



**Agreement on the
Conservation of Gorillas
and their Habitats of the
Convention on
Migratory Species**

Distribution: General

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THIRD MEETING OF THE PARTIES
Entebbe, Uganda, 18-20 June 2019

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Distribution: General

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FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
TO THE CMS AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION
OF GORILLAS AND THEIR HABITATS
Kigali, Rwanda, 29-30 March 2011

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting/Welcome addresses

1. The Meeting opened at 0940 on 29 March 2011 with an address by Ms. Rica Rwigamba, Head of Tourism and Conservation for the Rwanda Development Board. Ms. Melanie Virtue (UNEP/CMS) representing the Interim Secretariat of the Gorilla Agreement also delivered a short welcoming address.

2. Nine of the ten Range States were present. Gabon could not attend due to logistical problems. The list of participants can be found in Annex 2.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Rules of Procedure

3. The Rules of Procedure were unanimously adopted.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the Agenda

4. The Agenda was unanimously adopted. The agenda is attached as Annex 3 to this report.

Agenda Item 4: Nomination of Chair and Vice-chair

5. Dr. Tony Mudakikwa (Rwanda) was elected as Meeting Chair and Mr. Fidelis Omeni (Nigeria) was elected as Vice-Chair.

Agenda Item 5: Report by the Secretariat

6. Ms. Virtue (UNEP/CMS) delivered a presentation on the history and activities of the Gorilla Agreement, opening with a brief synopsis of the structure, tools and species coverage of the parent Convention.

7. She recapitulated the two resolutions passed at MOP1 in 2008 on a) monitoring and reporting and b) the establishment of a Technical Committee.

8. She also mentioned that an annual contribution of €3,000 had been agreed by Parties, and the CMS Secretariat had been requested to act as Interim Secretariat until additional funds became available. At the time of the meeting, only Rwanda had paid any contribution, and it

was stressed that payment was important not only to finance Secretariat activities, but also as a sign of commitment from Parties in order to raise additional funds.

9. She further reported in detail on the main achievements of the 2009 Year of the Gorilla campaign, including events, publications, the very active role played by Campaign Ambassador Ian Redmond and the projects supported. For the full presentation, click [here](#).

10. A major output of the “Year of the Gorilla” campaign had been the “State of the Gorilla” documentary, produced by Ambassador Redmond, after a five-week trip through eight Gorilla Range States. To view it online, click [here](#).

11. In closing, Ms. Virtue expressed her delight that nine of the ten Range States were represented at this first meeting of the Technical Committee. The presence of significant law enforcement expertise was also highlighted. She concluded by thanking Monaco and Germany for sponsoring the meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Summaries of activities to implement the Action Plans

12. All Range States gave a brief synopsis of their most important and recent gorilla conservation activities. Only key topics are summarized below. For the full versions of the reports received, click [here](#).

13. The reports focused on: existing and planned protected areas, especially those transboundary in nature; the status of various gorilla populations; the main threats faced by these populations; existing laws regarding gorilla conservation; ongoing projects on conservation, law enforcement and research; alternative livelihoods; awareness raising activities aimed at the general public; partnerships with various NGOs; tourism activities, revenue sharing schemes related to them and their benefits to local communities.

14. In closing, Mr. John Sellar (CITES Secretariat) noted that there was no mention in the country reports of how many gorillas had been killed or confiscated.

Agenda Item 7: Transboundary gorilla populations and their conservation

15. Mr. Samuel Mwandha (Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) Secretariat) gave a presentation on cooperation between Rwanda, DRC and Uganda concerning Mountain Gorilla conservation, as well as the background and history of the GVTC’s institutional development. Joint transboundary training, exchange visits, coordinated patrols, cooperative landscape and forestry management, as well as revenue sharing and community involvement were among the defining features of this collaboration. The GVTC was in the fourth year of a ten-year strategic plan, with formal signing of a related trilateral treaty awaiting approval. The full presentation can be accessed [here](#).

