



**53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

*Bonn, Germany, 19 – 20 October 2022*

UNEP/CMS/StC53/Report

**REPORT OF THE MEETING**

**1. Opening remarks and introductions**

1. The Chair of the Standing Committee (StC), Rohit Tiwari, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC53). He briefly reviewed the main items on the agenda and emphasised the need to complete the StC tasks before the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (COP14). He noted the agenda items including discussing and deciding on next steps for the [CMS Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 \(SPMS\)](#), the [Programme of Work \(POW\) 2020-2023](#), and the implications of the [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) in the context of migratory species.
2. The CMS Executive Secretary, Amy Fraenkel, added her welcome on behalf the CMS Secretariat, welcomed the Chair in his new role, and congratulated him on his appointment as CMS National Focal Point for India. She highlighted that the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee Chair, Patrick Omondi, would present a report to StC53 on the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee meeting held the previous day. She gave the customary thanks, looked forward to COP14 in Uzbekistan in 2023 and highlighted agenda items on the progress made by the Secretariat on the CMS POW 2020-2023; resource mobilisation; the CMS budget; and the possible follow-up to the SPMS, which would conclude in 2023.
3. The Secretariat made some housekeeping announcements.

**2. Rules of Procedure**

4. The Secretariat referred participants to the 'Rules of Procedure for StC Meetings' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.2](#)) and invited the StC to consider the proposed amendments, including suggestions to address several inconsistencies and to adapt certain rules where meetings were hosted virtually.
5. The StC reviewed and revised the draft document in plenary on 19 and 20 October.
6. StC53 adopted the revised 'Rules of Procedure of the StC' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Outcome1](#)) which can be found in Annex 1 to this meeting report

**3. Adoption of the Agenda and Meeting schedule**

7. The Chair referred participants to the 'Provisional Agenda and Documents' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.3.1/Rev.2](#)) and 'Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.3.2/Rev.1](#)). He invited comments, questions and proposed additions to the agenda.
8. StC53 adopted the Provisional Agenda and Documents and Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule as tabled.

9. There were no interventions.

#### **4. Report from the Depository**

10. The representative of Germany summarised the Report of the Depository ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.4](#)), noting that, since the Report for the triennium 2017-2019, the Central African Republic, Turkmenistan and the Kingdom of Bahrain had acceded to the Convention, so Parties now numbered 133.

#### **5. Reports from the Standing Committee**

##### **5.1 Reports from Standing Committee members**

11. The representative of Monaco, on behalf of the Europe region, summarised Europe's Regional Report ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.5.1.3](#)), noting that they had received contributions from Belgium, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Monaco and Spain on activities undertaken since COP13. She highlighted a number of activities including: Belgium's new National Action Plan on Marine Litter 2022-2027; Georgia's draft law on Biological Diversity establishing legal regulation mechanisms to respond to the EU Birds and Habitats Directives; Germany's Action Programme for Insect Conservation and dedication of financial support to species which might be negatively affected by renewable energy projects; Italy's amendment of its constitution in 2022 to introduce principles of protection of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems in the interests of future generations and analysis of migratory birds species using Mediterranean flyways to guide windfarm planning; Monaco's development of legislation to enforce its environmental code including the adoption of a measure relating to the prevention of pollution including plastic pollution; and the earmarking of circa €90m by Spain to retrofit powerlines.
12. The representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of Latin America and the Caribbean, presented highlights of the regional report contained in document [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.5.2.1](#). He thanked the Secretariat for the support and work done after the inclusion of the Jaguar in the appendices, which included the identification of and coordination with stakeholders in the Range States and the CITES Secretariat and the Road Map 2030. He also highlighted that the next steps include the preparation of national plans and that connectivity is essential for the effective conservation of the Jaguar. The representative of Peru, on behalf of South and Central America and the Caribbean Region, described a plan for the conservation of the Jaguar developed and adopted by Peru, which goals include the reduction of illegal hunting, habitat conservation, institutional and governance strengthening and awareness raising.
13. The representative of New Zealand reported on behalf of the Oceania Region and thanked the Secretariat for the new report template. The report is contained in document [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.5.1.2](#). She highlighted key regional actions, including: contracting by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) of a cetaceans expert to review cetacean diversity status and threats in the Pacific island region; the launch in June 2022 by SPREP of a Pacific Island Regional Marine Species Programme 2022-2026 including five marine species action plans; and development by Australia of a Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Christmas Island Frigate bird which is listed on CMS Appendix I as well as Underwater Anthropogenic Noise Guidelines.

## 5.2 Reports from Standing Committee Observers

14. A representative of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) Secretariat, referred to the 'Report of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS)' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.5.2.1](#)). The 27th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (AC27) took place in September 2022 and agreed on 27 Action Points dealing with bycatch, resource depletion, marine debris, use of stranding records, and offshore renewable energy. AC27 also discussed: the recent Nord Stream gas leak and its potential effects on cetaceans and their prey; the issue of dolphin hunts in the Faroe Islands; and the threat that jet skis pose to small cetaceans.
15. The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Executive Secretary reported on AEWA activities since COP13, highlighting that Armenia, Turkmenistan and Cameroon had joined the Agreement, bringing the total number of Parties to 83. He highlighted that: the EU had agreed to ban the use of lead gunshot in wetlands under REACH (the EU's framework regulation for chemicals); and AEWA MOP8 had taken place on 26-30 September 2022 in Budapest, Hungary where Parties had shown their confidence in the Agreement through increasing the budget by 10%, enabling creation of a new position for the coordination of Species Action Plans and increasing the financing of the African Coordinator position.
16. He also reported on behalf of EUROBATS, highlighting the publication on 8 April 2020 of a joint [Notification to the Parties](#) of CMS, AEWA and EUROBATS on facts about bats and COVID19.
17. The representative for BirdLife International highlighted the publication of the [State of the World's Birds 2022](#) report launched in September 2022 which welcomed the CMS approach to establishing dedicated thematic multistakeholder working groups (WGs) and task forces to facilitate implementation of its resolutions and decisions. Recalling [CMS Resolution 12.25](#) (coastal ecosystems), she recommended the Secretariat to explore with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) the possibility of establishing a global coastal forum to further enhance coastal ecosystem conservation in terms of protection management, wise use and restoration including through evidence on solutions. She said that this was also supported by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The World Coastal Forum establishment group was created, sponsored by China, with the task of developing such a forum and held its fourth meeting in November 2022, with a first World Coastal Forum conference expected to be held in April 2023.

