

**Third Regional Seminar on the Conservation and Restoration of
Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna**

Agadir, Morocco, 14 – 16 March 2023

UNEP/CMS/SSMF-RS3/Report

MEETING REPORT

Convening of the Meeting

1. In accordance with Activity 3. of the Concerted Action 13.4 for Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its 13th meeting in Gandhinagar, India (2020), the Secretariat organized the Third Regional Seminar on the Conservation and Restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna in collaboration with the National Agency of Waters and Forests of Morocco and with funding from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) of Germany in the context of the project *Addressing the Illegal Killing of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna*.
2. The meeting took place from 14 March – 16 March 2023 in Agadir, Morocco.
3. The complete list of Meeting participants can be found in the Annex to this Report.

Agenda Item 1. Opening remarks and introductions

4. The meeting was opened by Mr. Abderrahim Hourmy, Director General of the National Agency of Waters and Forests of Morocco, who gave a welcome speech on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco. He reminded meeting participants that the last time this seminar was held was 20 years ago in Agadir and hoped that this meeting would rebuild momentum for the conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna. He thanked the CMS Secretariat and the authors who had contributed to drafting the meeting documents and said that Morocco was ready to support CMS' work in the region and to advance the conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna.
5. Mr. Amadou Ibro, Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and the Fight against Desertification of Niger, provided remarks stressing on the importance of regional collaboration for the conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna and touched upon some of the threats faced by these species and the challenges faced in their conservation.
6. Mr. Kumara Wakjira Gameda, Director General of the Wildlife Conservation Authority of Ethiopia, provided remarks highlighting the diversity of species and biomes within the Sahelo-Saharan region and the importance of their effective conservation. He emphasized the importance of agreement on a new Action Plan for the conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna.
7. Ms Clara Nobbe, Head of the Terrestrial Species Team of the CMS Secretariat, welcomed participants on behalf of the CMS Secretariat. She thanked the Government of Morocco for hosting the meeting and the Government of Germany for its financial support. She reminded that 20 years had passed since the original Action Plan developed for the conservation of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna was reviewed in Agadir and that since then

the conservation status of all, but one Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna species had deteriorated. Given that multiple, cross-sectoral threats put the species of the region at risk, she stressed that partnerships across sectors and between governmental and non-governmental partners were essential for the conservation of the species.

Agenda Item 2. Election of the Chair of the Meeting

8. In line with CMS practice at similar meetings, Mr. Khalid Cherki, Head of the Department of International Cooperation at the National Agency of Waters and Forests of the host country was suggested as the Chair of the Meeting. As there were no objections, he assumed the role of the Chair.

Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the agenda

9. The agenda was presented by the Secretariat and adopted without comments.

Agenda Item 4. Presentation of the draft updated action plan for the conservation of Sahelo-Saharan megafauna and its habitats

10. The Secretariat provided a brief introduction to Concerted Action 13.4 for Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna that set out the mandate and context for the development of the updated Action Plan.
11. IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group (ASG) Co-Chair Dr David Mallon presented the draft updated Action Plan. He provided background information on the history and context of the Action Plan. He presented the main threats facing the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna species as well as the main conservation measures in place, that include species planning, legal protections at the international (CMS and CITES) and national levels, ex-situ populations and conservation activities, reintroductions and protected areas. He presented the aim of the Action Plan, which is to provide a global framework for conservation of all SSMF species, in all settings in which they occur (wild, reintroduced, semi-captive, and captive), aligned with the strategies already developed for some species. Furthermore, he presented the nine strategic directions at the regional level needed for the effective conservation and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna, that are: 1. Policy and Legal, 2. Ecosystem Management, 3. Site Protection, 4. Species Action, 5. Community Engagement, 6. Education and Awareness, 7. Climate Change, 8. Capacity Building, and 9. Regional Cooperation.
12. Following the context setting presentation of the Action Plan, Dr Mallon presented the logical framework for the regional level action plan that was structured along the nine strategic directions. Following his presentation, the Chair opened the floor for questions, comments and proposed revisions on the logical framework for the regional level action plan.
13. The Meeting provided their comments and proposed revisions on each of the nine actions. On the action on *Policy and Legal* the Meeting agreed on most of the actions presented and decided to add an activity on encouraging public-private partnerships.
14. On *Ecosystem Management*, the Meeting restructured the proposed actions and added actions on (i) the identification and mapping of important habitats and corridors for SSMF, (ii) the inclusion of the conservation of SSMF species habitats in integrated land use planning and (iii) the restoration of important sites for SSMF species in accordance with CMS obligations.
15. On *Site Protection*, the Meeting agreed on consolidating the actions (i) on the review and extension of protected area networks into one action and (ii) on the addition of an action on