16. In the ensuing discussion, the question arose whether the Kahuzi Biega National Park (KBNP), though not directly connected to the other parks within the transboundary network, could be included in the GVTC discussions. Mr. Mwandha replied that this should be possible, as other National Parks from the region (Kibira NP in Burundi and Nyungwe NP in Rwanda) were already being invited to meetings.

Agenda Item 8: Process for the nomination for the three expert positions on the Technical Committee

17. The Technical Committee consisted of one representative from each Range State of the Agreement; one representative from GRASP (Great Apes Survival Partnership); and one expert each from the fields of: forest management and conservation; environmental law; and wild animal health. As the Range State and GRASP representatives had already been nominated, the discussion focused on the desirable qualities of the three supplementary experts.

18. Dr. Fiona Maisels (GRASP) stated that the fields of the three experts had been chosen to reflect the main threats to gorillas: disease, poaching, and habitat clearance. She recommended that the veterinarian should have a good record of publications in peer reviewed journals, previous experience of having served on an international expert group (such as IUCN, CBD, etc.) in a technical or advisory capacity, and should have led major initiatives in their field. Detailed knowledge of Ebola was vital, as the disease was a major threat to gorillas, having recently wiped out large numbers in West and Central Africa. A similar profile would be expected of the expert in forestry and conservation. The Chairman added that in addition to detailed knowledge of Ebola, the expert should have a good knowledge of diseases in general. A health contingency plan had been produced for the Mountain Gorillas, categorizing diseases and listing Ebola under the first category.

19. Mr. David Higgins (INTERPOL) stated that the legal expert should have extensive experience with law enforcement in order to be able to address the threats of poaching and illegal land clearance, and be in a position to engage at both the high political and general law enforcement levels in the field.

20. Mr. Sellar (CITES) thought that this post should indeed be filled by a law enforcement professional with a strong emphasis on the practical aspects of law enforcement (such as a police or customs officer or lawyer). After in-depth discussion, Mr. Sellar suggested that the post would be most effective if it were located within an international agency (e.g. within the environmental crime programme at INTERPOL). This proposition was greeted with broad support, as in this way, not only crimes within one or multiple range states would be covered, but, in fact, a whole network would become available to the Agreement. INTERPOL, with regard to destination states for wild animal products, could be brought in to help shed light on trafficking of gorilla parts.

21. Ms. Virtue suggested that a body such as IUCN's Primate Specialist Group could be used for vetting applicants, which was not opposed.

22. In closing, Ms. Virtue said that, at the Second Meeting of the Parties in November 2011, a dossier of candidates or candidate agencies for each of the three posts would be presented for decision. Nominations would be open until 29 July. A formal request reiterating the process would be sent to the Technical Committee members.

Agenda Item 9: Monitoring and Reporting System for the Gorilla Agreement

23. Ms. Virtue (CMS) reminded the meeting of the history of this agenda item. The original idea had been to explore the possibility of setting up a way to monitor both gorilla populations and related law enforcement activities. Mr. David Greer (WWF) also reminded the participants that the plan had been to combine law enforcement monitoring with overall agreement monitoring.

24. However, it was explained that several organizations, or collaborations between organizations, were already doing this, and it was necessary to avoid duplication. It was also noted that most countries had site-based monitoring, but lacked a national database.

25. Mr. Sellar (CITES) noted that effective monitoring was expensive. For example the CITES Programme for the Monitoring of Illegal Killings of Elephants (MIKE) had a budget of €10 million over five years, and was run by four full-time staff. Also, national data protection issues would need to be addressed, and it could be very difficult to secure full cooperation from national authorities in this area. He suggested that the Interim Secretariat approach MIKE with the proposal of expanding their monitoring program to gorillas.

26. After much discussion, Ms. Virtue (CMS) suggested that it was too ambitious and costly for the Agreement itself to monitor both populations and law enforcement, and that it would be better to begin by reporting on activities outlined in the Agreement's Action Plans.

