph. jamesi*) and their Habitats

45. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat to this MOU. In 2011, the Secretariat partnered with BIOTA, the Centre for Studies in Theoretical and Applied Biology (Centro de Estudios en Biología Teórica y Aplicada) in Bolivia to organize monitoring activities on two populations of High Andean Flamingos.

46. The main aim of the study was to investigate reproduction and active nesting sites, count the breeding colonies in priority sites and identify the principal threats to the birds' conservation during the 2011-2012 breeding season. Monitoring activities started in August 2011 and provided essential data on the current conservation status of these populations, information that helps establish population trends. The project was completed in June 2012 and a preliminary report is available on the CMS website < http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2012/04_apr/nw_250412_flamingos_e.htm >.

47. The First Meeting of Signatories to the MOU was planned for November 2011 in the margins of COP10. Due to a lack of registrations from representative countries, indicating there would be no quorum, the meeting was postponed. New meeting dates and venue are yet to be identified in consultation with the Range States.

Ruddy-headed Goose

Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Ruddy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*)

48. The CMS Secretariat acts as depositary of the MOU, while secretariat functions are provided by the Signatories themselves on a rotational basis.

49. Recent activities undertaken in Chile for the conservation of the declining Ruddy-headed Goose populations include a hunting ban in the area "San Gregorio" in the Magallanes commune, which accommodates the main breeding sites for the species. Furthermore, Chile launched a programme for the prevention and control of invasive species in Magallanes, which deals with monitoring, research and education activities, the control of selling exotic pets in the region, the construction of protected breeding sites for the Ruddy-headed Goose and other conservation measures. The programme will run for three years until 2014.

Siberian Crane

Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*)

50. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU, while the International Crane Foundation (ICF) continues to provide coordination services. Funding of US\$10,000 has been provided by CMS to cover the salary of a part-time coordinator based in Moscow for one year starting in September 2012. Activities include; information exchange, of a newsletter, public

awareness and education programs, and the maintenance of the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination website (www.sibeflyway.org) as a dynamic information platform under the MOU.

51. Significant progress has been made to engage hunters, hunting agencies, and border guards in crane conservation in Central Asia. Ecological education activities were conducted with hunters at designated and potential new sites of the Western/Central Asian Critical Site Network (WCASN) with financial support by Mohammed Bin-Zayed Species Conservation Fund and administration by ICF.

52. In China, a water control structure has been proposed for the outlet to Poyang Lake, which is by far the most important wetland in East Asia for wintering waterbirds and critical habitat for more than 98 percent of the world population of the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane.

53. In Russia, the “Flight of Hope Project”, which promotes Siberian Crane reintroduction through teaching captive-reared chicks about migration routes by leading them with ultra-light aircraft, is starting to be implemented with funding from the Russian Government. On 5 September 2012 Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, supported the project by meeting staff members and joining a training flight with young cranes.

54. The proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of Signatories (Bonn, June 2010) have been published in English and Russian, including the conservation status report, the new Action Plan for the WCACN, as well as the revised Action Plans for the three Siberian Crane Flyways.

Slender-Billed Curlew

Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Slender-Billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*)

55. No action has taken place for the Slender-Billed Curlew MOU since COP10.

TERRESTRIAL SPECIES

Bukhara Deer

Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*)

56. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU.

57. The First Meeting of Signatories to the MOU took place on 20 November 2011 in the margins of CMS COP10. Three of the four Signatory states (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) attended the meeting, with Turkmenistan not being represented. Participants also included representatives of the two cooperating organization of the MOU, WWF Russia and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC). The meeting reviewed briefly practical implementation issues, discussed approaches to information management, including reporting, and adopted a new National Reporting Format.

58. Participants also agreed to extend the geographical scope of the MOU to cover all Range States of the Bukhara Deer (i.e. adding Afghanistan) and invited Afghanistan to sign the MOU. It was further decided to develop a Medium-term International Work Programme (MTIWP) with key priority activities for the conservation of Bukhara deer, to be completed by email consultation. .