the promotion of trans-frontier protected areas for the conservation of SSMF.

16. On *Species Action*, the Meeting agreed to keeping the first level actions and deleting the sub-level actions as they were too detailed. The meeting also agreed on adding an action on reinforcing scientific research.
17. On *Community Engagement*, the Meeting agreed to consolidate the six proposed actions into four that include additions on (i) promotion of intercommunity dialogue and revenue generation activities and (ii) the valuing of traditional knowledge and practices related to SSMF species and their habitats.
18. On *Education and Sensitization*, the Meeting agreed to add 'Communication' to the title of the activity resulting in *Education, Sensitization and Communication*. The Meeting also agreed on consolidating the four proposed actions into three.
19. On *Climate Change*, the Meeting agreed to add an activity on identifying the impacts of climate change on SSMF species and their habitats.
20. On *Means of Implementation*, the Meeting revised the actions to entail actions on (i) the provision of adequate equipment and technologies to effectively conserve MFSS species, (ii) capacity building in all technical areas necessary for the implementation of the regional action plan and species-specific action plans and (iii) the strengthening of fundraising capacities for the implementation of the action plan.
21. On *Regional Cooperation*, the Meeting agreed to add actions on encouraging trans-frontier initiatives and the promotion of coordination on anti-poaching activities; and the integration of the conservation of SSMF species into regional initiatives such as the Great Green Wall initiative.

Agenda Items 5 to 8. Draft Action Plan: Species specific discussions

22. IUCN SSC ASG Co-Chair Dr Philippe Chardonnet presented the species-specific action plans in the following order: Addax, Scimitar-horned Oryx, Dorcas Gazelle, Red-fronted Gazelle, Barbary Sheep, Dama Gazelle, Slender-horned Gazelle, Cuvier's Gazelle. For each species he provided background information on their current conservation status and distribution and presented the logical framework for the individual species. Following each species-specific presentation, the Chair opened the floor for questions, comments and proposed revisions on the logical framework.
23. On the Addax, Dr Chardonnet stressed the dire conservation situation of the Addax in the wild, with an estimation of under 100 individuals remaining in the wild state, all in Niger and potentially across the border to Chad. The Meeting agreed on structuring the activities along the following topics: Relic populations; Potential populations and sites; Reintroductions; Genetics (with distinction between in-situ and ex-situ); and Engagement and Sensitization. The meeting agreed that there was no need for specific actions on the implementation of the species-specific action plan as it was deemed a separate item to be developed (this applies to all species).
24. On the Scimitar-horned Oryx, Dr Chardonnet informed the Meeting that the species was extinct in the wild and that reintroduction efforts have been successful in the past decades. The Meeting agreed on structuring the activities along the following topics: Reintroductions; Semi-captive populations; and Genetics (with distinction between in-situ and ex-situ).
25. On the Dorcas Gazelle, the Meeting agreed on structuring the activities along the following topics: Status of the Species in the Wild; Conservation of Known Wild Populations; Reintroductions; and Genetics (with distinction between in-situ and ex-situ).