27. Dr. Maisels (GRASP) noted that the Action Plans were based on the relevant IUCN Primate Specialist Group plans, where the necessary actions to best conserve the species had been identified, with an appropriate timeline. Reporting on these actions would essentially focus on how well the Gorilla Agreement was proceeding toward its goals. GRASP suggested that a template for such reporting should include means of verification, such as reports and publications.

28. The Secretariat agreed to develop and send out such a reporting format for approval and comment. Sample formats would be presented at MOP2 for endorsement by the Parties.

Agenda Item 10: Developments in Wildlife Law Enforcement in the Region

29. The law enforcement community was well represented at the meeting, and several organizations presented their work regarding gorilla conservation. The discussion was led by Mr. Higgins (Manager, Environmental Crime Programme, INTERPOL) and Mr. Sellar (Chief of Enforcement Support, CITES), who explained their organizations' roles and outlined new developments.

30. Mr. Sellar began by outlining several current developments. Specifically, Operation GAPIN (Great Apes and Integrity) had been launched in 15 countries in Africa, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Pan-African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA). GAPIN focused on providing training for Customs agencies, raising awareness of different enforcement methods and of the main trade routes used. This initiative had already led to a number of significant seizures.

31. In 2011, a "Controlled Delivery Unit" project had been set up, led by the World Customs Organization (WCO). Rather than making seizures, the approach was to follow the contraband chain in both directions, to its source as well as its destination, thereby exposing all the links of the illegal trafficking chain involved. At present, the Controlled Delivery Unit project was in the pilot stage with 20 participating countries, but it was planned to expand the programme globally. Middle ranking police officers and Customs officers were being trained in this technique.

32. The CITES Secretariat had a mandate to conduct joint technical missions to range states, in conjunction with GRASP, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization to

advise on law enforcement issues. Planning, including fundraising for these missions was underway.

33. In November 2010, the International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) had been set up, combining the expertise of CITES, INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization to coordinate support to national wildlife law enforcement efforts. Interest was expressed to include gorilla conservation in the ICCWC Action Plan, and the Secretariat had been instructed to consult with ICCWC on the best approach.

34. Mr. Sellar further explained that Range States could play an important role by promoting a positive image of certain species. For example, Uganda and Rwanda had images of gorillas on their currency - this raised awareness among the general population of the unique value the species had for their country.

35. Mr. Sellar pointed out that the international agencies suffered from lack of resources for wildlife law enforcement - even CITES had only one staff position specifically addressing the topic. CITES was in the process of setting up a "virtual college" with training materials to support implementation of the convention. Suggestions and requests for capacity building materials and modules would be welcome.

36. Mr. Higgins then gave an overview of his organization's work. There were 188 member countries of INTERPOL, including all gorilla Range States. Each country had a National Central Bureau, usually based at the national police agency. There were also larger regional offices (including one in Cameroon) which countries could access through their national offices. The international secretariat was based in Lyons, France. Mr. Higgins underlined that, in many cases, police and customs stood to learn much from wildlife authorities, and urged wildlife authorities to reach out to police/customs. Also, countries needed to exchange information with their neighbours to address cross-border trafficking effectively. INTERPOL was in a position to help with establishing the secure communications channels needed for such cooperation.

37. INTERPOL kept global databases on a range of different crime types. It was evident that environmental crime was not isolated and had to be viewed in connection with other crimes such as corruption, fraud, weapons trafficking and even drug trafficking. These databases were accessible through the national INTERPOL offices, and members of the Technical Committee were urged to familiarize themselves with the process and make themselves known to their INTERPOL National Central Bureaus.

38. Following these presentations, Mr. Naftali Honig (Project for the Application of the Law on Fauna - PALF) gave an overview of the status of PALF activities in Congo. Founded in 2008, PALF was part of a network of similar organizations working to support states in their wildlife law enforcement activities, and had sister organizations in Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic. Expansion to several other countries was planned.