However, input from Signatories is still pending and the MTIWP yet to be finalized.

Saiga Antelope

Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.)

59. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU, with coordination functions provided by the two NGOs listed below.

60. Following major mass mortality events of saiga antelopes in the Ural population (Western Kazakhstan) in 2010 and 2011, another die-off occurred in 2012, this time about 917 saiga were found dead in Northern Kazakhstan. It is not the first time such a die-off has been recorded from the Bekpak-dala population in central Kazakhstan, the largest of the five remaining saiga populations. Fortunately the 2012 die-off was relatively small compared to the one in 1988, when approximately 270,000 adult saiga (only 8 per cent male) of a total of 368,000 animals were reported dead. CMS is working with the Kazakh authorities to investigate the reasons for such mass mortality events and to implement prevention measures. Epidemiological research, preventive action by animal health authorities and careful sampling are vital to mitigate future outbreaks and are part of the 2011-2015 Medium-Term International Work Programme adopted under the MOU.

61. The two coordinating organizations of the MOU, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) and the Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA) have been working to set up a comprehensive website, the Saiga Resource Centre, which will be launched in due course. The website will also include a project database featuring all activities and projects currently undertaken for the conservation of saiga antelopes.

62. Emerging threats for the critically endangered Ustiurd saiga population, migrating between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, include the construction of a fence along the international border between both countries, which might have serious negative barrier effects on saiga antelopes. In order to address this problem the CMS Secretariat, in cooperation with ACBK and SCA, Fauna and Flora International (FFI) and the Committee on Forestry and Hunting in Kazakhstan, is in the process of developing practical guidelines in which will outline best practice in the design of wildlife friendly fences and rail roads. Such guidelines will contain concrete recommendations for how such a fence (or overall border demarcation infrastructure) and rail road could be made saiga friendly, if construction cannot be avoided.

South Andean Huemul

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of the South Andean Huemul (*Hippocamelus bisulcus*)

63. The CMS Secretariat acts as depositary of the MOU, while secretariat functions are provided by the Signatories themselves on a rotational basis.

64. The first official bilateral meeting in the framework of the South Andean Huemul MOU was held in Coyhaique, Chile, on the 4th and 5th of November 2011. The meeting was attended by national and regional experts and representatives of the public and private sector of the two Signatory States.

65. The meeting highlighted the importance of the Aysén region for the conservation of the Huemul, reviewed priority actions of the national Action Plans and discussed common populations and protected areas for the endangered species. Chile and Argentina nominated their National Focal Points for the MOU and agreed to strengthen their fundraising activities to retrieve funds for the

implementation of the Action Plan.

66. The meeting acknowledged the outcomes of the technical workshop which took place in Valdivia, Chile (26-27 September 2011). With representatives of sectoral institutions and of regional and local government, the workshop developed the draft joint Action Plan for the Conservation of the South Andean Huemul, which is currently being reviewed by the relevant Ministries in both countries and should enter into effect soon.

West African Elephants

Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)

67. The CMS Secretariat provides the secretariat function for this MOU. At the Second Meeting of Signatories in Niger in 2011, it was agreed to request the CITES Programme on Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) to provide coordination services through its West Africa Office. However, before this arrangement could be effected, the MIKE Programme experienced significant funding cuts, requiring it to close its West Africa office, thus preventing it from extending coordination functions to the MOU.

68. The CMS and CITES Secretariats remain in close contact regarding the future funding plans for MIKE, which may be extended to other endangered species, such as apes and rhinos, and which may enable the programme once again to provide coordination services.

IV. REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AGREEMENTS

The Central Asian Flyway (CAF)

69. The Central Asian Flyway (CAF) covers at least 279 populations of 182 migratory waterbird species that cross the borders of 30 countries of North, Central and South Asia and the Trans-Caucasus on their annual migrations. Many of these populations are declining rapidly and the wetlands, grasslands and other habitats upon which they depend are seriously threatened along the CAF due to uncontrolled hunting, habitat degradation, unsustainable water management, and lack of law enforcement and conservation capacities.