## 6. Report of the COP Presidency

18. The representative of India highlighted the activities that India had undertaken since COP13 contained in the 'Report of the COP Presidency' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.6](#)), including:
  - A two-day online meeting on 6 -7 October 2021 with Central Asia Flyway (CAF) Range States;
  - Development of a field guide for monitoring Ganges and Indus River dolphins and associated aquatic fauna and habitat which was released in October 2021; and
  - A national ban on the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of single use plastic items as of 1 July 2022.

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

19. The Scientific Council (ScC) Chair, Narelle Montgomery, presented her Report ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.7](#)) and drew attention to the document on the 'Implementation of the POW 2020-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.15](#)) which also contained information on the ScC workstreams.
20. The workstreams and projects anticipated to be submitted to COP14 for consideration, included:
- Work from several WGs including the Expert Group on Animal Culture and Social Complexity, the WG on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds; and the Intersessional WG on Linear Infrastructure. Invitations had been issued by the CMS Secretariat and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Secretariat seeking members for the Intergovernmental Task Force to address the illegal killing of birds (ITTEA) in the EAAF;
  - A review of the status of CMS-listed species, particularly those included on CMS Appendix I, designed to elaborate a current picture of the situation in relation to these species, with a detailed assessment for a few of them;
  - A report on the impact of direct use on CMS Appendix I species to be considered at the next ScC and then presented to COP14;
  - Consolidated guidelines on the impact of light pollution on migratory species, to be reviewed by ScC and submitted to COP14;
  - Workshops to develop additional guidance convened by the COP-appointed Councillor on Marine Pollution, Mark Simmonds, had provided input;
  - Upcoming reports and recommendations from two Intersessional WGs, one on the African and one on the Asiatic Cheetah, following the review of the species conservation status to be provided to the ScC for consideration; and
  - Several SSAPs.
21. StC53 took note of all the reports.

## **8. Report of the United Nations Environment Programme**

22. The Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was presented by Tita Korvenoja, UNEP, via a video recording and is contained in document [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.8](#).

## **9. Report from the Secretariat**

23. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary to introduce this agenda item. The Executive Secretariat introduced the report 'Implementation of the POW 2020-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.15](#)) and was proud that, in spite of the challenges with COVID as well as administrative and funding issues, the Secretariat had managed to achieve a lot since COP13 and StC52. She explained that her colleagues would report on the main activities of the Secretariat since StC52 under agenda item 15.
24. StC53 took note of the verbal report.

## 10. Financial Matters

### 10.1 Implementation of the CMS Budget

25. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary to introduce this item and she thanked the members and Chair of the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee, which had met the previous day, for their guidance, in particular on the issue of arrears which continued to be problematic for the Secretariat. She highlighted uncertainties and the challenges in supporting meetings and the day-to-day work of the Secretariat, including the fluctuation of the exchange rate of the Euro against the US dollar and requested guidance from the StC53. Most core funding went to staffing which enabled the Secretariat to fulfil on the POW.
26. The Secretariat referred participants to the document 'Implementation of the CMS Budget' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.10.1](#)). €2.8million was expected from 133 Parties, whereas, as of September 2022, only €1.6million had been received, resulting in a deficit of €1.2million with 84 Parties due to pay their 2022 contributions. Unpaid contributions, including for 2022, totalled €2.4million.
27. Some figures in the Report had had to be revised due to exchange rate fluctuations and travel cost increases. The approved budget for 2021 was €2.7million and expenditure €2.1m, with some savings due to the COVID pandemic restrictions on travel and that more meetings had been held virtually. The approved budget for 2022 was €2.8million, with €33,900 being redeployed for a language translation contract. Actual January-July expenditure was €1.6million and revised projected expenditure August–December €1.1million, with the revisions being due to the effect of exchange rate fluctuations on staff costs and increased airfare costs.
28. Uncertainties and challenges regarding the 2021-2022 budget included:
- That corporate initiative costs (Umoja) had been passed on to individual Secretariats and had increased significantly since 2018 and StC52 had recommended that these costs be passed on as costs of the Secretariat in the budget;
  - A retroactive salary payment to all active and separated staff members resulting from the 2016 Comprehensive salary survey for general service staff in Bonn, Germany which had been delayed until May 2022 but had been unplanned in the budget;
  - That the actual total cost of professional staff was higher than standard salary cost adopted by COP13;
  - The weakened Euro currency against the US\$; and
  - Discontinuation of the waiver of Programme Support Costs (PSC) for donor contributions to support meeting participants from developing countries.
29. The Secretariat anticipated over-expenditure amounting to €116,000, including PSC, for 2022-2023 under the Staff and Personnel budget item. To cover the estimated over-expenditures, the Secretariat therefore proposed to redeploy the estimated unspent balance of the 2021-2022 budget for staff training (€30,824), IT services (€62,074) and travel cost of Sessional Committee members for SC meetings (€10,000). Furthermore, the Secretariat proposed to shift the funds of €100,744, including PSC, from the 2021 budget to the 2022-2023 budget period within the same budget categories: €62,414 for staff travel and €26,740 for contractual services.
30. Projections for the Trust Fund balance were that there was an opening balance as at 1 January 2022 of €2.1million, contributions for prior years received in 2022 equalled €346,000, contributions received for 2022 equalled €1.6million and contributions were

expected of €485,000. Estimated expenditure for 2022 was €2.7million and the provision for exchange rate fluctuations was €42,000, meaning the estimated Trust Fund balance as at 31 December 2022 was projected as €1.7million. The 2023 estimated opening balance was €1.7million and the estimated closing balance by 31 December 2023 would be €850,000 but less the proposed deployment and shift of funds, the estimated closing balance was expected to be €633,000.

31. Activities to address the shortfall during the implementation of the 2021-2022 budget included: a new webpage on the CMS website regarding the status of assessed contributions to the CMS Trust Fund; efficiency gained through long-term agreements of other UN Agencies for procurement of services, especially provision of translation services; conservative use of core budget funding; and pursuing an alternative method of paying small amounts of assessed contributions.
32. StC53 was invited to take note of the report, provide guidance on how to address the arrears and adopt the proposed redeployment and shift of funds by the Secretariat.
33. The Chair of the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee reported on the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 21 October 2023 in Bonn. The Sub-Committee recognized that having unpaid contributions was a persistent concern within the Convention and considered how to provide guidance on how to address the issue of arrears. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Secretariat continue to:
  - publish the status of arrears of contributions on the CMS website as there had been some significant but not substantial improvement post the publication of arrears;
  - engage bilaterally with the Parties and use diplomatic channels to address this issue;
  - improve on communication with Parties by expanding the list of alternates for communication in relation to arrears; and
  - request UNEP to help in securing the arrears.
34. The Chair of the Subcommittee reminded that in the StC52 the need for clarification about whether [Resolution 13.2](#) paragraph 10 (representatives of Parties in arrears for more than three years should not be allowed to hold any office in the Convention bodies) only applied at the time of selection or appointment was raised.
35. The Sub-Committee recommended that the StC approve the Secretariat's proposal concerning redeployment and shifting funds to address this issue provided they were within the approved budget of the triennium.
36. The representative for New Zealand acknowledged the Secretariat's considered and careful budgeting and expressed concern about the arrears. She agreed there was a need to clarify what "Convention Bodies" in Resolution 13.2 (10) mean and whether they apply intersessionally.
37. The representative for Germany expressed concerned about the arrears and also supported the need to clarify Resolution 13.2(10) and emphasised the need to ensure the sustainability of funding and the functioning of the Secretariat, saying the sustainability of the Convention was at stake and urging StC members to secure the financing required to address the arrears. The representative for the UK encouraged the engagement of all Parties and welcomed further clarification of Resolution 13.2 (10).
38. The representative of Australia supported the need for further clarification of Resolution 13.2 (10) and wondered what that process of clarification would be. She recalled COP13 had not supported the management action not allowing Parties three years or more in arrears to submit resolutions/proposals and wondered if that had also been considered by the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee. The Finance and Budget Sub-Committee Chair