39. Mr. Honig explained that PALF went beyond classic anti-poaching measures and targeted leading commercial bushmeat hunters and traffickers, as well as corrupt wildlife officers, who were responsible for organizing and facilitating trade in bushmeat at non-subsistence levels. As the bushmeat trade was undertaken by organized chains, he stressed the importance of targeting individuals in high positions – arresting ringleaders was necessary to address the problem properly. Several successful high-level prosecutions were detailed. PALF identified corruption as a main driver of illegal trade - in Cameroon, 80-85 percent of the

cases dealt with by PALF's sister organization, LAGA, involved corruption. Post-arrest follow-through by a legal team was identified as a crucial aspect of PALF activities, as suspects were often only briefly detained and then released after paying bribes. If police forces felt that they were being observed, they were less likely to engage in corrupt practices.

40. Mr. Honig further explained that confiscated meat and other products were often sold back into the market. To end this practice, burning of seized contraband needed to be seriously considered. The trafficking of firearms was closely tied to bushmeat and ivory trafficking, with weapons often being sold to poachers by corrupt officials - this aspect needed close attention as well.

41. Mr. Honig then went on to detail various current cases and important smuggling routes, including for the trade of live primates. The presentation can be accessed [here](#).

42. Mr. Linjouom Ibrahim (Cameroon) expressed appreciation for the work done by PALF on this complex topic, and stated that the presence of independent observers could indeed augment the quality of investigations.

43. Mr. Cléto Ndikumagenge (Congo Basin Forest Partnership) pointed out that many local NGOs were doing a good job monitoring wildlife crime and needed to be involved.

44. Mr. Nascimento Antonio (Angola) thanked the NGOs working on law enforcement, but reminded them to make sure to work closely with government agencies and share information for the benefit of both sides.

45. Mr. Sellar (CITES) shared this concern, as ultimately governments had to be responsible for law enforcement, and some of the support given to governments by NGOs was a matter that should be handled by enforcement professionals. At the same time, CITES also recognized that, without NGO activities, much less would be accomplished. Mr. Sellar said that he was impressed by some of the successes achieved. Careful reflection was needed, however, as ultimately it was governments' responsibility to address all law enforcement issues, but the need for NGO help showed that there was clearly a problem. CITES was of the opinion that NGO support and capacity building must be seen as a stopgap and kept short-term, always with the goal of allowing governments to assume their full role.

46. In response, Mr. Honig said that it was the governments that were asking the NGOs to come and work with them to help find solutions. Although PALF agreed in principle that law enforcement was a core governmental responsibility, PALF also emphasized the need for quick action and results. A functioning governmental apparatus could take many years to set up; time that was not available. PALF had an agreement with the government of the Republic of Congo to undertake evaluations of its work after three and five years, and to determine if external support was still necessary.

47. Mr. David Greer (WWF) agreed with Mr. Sellar's comments, but went on to congratulate the countries involved for allowing the innovative PALF approach to law enforcement within their borders. He asked the Range State representatives to stress the key importance of this issue to their governments, and affirmed that the ultimate goal must be for governments to handle these issues independently.

48. Mr. Raymond Mbitikon (COMIFAC) explained his organization's role as a subregional institution backed by ten countries united by their political willingness to fight all forms of environmental degradation in forests. COMIFAC's mission was to help harmonize

forest policies throughout the region and coordinate the conservation of natural resources. COMIFAC highlighted the social and political conflicts which played a key role as drivers of the continuing slaughter of wildlife species, both protected and unprotected. He announced that COMIFAC was currently developing a Wildlife Trade Enforcement Action Plan 2011-2016, and confirmed that it would be shared with stakeholders for comments.

49. Mr. Sellar requested COMIFAC to send this draft plan to the CITES Secretariat, as CITES might have relevant comments, given its considerable experience with wildlife crime networks elsewhere in the world. Mr. Sellar suggested that all appropriate authorities be involved (e.g., anticorruption and financial crime units in the police and customs), as wildlife crime was not a standalone activity - it also involved, among other things, corruption, fraud, murder, theft and arms dealing.