70. There is an urgent need for science-based and internationally co-ordinated conservation measures, aimed at ensuring the survival of species and their habitats as well as sustainable benefits to people. In order to address these needs and to identify coordinated actions to conserve those species, CMS convened two meetings of Range States (Tashkent 2001, New Delhi, 2005) with technical and logistical support of Wetlands International, the second of which broadly agreed on the content of the CAF Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats.

71. However, the CAF Range States had not yet reached a formal decision on their preferred legal and institutional framework to support implementation of the CAF Action Plan. Until recently, lack of funding prevented the Secretariat to organize a formal negotiation meeting. However, with strengthened Secretariat capacity on Central Asian issues through the provision of a German-funded Junior Professional Officer, as well as other fundraising efforts, it has become feasible to convene a third negotiation meeting, now scheduled for 12-13 December 2012 in Abu Dhabi, in conjunction with the First Meeting of Signatories to the Raptors MOU.

72. Delegates to the December 2012 meeting will be invited to decide on one of the following two options for a legal and institutional framework for CAF, namely:(1) Extending the geographical

area of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) to encompass the entire CAF region and incorporating the CAF Waterbird Action Plan under the Agreement; or (2) Establishing the CAF Waterbird Action Plan as an independent international cooperative conservation framework outside the CMS Framework. (see CMS/CAF3/Doc.9 for more details).

Central Eurasian Aridland Mammals

73. CMS Recommendation 9.1 recognized that the populations of many Eurasian migratory mammals are in a profoundly unsatisfactory state of conservation and that these ecosystems and their unique migration phenomena are a crucial area of action for CMS. The Recommendation also requested the Scientific Council, in cooperation with the Secretariat, the Government of Mongolia and other concerned Parties to pursue the Central Eurasian Aridland Concerted Action and associated Cooperative Action, including the development of an Action Plan and status reports for all species concerned.

74. Through the Saiga Antelope and the Bukhara Deer MOUs, CMS is already working together with many countries and organizations to enhance the conservation of migratory mammals and their habitat in Central Asia.

75. Against this background and to fulfil its mandate, the CMS Secretariat has strengthened its engagement in Central Asia and prepared a first draft of an Action Plan, which was discussed at the 17th Meeting of the Scientific Council in 2011 (CMS/ScC17/Doc.13). While the meeting did not reach an agreement on concrete next steps, finalizing the Action Plan may provide a roadmap for further CMS engagement in Central Asia.

76. This would include the further development of the existing draft Action Plan as a strategic framework document that outlines the main conservation needs, common problems and proposed activities for the conservation of migratory mammals and their habitat in the region. As such, it would increase synergies between the existing species MOU s and reduce overlap in addressing similar problems, such as habitat fragmentation and barriers to migration, capacity building, information sharing, transboundary cooperation, illegal hunting and trade, etc.

77. After consultations between the Secretariat and the Chair of the Scientific Council in early 2012, and subject to the availability of external funding, the following activities are envisaged to finalize the existing draft Action Plan and ensure participation and support of Range States and other relevant stakeholders:

- In cooperation with the Scientific Council conduct a gap analysis and needs assessment to obtain a comprehensive picture of the situation in the region and to identify priorities for conservation, in order to provide a sound information base for the final Action Plan; and
- A meeting of Range States and national and international stakeholders to discuss, finalize and adopt the Action Plan, identify priority activities for pilot projects, and agree on coordination arrangements and financial mechanisms to ensure sustainable implementation.

78. The Secretariat is currently seeking funds to implement these activities, collectively known as the *Central Asia Initiative* to ensure continued support for Central Asian issues within the Secretariat.

The Argali Mountain Sheep (*Ovis ammon*)

79. The Argali sheep is a threatened migratory ungulate inhabiting mountains, steppe valleys and rocky outcrops in Central Asia. Many populations in the transboundary Mountainous regions suffer from grazing pressure; habitat loss and excessive poaching that have caused dramatic declines in many local populations.