said the Sub-Committee had considered the proposal before COP13 and found it to go against the principles of the Convention mandate, as it would result in a country which was in arrears not being able to request to list a threatened species for example. He proposed the COP consider this issue again.

39. The Secretariat explained that, while there was not a agreed definition of “Convention bodies” under Resolution 13.2(10), in practice it had been narrowly interpreted as “holding office in the COP, StC and Scientific Council”. A broader interpretation could include WGs or task forces established under them. “Holding office” was in practice considered the nomination and election to take part as a member or to Chair one of the Convention bodies.
40. The Executive Secretary said that a new resolution was being drafted under Resolution 13.2 as part of the budget submission from the Secretariat which would be sent to the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee for review and then submitted to the COP. Any member could submit comments in relation to that. She also requested guidance on what to do when a representative was appointed/elected and the Party became in arrears during the term of that appointment and suggested this was a question for the COP.
41. StC53 took note of [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.10.1](#) and the report of the Finance and Budget Sub-Committee and agreed with the Secretariat’s proposal in relation to arrears and StC53 adopted the proposed re-deployment and shift of funds.

## 10.2 Resource mobilization

42. The Secretariat presented the document ‘Resource Mobilization’ ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.10.2](#)), noting the POW 2020-2023 had guided all efforts to mobilize resources through issuing a notification regarding: funding priorities; making tailored requests to individual donors; participating in and/or leading on submission of grant applications; and collaborating with partners.
43. The Secretariat received resources which enabled the implementation of many priorities as outlined in the Implementation of the POW 2020-2023 ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.15](#)) (see Agenda Item 9 above) while several aspects of the POW still required support. €500,000 in voluntary contributions had been received from the governments of Australia, France, Germany, Malta and the UK. This did not include the 2020-2021 financial resources obtained for the implementation of activities spanning over the intersessional period. Considerable amounts were also pledged by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD) on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to continue to host the CMS office-Abu Dhabi for 2020-2023. Further resources were secured by the Raptors, Sharks and IOSEA MOUs for their operations.
44. The Secretariat then focused on the relevance of the conclusion of negotiations on the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund (GEF8) which had received total pledges of US\$5.25billion from 1 July 2022-30 June 2026. This was a nearly 30% increase compared to GEF7, with the envelope for Biodiversity being 36% of the total and 31% of the total amount being for 11 integrated programmes. GEF8 introduced several important positive changes, including full flexibility for use of GEF8 STAR country allocations that: could be applied across the three Rio Focal Areas thus achieving multiple outcomes; could be matched with incentive funds with a ratio of three to one for Impact Programmes (IPs); and were set at a minimum threshold to expand opportunities for countries to participate in more than one IP.
45. GEF was not the financial mechanism for CMS, as per CBD Decision XIII/21 and CMS Resolution 10.25 (Rev.Cop12). CMS could, however, provide advice on national implementation of CMS priorities and convey the advice to the GEF through CBD. This

process was followed in 2020 for the development of the GEF8 Programming Direction. CMS priorities were considered by the CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) and the CBD proposal for the four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities for GEF8 ([CBD/SBI/3/6/Add.4](#)) to be adopted by CBD COP15 in December 2022 did recognize CMS and other MEA priorities and their contribution to the implementation of the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and seek to support synergies.

46. The Secretariat had provided inputs in all stages of the development of the GEF8 Programming Direction and many of the CMS priorities were included. GEF8 areas of work of particular relevance to CMS was outlined in the Annex of [CMS Notification 2022/005](#). Entry points included: the Wildlife Conservation for Development IP with a focus on overexploitation of wildlife for illegal and unsustainable uses domestically; a focus on the importance of ecological connectivity; and work on wildlife health, plastic pollution and sustainable infrastructure.
47. The Secretariat was preparing a detailed mapping of CMS mandates and initiatives against GEF8 Programming Directions to support countries and the GEF in setting priorities which would be circulated shortly; liaising with GEF agencies to explore possibilities for collaboration on project implementation; and GEF, UNDP and UNEP fast track (GEF7) support to all GEF-eligible countries at the start of GEF8 to revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to align them with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).
48. The Chair invited StC53 to take note of the document and make any comments, provide advice regarding possible sources of funding for areas of the POW that were still unfunded and liaise with their GEF counterparts to ensure that their allocations support projects and initiatives that conserve and sustainably use migratory wildlife and their habitats.
49. The representative for India welcomed the GEF funding support ideas and urged Parties to undertake the implementation of key activities outlined in the POW in collaboration with corporates through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding.
50. StC53 took note of [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.10.2](#).
- 11. Progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023**
51. The Chair introduced this agenda item.
52. Dave Pritchard, Consultant, introduced the document 'Assessment of Implementation of the SPMS 2015-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.11](#)) which provided an update on the situation since StC52, including insights on lessons learned about strategic planning in general, the impact of the SPMS and approaches followed by other MEAs. The Assessment responded to several Decisions from COP13 and was the background for consideration of the options for follow-up to the SPMS to be discussed under agenda item 12.
53. The SPMS 2015-2023 contained a preliminary suggestion for indicators to measure progress which was further developed in stages over COP12 and COP13. [Decision 13.1](#) requested the Secretariat to finalise the indicators and look at filling important gaps in data and information for the monitoring process. StC52 acknowledged lack of funding had meant the work had not been fully completed. However, the format for national reporting had since been revised which enabled information on progress to be gathered, added to which scientific assessments of the conservation status of migratory species had been fed in. Annex 1 of the Assessment summarised the state of indicator availability.