26. On the Red-fronted Gazelle, Dr Chardonnet informed the Meeting that this species was the most taxonomically complicated as different scientists and institutions treat some of the sub-species as standalone species. He also noted that some of the sub-species, such as the Mongalla Gazelle, mainly occur outside of the arid Sahel and Sahara biomes like in flooded grasslands and/or savannah woodlands. The Meeting agreed on structuring the activities along the following topics: Status of the Species in the Wild; Conservation of Known Wild Populations; Taxonomy; Feasibility Analysis of Ex-situ Conservation and Reintroductions.
27. On the Barbary Sheep, Dr Chardonnet noted that outside of its native range the species is abundant and in certain localities considered a pest or invasive species that outcompetes native fauna. The Meeting agreed on structuring the activities along the following topics: Status of the Species in the Wild; Conservation of Known Wild Populations; Reintroductions; and Genetics (with distinction between in-situ and ex-situ).
28. On the Dama Gazelle, Dr Chardonnet and Dr Mallon presented the Updated objectives and actions for Dama Gazelle (*Nanger dama*) conservation (2021-2028) that was developed from the 2.5-year review of the action plan on Dama Gazelle in 2021 under the leadership of Al Ain Zoo, IUCN SSC ASG and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. They responded to the Range States' questions on the process by which the action plan was developed and informed them that it was developed in a consultative manner with all relevant stakeholders and Range States' inputs taken into consideration. They recommended that the Meeting adopt the action plan as is and to align its next review with the future meeting of the Regional Seminar. The Meeting agreed to the action plan as presented but requested that the Secretariat format it to match the style of the other action plans.
29. On the Slender-horned Gazelle, Dr Chardonnet and Dr Mallon presented the Slender-Horned Gazelle Conservation Strategy 2020-2029 that was developed under the leadership of the IUCN SSC ASG and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland in 2020. They responded to the Range States' questions on the process by which the action plan was developed and informed them that it was developed in a consultative manner with all relevant stakeholders and Range States' inputs taken into consideration. They recommended that the Meeting adopt the action plan as is and to align its next review with the future meeting of the Regional Seminar. The Meeting agreed to the action plan as presented but requested that the Secretariat format it to match the style of the other action plans.
30. On Cuvier's Gazelle, Dr Chardonnet and Dr Mallon presented Cuvier's Gazelle Conservation Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2026 that was developed under the leadership of IUCN in 2018. They responded to the Range States' questions on the process by which the action plan was developed and informed them that it was developed in a consultative manner with all relevant stakeholders and Range States' inputs taken into consideration. They recommended that the Meeting adopt the action plan as is and to align its next review with the future meeting of the Regional Seminar. The Meeting agreed to the action plan as presented but requested that the Secretariat format it to match the style of the other action plans.

Agenda Item 9. Extension of the Concerted Action to other species and biomes

31. The Secretariat presented CMS COP Decision 13.101 that requests the Scientific Council and the Secretariat to examine the possibility of the extension of the area of the Concerted Action to the deserts of the Horn of Africa and associated biomes.
32. The Secretariat presented CMS Scientific Council Outcome 1.3 – Programme of Work

Terrestrial Species Conservation Issues which defined the activity to implement Decision 13.101 as follows: (i) investigate the possibility of extending the Concerted Action to the Horn of Africa and provide recommendations; (ii) liaise with National Focal Points of the concerned Range States as to the options set out in document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.3.2 and potential other scenarios regarding target species for the Concerted Action.

33. Dr Mallon presented the four options set out in document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.3.2 then the Chair opened the floor for discussion.
34. The meeting discussed the various pros and cons of the scenarios set out in document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.3.2 as well as other scenarios including the possibility of extension to include the Gourma elephants, a population of African Savannah Elephant occurring in the Sahelo-Saharan region. Discussions centred on the importance of ensuring that the identity of the Concerted Action remained Sahelo-Saharan and that any extension of the Concerted Action should not dilute this identity. For the addition of species, the Meeting agreed that only species that would most benefit from the Concerted Action should be added and species with existing regional conservation mechanisms (such as agreements and MOUs) should not be added. The Gourma elephants were not added as they are covered by the CMS West African Elephant Memorandum of Understanding. The Meeting unanimously agreed to recommend to COP14 that the Concerted Action be extended as per Scenario b) set out in document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.3.2, which would mean the extension of the Concerted Action to the Danakil and adjoining desert and semidesert and thus the addition of the African Wild Ass (*Equus africanus*). This scenario also opens the opportunity to add Soemmerring's Gazelle (*Nanger soemmerringii*) to the Concerted Action if it were listed on CMS.