80. Following the proposal of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, the species was listed on CMS Appendix II at COP10 (November 2011).

81. In March 2012, representatives of governmental agencies, hunting companies, scientific institutions, NGOs from the Range States and international organizations met for a workshop co-organized by the German Government (BfN, GIZ) to discuss ways to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of argali through transboundary cooperation. As a first joint action following the meeting, the Argali network website was created as an informal platform for knowledge exchange (<http://argalinetwerk.wordpress.com>).

82. Considering the great interest of the Range States to enhance transboundary conservation of argali, and in line with CMS Resolution 10.16, the Secretariat commissioned a study, in close collaboration with, and funded by GIZ. The purpose was to review existing initiatives and conservation activities for Argali in Central Asia in order to assess the current needs and gaps in conservation and management of the species; as well as to analyse the role CMS could play in this regard.

83. The report (attached as an annex) concludes that a non-binding MOU and Action Plan appears to be the most suitable instrument for Argali under CMS. The report also outlines different options as to how a new argali instrument could be successful in terms of sustainable financing, servicing and coordination to ensure effective implementation.

84. The Secretariat invited feedback from Range States on the recommendations, and their further interest and commitment to promote transboundary Argali cooperation, including on the maintenance of the web-platform, nomination of technical experts for the drafting of the Action Plan and sustainable coordination mechanisms. Range States were also invited to nominate representatives from their country to participate in a Working Group to be established in order to develop and steer the process for the establishment of an international argali action plan.

85. The GIZ has provided funding for a consultant to draft the action plan and facilitate a meeting of the working group to finalize the document, which is planned to take place in November/December 2012 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. It is envisaged that participants will also identify a sustainable coordination and servicing mechanism that ensures implementation of the Action Plan.

86. The initiative to develop an Argali Action Plan (and MOU), together with other single species MOU s (e.g., Saiga, Bukhara deer) could form part of the broader Central Asian Initiative mentioned above.

Central African Elephants (*Loxodonta africana*)

87. At COP10, the Secretariat presented a study: *Analyzing Gaps and Options for Enhancing Elephant Conservation in Central Africa* (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.46). It outlined three such options:

i) a binding Agreement for the coordination of Central African elephant habitat and corridor

protection;

- ii) no Agreement, but provision of capacity support for increasing African elephant habitat protection; and
- iii) no Agreement at present, but facilitated consultations with Central African CMS Parties, to articulate their specific needs and if any Agreement is actively sought, levels of contribution and longer-term commitment.

88. Resolution 10.16 made no specific decisions relating to the way forward for this initiative, but did stipulate in paragraph 6 a list of conditions to be addressed in developing new instruments. A key requirement was the need for a country or organization to be committed to leading the development process.

89. Cameroon, supported by Congo, indicated its support for Option 3, and a willingness to take a leading role in this process. To date, the Secretariat has not received any response from Cameroon regarding its enquires on this.

Instruments under development for which no progress has been made since COP10

90. There has been no progress in the development of the following instruments, since COP10.
- Agreement on the Conservation of the Asian Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis undulate macqueenii*)
 - Cetaceans in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia
 - Pacific Marine Turtles
 - Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Sahelo-Saharan megafauna
 - But the Secretariat is supporting conservation activities through the Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes project mentioned in CMS/StC40/22
 - Sub-Saharan African Bats

Next steps

91. CMS Resolution 10.16, paragraph 5, instructs the Secretariat to develop for consideration and adoption at COP11 a policy approach to the development, resourcing and servicing of agreements in the context of Resolution 10.9 on Future structure and strategies of the CMS and the CMS Family. The approach proposed by the Secretariat is further elaborated in UNEP/CMS/StC40/13 on the Future Structure and Strategies of CMS.

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) take note of the progress in implementation of agreements already concluded; and
- b) give any further guidance to the Secretariat on agreements under development.