54. Decision 13.1 requested the Secretariat to prepare a full assessment of the SPMS implementation, if resources allowed, to submit to COP14 and to enable the StC to consider options for a follow-up to the SPMS. The fact that information from the national reports for the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14 and the Migratory Species Conservation Status Report were not yet available, as well as lack of resources, meant that a full assessment was beyond the scope of work feasible to complete in advance of StC53.
55. Despite those constraints, a summary relating to implementation of each of the targets in the SPMS had been compiled drawing on the analysis prepared for COP13 and other sources and was provided in Annex 2. Overall, positive progress had been made towards the achievement of some SPMS targets, especially those relating to awareness raising, improved governance arrangements and area-based conservation measures. Despite notable progress in these areas, however, progress towards the achievement of some other targets was lacking, thereby hindering ultimate progress overall towards the SPMS goals. In particular, the reduction or mitigation of the impacts of various threats and pressures on migratory species, including unsustainable use, was considered a priority area for intensified efforts. Favourable conservation status represented the ultimate objective of many of the SPMS targets, and the indicators assessing progress towards the achievement of an improvement in this status revealed a varied picture depending on the taxonomic group assessed and the method of assessment.
56. The document also included an assessment of the extent to which the strategic purposes of the SPMS as a whole had been achieved.
57. Emerging findings included:
- Having an agreed plan of priorities seemed to have been useful in positioning CMS externally, for example in promoting concepts of migration systems and ecological connectivity;
  - There was not much evidence that the SPMS had been the main driver of implementation efforts by Parties, the Secretariat and others;
  - The ambition for the SPMS to be an "umbrella" for linked sub-targets across the CMS Family had not worked;
  - Structural coherence of a set of goals and targets expressing a hierarchy of objectives and links to reporting were useful but the targets themselves were of mixed quality in terms of measurability and communicability, and were not prioritised; and
  - Tying the SPMS targets as a migratory version of the global biodiversity targets had had some benefits but these biodiversity targets had now changed and so the SPMS was still backwards facing in this regard.
58. [Decision 13.4](#) requested the Secretariat to look at strategic planning in other Conventions, and the document gave summaries for Ramsar, CITES, the World Heritage Convention, AEWA, the Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC). There was a basic common philosophy of purpose, but the scope and complexity varied. There was little objective information on the comparative impact or effectiveness. The document also noted how each had factored in the post-2020 GBF.
59. The Chair asked the StC to take note of the document and opened the floor for comments.
60. The representative for Germany asked Mr Pritchard what his assessment would be of the function and added value of a future Strategic Plan. Mr Pritchard suggested this would be the discussion under agenda item 12 and that there were several options as to its purpose

such as a high-level political positioning document or a scheme of concrete implementation priorities to speak to the strategic objectives.

61. StC53 took note of document [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.11](#).

## **12. Options for follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023**

62. The Executive Secretary introduced documents: 'Options for a follow-up to the SPMS' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.12](#)) and 'Additional Information to Support Consideration of the Options for follow-up to the SPMS' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.12/Add.1](#)).

63. The Executive Secretary referred to Decision 13.4, requesting the StC to consider, taking into account the experiences for the development of the current SPMS 2015-2023, available options for a follow up to the SPMS 2015-2023 and take a decision on the next steps.

64. Key take-away lessons from analysis of SPMS 2015-2023 were that the SPMS provided some benefits including: helping to position CMS externally, for example in promoting migration systems and ecological connectivity; and that many of the goals and targets articulated key objectives for migratory species. On the other hand, in addition to the shortfalls highlighted by Mr Pritchard under agenda item 11, the SPMS did not advance the integration of CMS priorities into NBSAPs and the SPMS was not adopted by the MEAs that dealt with migratory species as their own strategic plan.

65. The SPMS 2015-2023 had been developed to mirror the Aichi biodiversity targets adopted under CBD in 2010 in the context of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Significant developments had taken place since the adoption of the SPMS 2015-2023, such as the publication of the IPBES 1st Global Assessment (2019) which indicated a potential extinction of up to a million species. There had been increased attention on the value of species for ecosystems services, such as through the IPBES Pollinators Assessment (2017) and Sustainable Use Assessment (2022). In the current text of the Post-2020 GBF, species were included in at least three targets and CMS priorities were also better reflected in numerous global policy initiatives and GEF Programming for the first time.

66. CMS had advanced much globally-relevant science and policy on migratory species and there had been a concerted effort to put this into practice such as through the Energy Task Force, where there had been an encouraging uptake of new partners. The Executive Secretary also highlighted work on over-exploitation, domestic illegal and unsustainable taking, area-based conservation and restoration, pollution and climate change.

67. The Executive Secretary suggested a few principles and approaches for the development of a follow-up to the SPMS 2015-2023, including:

- Focusing on core mandate and key priorities for achieving conservation of migratory species;
- Ensuring a greater scientific foundation for actions;
- Mapping priorities for migratory species to demonstrate linkages and contribution to implementation of other global policy priorities; and
- Addressing synergies across migratory species instruments in a pragmatic way.

68. She also highlighted some key considerations for any follow-up to the SPMS 2015-2023, which were further developed in [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.12/Add.:](#)

- Timeframe and approach, with a need to consider the start date and time span for any follow-up plan;

- The desired approach and elements of any follow-up plan;
  - Whether all elements needed to be delivered as a package, or if any elements could be elaborated in the future; and
  - Process, costs and feasibility.
69. Five basic options were laid out in the documents as a basis for discussion:
- 1) Discard the idea of a Strategic Plan and work instead through other tools such as Programmes of Work and COP Resolution mandates;
  - 2) Extend SPMS 2015-2023 until 2030 with minimal changes to its content;
  - 3) Update SPMS 2015–2023 to better reflect CMS priorities and no longer tie it to the expired Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
  - 4) Develop a new Strategic Plan linked to the GBF once it was adopted; or
  - 5) Develop a new Strategic Plan in an iterative way based on the priorities defined by CMS, which was the Executive Secretary’s preferred option for CMS going forward.
70. StC53 was given some questions to consider and invited to take a decision on the next steps concerning options and encourage Parties and stakeholders to provide financial and technical support. The Chair opened the floor for discussion.
71. The representative for New Zealand, speaking on behalf of Oceania, could see the benefits of having a Strategic Plan in providing strategic direction based on current biodiversity trends and threats and linked to performance, as a framework for prioritizing and to elevate the CMS profile. She expressed a preference for Option 5, however she felt there was merit in aligning the Strategic Plan as much as possible with the GBF and other related MEAs. She supported a short and targeted document potentially complemented by a prioritization document which could be updated more regularly. She proposed that the timeframe could be two-three trienniums with the supporting documents being updated regularly, and that it be agreed by COP14 if possible. She was flexible about the process to develop it but was leaning towards the option of a StC WG with representatives from each region.
72. The representative for Georgia, on behalf of the European region and supported by the representatives for India, Kenya and Germany, urged retaining the vision and mission of the SPMS 2015-2023 but proposed identifying prioritised headline objectives or targets from the existing SPMS or new ones, focused on the CMS mandates only and measured based on the POW results and national reports. She supported the development of a short document, to be submitted to COP14 for consideration and aligned with the GBF 2030 timeline. Concerning the process to develop the Strategic Plan, she supported a StC WG including Observers.
73. The representative for Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of the South and Central America and the Caribbean Region, expressed support for option 5, with development of a Strategic Plan based on basic principles and priorities of the Convention. The core part of the plan should be submitted to COP14 for consideration, while other elements such as indicators could be postponed to COP15 as needed. The process of development of the new Strategic Plan could be coordinated by the StC, linking to other Parties from the regions as needed. 2030 was a suitable horizon for the plan. Pursuing synergies with other frameworks through the plan was important, without losing focus on CMS priorities.
74. The representative for India expressed support for previous statements from New Zealand and Georgia. He supported the development of a new Strategic Plan focused on the aims and objectives of the Convention, with preference for a short document with clear objectives and implementable targets.