Agenda Item 11: Funding

50. Discussing possible sources of funding for Agreement implementation, Ms Virtue (CMS) explained that the Gorilla Agreement was unique amongst CMS agreements in that all Range States were developing countries, making fundraising from Parties themselves difficult. Even if all Range States became Parties and paid the annual subscription of €3,000, it would only raise €30,000 per year. Therefore, other sources of funding were crucial. To date, the Interim Secretariat had been able to identify several. Germany, Monaco and France had funded meetings and projects, for which meeting delegates expressed their appreciation.

51. Ms. Virtue went on to explain the role of "Friends of CMS", an independent, German-based organization whose sole role was to raise funds for migratory species and activities supporting the Convention.

52. Furthermore, Ms. Virtue reported that CMS had hired a consultant to develop several GEF project proposals, which might include focusing on a transboundary activity benefitting gorilla conservation. However, GEF funding for biodiversity was limited to US\$5 million in gorilla Range States, so any potential target country would have to prioritize part of its allocation for this project, if it were to go ahead. The NGOs present were encouraged to submit project ideas, and also consider contributing matching funds required for GEF projects.

53. Mr. Gustave Doungoube (Central African Republic) voiced the opinion that GEF projects were a good idea and that the Agreement's Interim Secretariat could help Range States define priorities for the allocation of their GEF funds.

54. The Chair, Dr. Mudakikwa (Rwanda) thanked Germany and Monaco who had funded the meeting and asked them to give the participants their views regarding funding and the meeting in general.

55. Ms. Andrea Pauly (Germany) explained that, though not a Range State, her country had been happy to provide seed money to establish the Gorilla Agreement, and in this context recalled the German-sponsored Frankfurt Symposium during the Year of the Gorilla in 2009 and also Germany's role as host of the parent Convention. However, for the Agreement to become fully operational, a strong commitment from the Range States was essential.

56. Germany was funding several related projects, among them a tourism initiative managed by WWF Cameroon; a project in the Virunga National Park which focused on creating alternatives to charcoal, managed by Frankfurt Zoological Society; and a law enforcement project in Gabon, managed by Conservation Justice in close cooperation with

LAGA and PALF. Ms. Pauly stated that she was impressed by the work of PALF and would recommend the project to both the German Ministry of the Environment and to “Friends of CMS” for future funding.

57. H.E. Mr. Patrick van Klaveren (Monaco) expressed the view that the meeting had been successful, but felt that more ambitious recommendations and Action Points would have been possible, in order to take full advantage of the CMS structure. He reiterated the economic importance of intact gorilla populations and stressed the need to integrate the value of gorillas (both through tourism and through ecosystem services) into national budgets.

58. Like Germany, Monaco was of the opinion that only full engagement from the Range States, including timely payment of contributions, would allow the Agreement to become a success in the long run.

59. The Chair intervened to stress the importance of ecosystem services to all Range States, stating that gorillas were a key species in their forest ecosystems. He also supported the previous statements of Germany and Monaco regarding the importance of the Range States meeting their financial commitment and assuming overall responsibility.

60. Mr. Ian Redmond, the CMS Ambassador closed this agenda item with a reminder that the only gorilla subspecies whose population was growing, the Mountain Gorilla, was fully located within some of the most intensively protected areas in Africa, and that most gorilla populations were not this fortunate. Funding needs were therefore enormous. He also mentioned that, though he never tired of talking to donors, approaches by individuals from the Range States themselves had the potential to be equally or even more effective.

Agenda Item 12: Preparations for MOP2 in Bergen, Norway, on the 26-27 November 2011

61. Ms. Virtue informed participants of the status of preparations for the Second Meeting of the Parties, which would take place back-to-back with the Tenth CMS Conference of the Parties in Bergen, Norway. The main points were that several recommendations of the Technical Committee would be brought to MOP2 for decision, e.g. the nomination of three supplementary experts and the adoption of a standardized reporting system. In cases where a country’s Technical Committee member was not also its Focal Point for the Gorilla Agreement, the Technical Committee member was asked to liaise with the Focal Point.