Agenda Items 10 and 11. Funding and Partnerships

35. The Chair invited speakers from eight institutions to present on their work with a focus on opportunities for funding and partnerships for the implementation of the updated Action Plan.
36. Mr. Thomas Rabeil from Wild Africa Conservation (WAC) presented WAC's conservation activities on SSMF species that included reintroductions of Addax in Morocco, the securing of the W Park in Niger to protect the Red-fronted Gazelle, and the inventorying of Red-fronted Gazelle in Chad.
37. Mr. John Watkin and Mr. Abdoul Razack Moussa Zabeirou from Sahara Conservation presented the funding partnership model they used in their project for the development of the Ouadi Rimé - Ouadi Achim Wildlife Reserve in Chad and the sustainable management of its biodiversity.
38. Mr. Fabian Krause, Coordinator of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria Ex situ Programme for the Addax from Hannover Zoo presented on the ex-situ conservation of the Addax and zoos' roles in conservation and reintroductions.
39. Mr. Erik Reed from the World Bank presented on the Chad Local Development and Adaptation (Chad LDAP) – ALBIA project that aims to conserve natural resources and sustain livelihoods in a vulnerable area under increasing human and climatic pressure. He also presented on the monitoring tools that the project is using, including satellite imagery for monitoring of primary productivity of land, identifying degraded zones, delimiting and monitoring high biodiversity zones.
40. Mr. Sébastien Pinchon from Parcs de Noé presented on the Termit and Tin-Toumma National Nature Reserve (TTNRR) in Niger. He introduced the unique context of TTNRR

and its importance for SSMF species, especially the Addax and Dama Gazelle. The challenges faced with managing this vast reserve were presented along with some of the means that Parcs de Noé uses to address these challenges.

41. Ms. Teresa Abáigar from the Experimental Station of Arid Zones (EEZA) of the Superior Council of Scientific Research (CSIC) of Spain presented their work on the conservation of SSMF species ex-situ and in-situ in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia.
42. Mr. Issakha Gonney Guirki from African Parks presented African Parks' role in conservation of habitat across Africa. He focused his presentation on the Ennedi Natural and Cultural Reserve in Chad – a key site for the conservation of SSMF species. He presented on reintroduction efforts in the reserve, monitoring and patrolling and law enforcement.
43. Mr. Philip Riordan from Marwell Wildlife presented on their conservation efforts in Tunisia and on the technologies used for wildlife surveys such as satellite imagery and drones. He also presented on the importance of sustainable funding and finance initiatives such as Green/Blue Finance Instruments.

Agenda Item 12. Future directions of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action

44. The Secretariat presented the activities listed in Concerted Action 13.4 for Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna and reminded the meeting that upon closure of the meeting all of the mandated activities will have been completed, except the promotion of partnerships and technical support provided to Range States for the implementation of the Action Plan. The Secretariat presented options such as the renewal of the Concerted Action and the establishment of a SSMF Initiative (SSMFI) modeled on the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI). Finally, the Secretariat presented possible provisions for a resolution to establish a SSMFI then the Chair opened the floor for discussion.
45. The Meeting raised questions on the legal status of initiatives within CMS and their benefits which the Secretariat clarified. The Meeting was unanimously in agreement on the benefits of the establishment of the SSMFI.
46. The Government of Morocco stated that they would propose a resolution for the establishment of the SSMFI at COP14.

Agenda Item 13. Any other business

47. The Chair announced that all logical frameworks discussed (regional and species-specific) would be circulated to the Meeting participants for final review within 4-6 weeks of the closure of the Meeting and that the review period would be set at 2 weeks.
48. The Chair also announced that Range States not present would be given the opportunity to comment on the endorsed Action Plan.

Agenda Item 14. Closure of the meeting

49. The Chair, the Secretariat and Meeting Participants exchanged thanks to each other, the Government of Morocco as host, and the Government of Germany as donor.
50. The Chair closed the meeting.

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