75. The representative for Kenya aligned himself to previous interventions, expressing support for the development of a new plan with a strategic focus on convention mandates. Synergies with other conventions and frameworks were worth pursuing through the plan on issues of common interest. He expressed support for option 5 and for the establishment of a WG under the StC tasked to produce a draft Strategic Plan for submission to COP14 for consideration.
76. The representative for Germany emphasised that the function of the Strategic Plan should be to promote CMS in the global governance system and identify CMS' priorities to strengthen CMS identity. He supported Option 5 with a high-level "lean" document prepared for COP14. He pointed out this was important to promote CMS within the GBF arena, to demonstrate that CMS was contributing to the implementation of the GBF and open access to potential funding to support GBF implementation.
77. The Chair noted the broad consensus on the need for a Strategic Plan and agreement on Option 5 and creation of an StC WG. He referred to the draft Decision in [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.12/Add.1](#) as well as the options for the WG terms of reference (TOR).
78. The Secretariat introduced the draft decision and TOR for the StC WG ([CRP12](#)) and the Chair then opened the discussion. It was shared for consideration and then reviewed and adopted in plenary on 20 October 2022.
79. The final Decision on the 'Follow-up to the SPMS 2015-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Outcome2](#)) can be found in Annex 1 to this meeting report.

### **13. Cooperation between the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPES) and CMS**

80. The Secretariat introduced document 'Cooperation between IPBES and CMS' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.13](#)) and invited StC53 to take note of the document and provide any guidance to the Secretariat as regards further engagement with IPBES and the promotion of the inclusion of an assessment on connectivity in the IPBES rolling work programme.
81. The Secretariat recalled that COP13 had stressed the importance of cooperation with IPBES by adopting [Resolution 10.8 \(Rev.COP13\)](#) (Cooperation between IPBES and CMS), which, *inter alia*, instructed the Secretariat to maintain cooperative working relationships with IPBES and to participate in its meetings as appropriate; requested the StC to engage in relevant scoping processes and review of drafts of the IPBES thematic assessments adopted by IPBES-7 to ensure elements of connectivity were integrated; and requested the Secretariat to support the ScC in engaging in relevant scoping processes of the new IPBES thematic assessments adopted by IPBES-7, promote the inclusion of an assessment on connectivity in the IPBES rolling work programme by IPBES-9 in 2022 and report to StC52 and COP14. COP13 further specified the mandates to the SC and the Secretariat (Decisions [13.12](#) and [13.15](#)).
82. The Secretariat reported on activities in relation to IPBES including: that the Secretariat and the COP-appointed Councillor on Connectivity had contributed to the scoping processes for the IPBES Thematic Assessment of the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health (Nexus Assessment) and the IPBES Thematic Assessment of the Underlying Causes of Biodiversity Loss, Determinants of Transformative Change and Options for Achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity (Transformative Change assessment) and the scoping reports for these were finalised and adopted by IPBES-8 in June 2021. The Secretariat also participated in the external reviews of the Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species, the summary for policy makers of which was finalized and approved by IPBES-9.

83. CMS and the WHC had submitted a joint proposal for an Assessment on Connectivity with a complementary proposal submitted by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). IPBES-7 decided to defer consideration of this Assessment to IPBES-9 so COP13 requested the Secretariat to promote the inclusion of an Assessment on Connectivity in the IPBES rolling work programme by IPBES-9. The Secretariat had engaged in IPBES-9 in various forms, and, together with the UNCCD Secretariat and the WHC had submitted a document for IPBES-9's consideration. At IPBES-9 the CMS Executive Secretary delivered a joint statement supporting the inclusion of an Assessment on Connectivity in the IPBES rolling work programme. IPBES-9 decided to postpone the proposal to IPBES-10 for its consideration and requested the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) and the Bureau to prepare an initial scoping to form the basis of a fast-track assessment on ecological connectivity with input from relevant MEAs and other organisations.
84. The CMS and UNCCD Secretariats and the World Heritage Centre had then prepared a document titled 'Possible Basis for an Initial Scoping Report for a Fast-track Assessment on Ecological Connectivity by IPBES' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Inf.3](#)), compiling possible elements for the initial scoping report and had made it available to IPBES MEP at its 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. The MEP deferred consideration of this document until the next MEP meeting.
85. The ScC Chair reported that she had attended the last MEP meeting virtually. She urged the StC to reach out to IPBES colleagues and stress the importance of having a tangible product on connectivity that would help guide enhancement or recognition of connectivity requirements and assist IPBES Member Parties to implement connectivity-related commitments. IPBES-10 would be a critical decision point.
86. The Executive Secretary added that her understanding was that the IPBES Secretariat had put out a call to Members for additional proposals to be considered by the MEP to decide which would go forward. A possible reason for the delay in considering [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Inf.3](#) could be that IPBES was considering integrating it into another assessment. Connectivity was relevant on many levels and urgent which was why it was proposed to fast-track.
87. There were no interventions and StC53 took note of [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.13](#).