Agenda Item 13: A.O.B.

62. There was no other business raised.

Agenda Item 14: Adoption of the list of Action Points derived from the meeting

63. The meeting concluded with the adoption of Action Points arising from the meeting (Annex 1).

Agenda Item 15: Closure of the Meeting

64. H.E. Mr. Stanislas Kamanzi, the Minister of Environment and Lands of Rwanda, closed the proceedings by expressing his pleasure that his country had had the opportunity to host the meeting, and looked forward to continuing talks at MOP2 in November 2011.



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UNEP/CMS/GOR-TC1/ Report
Annex 1

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ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

1. National Reports
 - The secretariat will draft a format for national reports, and share with the Parties, as soon as possible.
 - Parties will provide their feedback to the secretariat, who will finalize a draft for the Meeting of the Parties to consider.
 - Each range state will submit a report to the CMS Secretariat 120 days in advance of the Meetings of the Parties on the status of gorilla conservation activities relevant to country and subspecies Action Plans and based on means of verification.
 - Ad-hoc format reports will be accepted for the upcoming 2nd Meeting of the Parties 26-27 November 2011. This report should be submitted to the secretariat by July 29 2011.
2. Identification of Experts for the Technical Committee

Party and non-party members will propose to the secretariat, suitably qualified experts in the following three areas:

 - Forest management and conservation;
 - Environmental law; and
 - Wild animal health.
 - The environmental law expert should be either a lawyer with experience in enforcement, or a law enforcement officer (police, customs etc) and can be either an individual or an existing position in an expert agency.
 - The wild animal health expert should have experience with Ebola and other diseases.
 - Peer reviewed publications and membership of relevant professional societies are highly desirable, especially for the animal health position.
3. Members request the CMS Secretariat to contact the CITES MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants) program to discuss the possibility of expanding this initiative to include monitoring of gorilla populations for the Gorilla Agreement.
4. Members request the CMS Secretariat to approach the International Consortium Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) to recognize the seriousness of illegal trade in gorillas, to take account of this in developing its workplan, and, if possible, identify ways in which it could support implementation of the Gorilla Agreement.
5. Members request the secretariat to liaise with COMIFAC on the development of its Wildlife Trade Enforcement Plan, to explore synergies and opportunities for collaboration.



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CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Distribution. General

UNEP/CMS/GOR-TC1/ Report
Annex 3

Original: English

FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
TO THE CMS AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION
OF GORILLAS AND THEIR HABITATS
Kigali, Rwanda, 29-30 March 2011

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting/ Welcome addresses
2. Adoption of Rules of Procedure
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Nomination of Chair and Vice-Chair
5. Report by the Secretariat
6. Summaries of activities to implement the Action Plans
All Range States very briefly give a synopsis of their most important and recent gorilla conservation activities
7. Transboundary gorilla populations and their conservation
 - Presentation on transboundary Mountain Gorilla conservation and the defining features of the cooperation between Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda
 - Discussion on how activities in other key transboundary gorilla protected areas can benefit from the Virungas experience.
8. Process for the nomination for the three expert positions on the Technical Committee (to be elected at MOP2)
 - Forest Management and Conservation
 - Environmental Law
 - Wild Animal Health
9. Monitoring and Reporting System for the Gorilla Agreement
Discussion on how to move forward on a Monitoring and Reporting System.
10. Developments in Wildlife Law Enforcement in the Region
Discussion on recent activities and plans regarding Wildlife Law Enforcement relevant to gorillas.

11. Funding
Discussing possible sources for increased funding for Gorilla Agreement implementation, including REDD, CBFF and GEF.
12. Preparations for MOP2 in Bergen, Norway, on the 26 - 27 November 2011
13. A.O.B
14. Adoption of the list of Action Points derived from the meeting
15. Closure of the Meeting