#### **14. Organisation of COP14**

88. The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce this agenda item.
89. The Executive Secretary thanked Uzbekistan for their offer to host COP14 and highlighted this would be the first CMS COP in Central Asia. Deliverables would include conservation status report on migratory species; the Atlas; other scientific reports, for example on taking of species for domestic purposes; opportunity to update the POW, for example on climate change; a new Strategic Plan; many decisions on species and guidelines, for example on light pollution and 'swim with' interactions with aquatic species. She urged everyone to start to consider the opportunities to make this an incredible COP.
90. The Secretariat outlined the document deadline and timeline for the meeting to be held during the second half of October 2023 and said the precise dates of COP14 were yet to be set.
91. The representative for Uzbekistan provided some background on his country, highlighting several environmental issues and conservation projects, and Uzbekistan's memberships to CMS and other MEAs. He emphasized that Uzbekistan had recently hosted global and regional multilateral events and the facilities available and welcomed the Executive

Secretary's recent mission. He looked forward to COP14 taking place in the second half of October 2023 in Samarkand, with the exact date to be confirmed.

92. The Chair thanked Uzbekistan and StC53 took note of the information provided. There were no interventions.

### **15. Implementation of the Programme of Work (2020-2023)**

93. The Chair referred participants to the document 'Implementation of the POW 2020-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.15](#)), noting StC53 was being asked to take note of the document and to provide comments and guidance to the Secretariat.

94. The Secretariat highlighted that the POW 2020-2023 was adopted at COP13 and had guided the work of the Secretariat and its fundraising efforts. The 'Report on Implementation of the POW 2020-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.15](#)) provided a detailed account of the status of implementation since StC52, with a narrative report on progress, challenges and planned steps and an overview table with details of funds raised and donors using a traffic-light rating system. 34% of the POW had been completed, 37% was in progress and 23% not initiated yet due to lack of funding. She invited Parties to consider the document and consider providing additional capacity or resources.

#### **15.1 Scientific Advisory Services**

95. The Secretariat highlighted the main developments since StC52 including: the completion and launch of an Atlas on Bird Migration in the Eurasian-African region (<https://migrationatlas.org/>); progress in the development of a report on the conservation status of migratory species as directed by COP13 and an assessment of the impact of direct use including trade on the conservation status of CMS Appendix I-listed species; and development of additional guidelines on the mitigation of impacts of light pollution on taxa of migratory species and awareness raising on and promotion of solutions to light pollution impacts through the World Migratory Bird Day Campaign.

#### **15.2 Aquatic Species**

96. The Secretariat provided an update on Aquatic Species team activities. On species conservation, several SSAPs were being developed including on Hawksbill Turtles (adopted), Angelshark (being finalisation for submission to COP14), Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (in consultation for submission to COP14) and the Loggerhead Turtle (in progress on implementation).

97. The Sharks Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) were preparing for MOS4 in February 2023 with ongoing work including working with partners such as IUCN on Rhino and Mobiliid rays, Guitarfish and Pelagic Sharks; appointment of a Dugongs MOU coordinator; progress on the IKI Seagrass Ecosystem Services project; and subregional and regional task force meetings of the MOU on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA). On addressing threats, Guidelines for Recreational In-water Interactions with Marine Species were being finalised for submission to the ScC and then to COP14, with funding from the Government of Monaco. On marine pollution, COP13 had appointed a COP-appointed Councillor, Mark Simmonds, a Work Programme had been developed at the last ScC and the impacts of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Nutrients Pollution had been identified as priority areas. There was also ongoing work on the Conservation implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity, with an in-person meeting to be held in early 2023.

### 15.3 Avian Species

98. The Secretariat reported on the activities of the Avian Species team, including:
- Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP): a training expedition in Guinea Bissau and a workshop in Nigeria took place in 2022, with a focus on developing a West Africa Action Plan addressing belief-based use and related trade;
  - Development of a new, agreed POW for the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (AEML WG) for the period 2021-2026, with new priorities and a new Coordination Unit for the AEML WG; and
  - Cooperation with the Government of India in relation to the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) to plan a Range States meeting in 2023.
99. Activities on addressing threats included:
- The Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Special Focal Points (SFPs) and CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on IKB in the Mediterranean (MIKT5) took place in Valencia, Spain, and adopted, amongst other documents, a Guidance document on National Action Plans and a new Model Law and legislative guidance;
  - A road map to tackle IKB in the Middle East and the development of an initiative for the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq; and
  - Increased Energy Task Force (ETF) membership, with ETF6 meeting having agreed on new priorities and the organisation of several in person and online events. An in-person ETF7 is planned for 2023.

### 15.4 Terrestrial Species

100. The Secretariat reported on the Terrestrial Species Team activities. Activities on conserving species included:
- MOS4 to the Saiga Antelope MOU took place online on 28-29 September 2021 and adopted an International Medium-term Work Programme and a report on the feasibility of sustainable management and trade of Saiga Antelope which had been submitted to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Kazakh government; and
  - Completion of an assessment by the UNEP Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) of Cameroon and Nigeria's national legislation and policies implementing key CMS/Gorilla Agreement obligations.
101. Activities on addressing threats included:
- The ScC-StC Intersessional WG on Linear Infrastructure development of recommendations on addressing habitat fragmentation which would be submitted to the ScC and COP14;
  - An EU-funded project to develop an assessment tool for establishing transboundary conservation areas in Africa which would be launched shortly; and
  - Finalisation of a study on community conservation approaches for the Saiga Antelope, Snow Leopard, Bukhara Deer and Argali under the Central Asian Mammals Initiative.

### 15.5 Information, Communications and Outreach

102. The Secretariat reported that coordination of the new Joint CMS/AEWA Communications Unit had now been fully established. The Unit continued to maintain the critical information infrastructure for CMS Family including through an upgrade and migration of the CMS family websites to a new platform which was in the final phase of quality control before the public launch. Development of a CMS Communications Strategy had been initiated and

work on an implementation plan for the Strategy with a focus on COP14 as a milestone outreach moment is underway. Implementing [CMS Decision 13.138](#), the Secretariat had worked closely with partners to ensure that the topic of light pollution was the theme for World Migratory Bird Day 2022 to promote existing and developing CMS guidelines to address light pollution and its impact on migratory birds. This campaign is also expanding, with the EAAFP joining as a partner and collaboration with the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI).

## 15.6 Capacity Building

103. The Secretariat reported on capacity building activities including: the accession of the Kingdom of Bahrain to CMS, bringing the number of Parties to 133, as well as the preparation of a strategy to promote accession; the admission of the first communication under the CMS Review Mechanism on a possible implementation matter and conduct of a joint mission with the Bern Convention and AEWA Secretariats to gather information; and an update in the implementation of the National Legislation programme, including a third call to participate launched in May 2022, with 59 Parties participating in the Programme.
104. The Chair and several Parties thanked the Secretariat for all their updates and StC53 took note of the reports.
105. The representative for Germany, supported by the representative for Monaco, asked how the indication that UNEP-WCMC was asked to provide a review of the eligibility for listing of Appendix I species (paragraph 18 of [UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.15](#)) related to the [Decision 13.24](#) mandate to review the conservation status of App. I species. The Secretariat explained that a methodology for the review had been developed in consultation with the SC, that provided for the compilation of information on App. I-listed species that related to the criteria defined by the convention for the listing of species on App. I, namely the conservation status and the migratory behaviour. Based on the review of the status of all Appendix I species, a prioritisation of species on which to carry out an in-depth assessment was undertaken, which was currently underway. The outcome was expected to be a rapid assessment on all species plus individual case studies on individual species.
106. The representatives for Australia and New Zealand flagged some inconsistencies in the figures in the tables on page 62 of the Report. The Secretariat clarified the inconsistencies: there were some cases where funding received exceeded the funding estimated, so to avoid a negative figure an indication of zero was given. In other cases, activities were completed even with less funding than planned.
107. The representative for New Zealand also wondered why there was no funding associated with the analysis of national reports and whether the intention was that the Atlas of Animal Migration would extend to all migratory species and geographic regions and was disappointed to see that the climate change work had been hindered by lack of funding and suggested COP14 could narrow the focus of work to make it achievable. She also asked for more information on the strategy to promote accession to CMS.
108. The Secretariat explained that the analysis of national reports (NZ) was planned to be carried out just before COP14 so it is included in the POW only in 2023.
109. The Executive Secretary confirmed the hope to extend the Eurasian-African Atlas of Animal Migration globally and the intention to collaborate with others, citing efforts by other organisations on different taxa and geographic areas including a global Atlas on antelope and an Atlas being launched in South America. She also reported that the Secretariat was making efforts to complete the study on the impacts of climate change on migratory species before COP14. The current POW report would be updated for consideration by COP14.



110. BirdLife International (BLI) reported that BLI had been using the Atlas database for a new pilot project on 13 coastal water birds of the East Atlantic Flyway (EAF) supplementing the usual approach for identifying important sites for migratory birds by building in data from database. Using network analysis, they aimed to identify ecological networks of sites that could qualify for inclusion in the World Heritage List as a network of related sites rather than as individual sites. She encouraged collaboration with the IUCN World Heritage Programme who were interested to work with CMS on scaling-up this approach.
111. The representative for Kenya emphasized the importance of the Assessment Tool for establishing transboundary conservation areas in Africa and asked when it would be launched. The Secretariat explained that the Assessment Tool had been launched at the African Protected Areas Congress in July 2022 but there were some final technical things to be done to get it online so it would be available within the next few weeks.
112. Costa Rica referred to the progress on the work for the conservation of the Jaguar. The Secretariat reported on work with Costa Rica in relation to conserving the jaguar under Appendices I and II. Some proposals had emerged from this for cooperation between CMS, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and CBD and Jaguar 2030 Roadmap members. Further CITES COP18 had adopted [Decisions 18.251-18.253](#) to further cooperation between the Conventions and calling for a Range State meeting to look into a specific intergovernmental cooperation framework similar to the African Carnivores Initiative between CMS and CITES for the Jaguar.
113. STC53 took note of [UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.15](#) with these discussion points.

## **16. Review Mechanism**

114. The Secretariat introduced this agenda item, recalling that COP12 adopted [Resolution 12.9](#), establishing a Review Mechanism and a National Legislation Programme aimed at facilitating compliance with the obligations set out in Articles III.4, III.5, III.7, and VI.2 of the Convention (implementation matters). Resolution 12.9 also instructed the StC to make recommendations for modifications of the Resolution as necessary while [Decision 13.21](#) mandated the StC to recommend modifications of the procedure and report to COP14.
115. The Secretariat referred participants to the document on the CMS Review Mechanism ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.16](#)) which contained a report on progress on the implementation of the Review Mechanism and recommended next steps in preparation for COP14, including proposing the development of operational guidelines to provide further clarity throughout the process and guide the Secretariat and the StC in the handling of the cases for the consideration of COP14.
116. Since the template for communication of a possible implementation matter was adopted by StC48 and made available by the Secretariat in the fourth quarter of 2019, the Secretariat had received three communications on potential implementation matters. The Secretariat had admitted its first case after consulting with councillors from the SC and took part in a joint mission with the Bern Convention and AEWA Secretariats with the objective to gather additional information and a report on its status was included in the Annex to [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.16](#).
117. The Chair invited the StC to take note of the document and provide guidance on the proposed preparation of operational guidelines for the CMS Review Mechanism.
118. The representative for India, supported by Australia, supported the preparation of the operational guidelines and requested the Secretariat prepare these, in consultation with Parties, for consideration before COP14.

119. Discussion initially focused on the case being assessed by the Secretariat, the order of events and whether a mission should have taken place without a decision from the StC. The Secretariat explained that the mission had been an information-gathering mission to assess whether the Secretariat could continue working with the Party or whether they had reached the stage where the case would need to be referred to the StC.
120. A number of members agreed on the need for operational guidelines. The representative for the UK stressed the importance of the Review Mechanism being “light touch” and the need for the StC to be adequately informed about cases under consideration. As this particular case was being raised under numerous Conventions, he emphasized that it should be possible to refer to information that was already in the public domain. The Secretariat stressed the confidentiality requirement under the Resolution and the procedure laid out in Resolution 19.2, which meant that further information would not be available at this stage.
121. The representative for Germany asked for clarification on what additional guidance was needed and emphasized not making the process more complicated, suggesting the Secretariat could generally exercise discretion on how to act but refer to the StC where required, similarly to the CITES Secretariat. The Secretariat noted that as this was the first case being considered under the Review Mechanism several questions had arisen in trying to ensure that that cases were handled consistently and so guidelines would be helpful on, for example use of experts,, publication of information, whether to keep a list online of cases, how much information the StC would want on cases which were not in the end referred to the StC and how to address issues of confidentiality.
122. The representative for Oceania asked about the funding of the Review Mechanism and the Secretariat explained there were some funds from Finland for the Review Mechanism and the shared mission with the Bern Convention and AEWA Secretariats had saved some funds but there would also still be a need for funding for missions and technical assistance in relation to the Review Mechanism.
123. The representative for Australia also felt operational guidance would be helpful as she understood that it was the Secretariat’s role to admit the case and then forward it to the StC as the review body to decide whether to open the case which would be where the mandate would come from for a mission. She also noted that, whereas the Avian Councillor had been consulted with, the Secretariat had not consulted with the SC as a whole. The Secretariat agreed that this was an area where operational guidelines would be helpful, in particular when to consult and who to consult with.
124. The representative for Georgia referred to the established practice of the Bern Convention where before a case file was opened there was a procedure within the country itself and only if it was not resolved in the country itself would it go to the Convention. The Secretariat explained that under Resolution 12.9, the Secretariat would admit the case file and work with the Party on potential measures of redress first and if they did not receive a timely response from the Party, the Secretariat would bring the matter to the attention of the StC in writing.
125. The representative for the UK said more information was required when a complaint was received. The Executive Secretary explained that in this instance StC53 was happening at a time when the Secretariat was in the process of reviewing whether to forward the case to the StC as review body. There was not currently a mechanism that the Secretariat let the StC know if a communication was received.

126. The representative for Germany proposed that the guidance be related to the specific sections that were unclear in Resolution 12.9. He also asked for clarification on confidentiality. The Secretariat welcomed the suggestion about how to go about the defining the guidelines. On confidentiality she expressed there was a need for guidance on when the information was provided to the StC so they could report to the COP and when and what information could be made public.
127. The representative for Kenya agreed there was merit in developing operational guidelines also for an affected Party to have a trajectory of the process as well as getting clarity about at what point information would be passed to the StC and when the StC would make it available to the Parties.
128. The StC took note of UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.16 and requested the Secretariat to prepare guidelines in consultation with StC members and with the suggestions made by members for the consideration of COP14. The Secretariat proposed consulting by email with the StC with an outline of the issues to be included in the operational guidelines for consideration by the StC which was agreed.

## **17. Migratory Species in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**

129. The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce this agenda item.
130. The Secretariat summarised progress in the implementation of [Decision 13.8](#) concerning engagement by the CMS Secretariat since StC52 in the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). She referred to the relevant documents: 'Migratory Species in the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.17](#)), and 'Annex to UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.17: CMS Secretariat Recommendations for the current Text of the draft post-2020 GBF' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.17/Add.1](#)).
131. CMS priorities for the GBF included: reflecting ecological connectivity in relevant elements of the GBF; addressing the conservation needs of threatened species; including Parties' commitments under other biodiversity-related Conventions in NBSAPs; recognising the role of the various biodiversity-related Conventions as well as other relevant MEAs; and promoting international cooperation for the implementation of the GBF.
132. Recommendations for possible revisions to the current GBF text to better reflect CMS priorities were included in [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.17/Add.1](#), for example on: Goal A (ecological connectivity); Targets 4, 5 and 9 (conservation and use); the role and contributions of MEAs in relation to implementation; and draft connectivity indicators resulting from discussions in a CMS workshop in April 2022 and a CBD Expert workshop on indicators in June/July 2022.
133. She explained that the latest text from the Fourth Meeting of the Open-Ended WG (WG2020/4) in June 2022 contained many CMS priorities, while others still required some attention before the final negotiations at GBF WG/2020/5 and CBD COP15 in December 2022 which the Secretariat would attend. It was difficult to forecast what the final text would contain. The Secretariat was developing a joint POW with the CBD Secretariat, disseminating information to CMS Parties about funding, analysing how CMS could support the GBF as part of the follow-up to the SPMS and exploring opportunities to strengthen CMS work in key areas relevant to the GBF.
134. She invited StC53 to take note of the document, make any comments and provide advice to the Secretariat and encouraged focal points to liaise with their CBD counterparts and provide feedback to the Secretariat on next steps towards contributing to the implementation of the GBF.

135. The Executive Secretary reported that the June OEWG text had just been released, noting that much of the language the Secretariat had proposed was not reflected in the text, in particular in relation to the species Targets 4,5 and 9.
136. Several Parties expressed their gratitude for the exemplary work of the Secretariat on this process. The representative for India emphasised the role of the CMS Family WG in discussing connectivity and proposed that the WG meet to outline future strategies to ensure the CMS recommendations were included in the GBF. He requested the Secretariat to issue a note to the focal points on what would be required to be taken up with the CBD focal points and the Executive Secretary agreed to do this and referred to the potential to use existing informal communication methods (such as Whatsapp groups) to try and liaise on this. The representative for the UK requested including all members in such an informal Whatsapp group even if they would not be at CBD COP15 in person which was agreed.
137. The representative for Germany supported the idea of a joint POW with the CBD and asked for an update on the Bern II workshops outcomes and the question on how the Conventions would be participating in the implementing system. The Secretariat explained that the Bern II outcomes were outlined in [UNEP/CMS/StC53/Inf.1/Rev.1](#) but said these were not “getting very much airtime” even though the Secretariat and others were trying to raise the profile of these outcomes.
138. The representative for Germany emphasised the need for a formal role for those MEAs doing species-specific work in implementation of the GBF. IUCN had been working since COP13 with stakeholders and Biodiversity-related MEAs on the species-related outcomes for the GBF, had recommended a POW on species under the new GBF galvanizing focus under the CBD on species outcomes and was willing to collaborate on scaling-up species conservation action.
139. The representative for Georgia highlighted the value of the provision by CMS of information on migratory species, in particular for Target 5 in relation to the indicators on the Red List of species.
140. StC53 took note of the progress made on this agenda item.

## **18. Dates and Venue of future meetings of the Standing Committee**

141. The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce this agenda item.
142. The Secretariat proposed that StC54 take place in Uzbekistan, one day before COP14, as was normal practice. Documents would be published in August as per the Rules of Procedure. It was customary that StC55 would then take place one day after the closing of the COP, for the purposes of electing officers. However, as this timing was not always successful, she proposed exploring other models as to how the election of officers could take place, potentially in a virtual meeting or via correspondence.
143. There were no interventions. StC53 agreed to the Secretariat’s proposal.

## **19. Any other business**

144. The representative of Germany, Oliver Schall, noted his upcoming retirement and expressed thanks for his 17 years with CMS.

**20. Concluding remarks**

145. The Executive Secretary expressed thanks to all involved, welcomed the opportunity to meet in person and hear about the many activities which were going on. She appreciated the presence of Uzbekistan at StC53 and looked forward to working together in their hosting of COP14. The Secretariat would reach out to all the members who had expressed interest in joining the WG on the follow-up to the SPMS.
146. The Chair expressed gratitude for the engaging discussions held over the two days of the StC53. He highlighted that StC53 had:
- Agreed on the TOR for the intersessional WG on the follow-up to the SPMS;
  - Finalised the Rules of Procedure;
  - Adopted the report on Migratory Species in the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework;
  - Agreed on implementation of the CMS Budget;
  - Agreed on resource mobilization; and
  - Agreed a way forward with the Review Mechanism.
147. Having formally thanked the host country Germany, StC Members, Observers, the Secretariat and all those supporting the meeting, he declared StC53 closed

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS ADOPTED AT  
STC53**

'Rules of Procedure of the StC' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Outcome1](#))

'Follow-up to the SPMS 2015-2023' ([UNEP/CMS/StC53/Outcome2](#))

## ANNEX 2

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**  
**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

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