



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Distr: General

UNEP/CMS/Inf.10.18.11  
2 June 2011

Original: English

TENTH MEETING OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Bergen, 20-25 November 2011  
Agenda Item 16b

## REVIEW OF ARTICLE IV AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED

- I. The Secretariat is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, the report provided by the Abu Dhabi CMS Interim Coordinating Unit for the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range, to accompany document UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.9.
2. The report is provided unedited in the format and language that it was submitted.

## EXAMEN DES ACCORDS DE L'ARTICLE IV DEJA CONCLUS

1. Le Secrétariat diffuse ci-joint, pour l'information des participants à la dixième session de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur les espèces migratrices, le rapport développé par l'Abu Dhabi CMS intérimaire Unité de coordination pour le Mémorandum d'Entente sur la Conservation et la gestion des Dugongs et de leurs habitats dans l'ensemble de leur aire de répartition, pour accompagner le document UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.9.
2. Le rapport est fourni sans avoir été mis au point, dans le format et la langue dans lesquels il a été soumis.

## REVISIÓN DE ACUERDOS ARTÍCULO IV YA CONCLUIDOS

1. La Secretaría adjunta, para información de los participantes a la décimo Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención sobre Especies Migratorias, el informe completo presentado por el Abu Dhabi CMS Provisional Unidad de Coordinación para el Memorando de Acuerdo sobre la Conservación de Especies de Aves Migratorias de Pastizales del Sur de Sudamérica y de sus Hábitats, en complemento en el documento UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.9.
2. El informe se presenta sin modificaciones editoriales, bajo la forma y en el idioma original.



02 June 2011

**Review of Article IV Agreements already concluded:  
Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs  
and their Habitats throughout their Range**

**A. Background**

1. The UNEP/CMS Office in Abu Dhabi is funded by the Government of Abu Dhabi and hosted by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD). The signature of the Donor Agreement between UNEP and EAD occurred in October 2009 and the signature of a Host Country Agreement is under consideration for signature between UNEP, EAD and the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Once signed, this document will complete the Office's UN jurisdictional identity. At present, the Office's human resources comprise Executive Coordinator, supported by Programme Officer - Dugongs (PO-Dugongs), Associate Programme Officer and Administrative/Finance Assistant.

2. The Office serves as the Secretariat to the MOU on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range. The functions of this Office include communication with range states and supporting partners, promotion of conservation projects/programmes, providing technical expertise, and supporting capacity building.

3. As per its Terms of Reference, the UNEP/CMS Office - Abu Dhabi plays a key role in coordinating relevant initiatives to protect migratory species in line with the provisions of the above-mentioned MOU as well as the existing bodies within the sub-region. As such, the Office progresses and supports global, regional and national conservation actions for migratory marine species and their habitats. The function of the Office also includes providing coordination framework for the UNEP/CMS activities in the West Asia Region and Indian Ocean, enhancing synergies with other regional bodies.

4. To achieve the main objectives of the Office, a number of initiatives to protect migratory species in line with the provisions of the above-mentioned MOUs have been undertaken particularly through presentations and side events in the international arena. This includes various dugong conservation workshops held in Phuket (Thailand), Goa (India), Antananarivo (Madagascar) and Abu Dhabi (UAE). Three further regional meetings are scheduled for June 2011 in India, for July 2011 in Malaysia and for October in Kenya (to be held in association with 7<sup>th</sup> WIO MSA Scientific Symposium). The 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in October 2010 in Nagoya (Japan) was a valuable opportunity for CMS and its Abu Dhabi Office to raise international awareness on the major conservation challenges for migratory marine species.

5. The Office also continues to support the international interests of EAD and UAE more broadly, through its representations during missions, meetings, workshops and conferences. The office has provided technical assistance in coordination with EAD officers for dugong conservation efforts in South East Asia, South West Indian Ocean and South Asia. Most



recently the Dugong MOU Secretariat liaised with the Government of Palau to identify potential dugong conservation efforts in response to an offer of assistance under the auspices of the United Arab Emirates Partnership in the Pacific Program.

## **B. Review of the progress made towards the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range**

6. The UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU, which has 19 signatories and over 40 range states, is serviced by UNEP/CMS Office - Abu Dhabi with the support of a full time dedicated Programme Officer who commenced appointment in September 2009. Since the establishment of the UNEP/CMS Office - Abu Dhabi, the Dugong MOU has secured eight new signatories. Mozambique became the 19<sup>th</sup> signatory in April 2011. More countries, including Thailand, have recently expressed an interest to sign in 2011.

7. Since September 2009, all Signatories, dugong range states, NGOs, researchers and other stakeholders who have been involved with development and finalization of the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU, have been notified of the establishment of the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office.

8. Before the First Official Signatory State Meeting (SS1) of October 2010, the Dugong MOU Secretariat's strategy for activities was to take direction from the meetings *Technical Workshop and Meeting to Sign the Dugong MOU* held in Abu Dhabi in October 2007, and the *Informal meeting of Signatory States to the CMS Dugong MOU* held in Bali in August 2008. The main focus of the Secretariat has been on identifying feasible options that facilitated or directly supported regional cooperation between range states on conservation and management actions to address key threats to dugongs. In addition the Secretariat has sought to facilitate sub-regional activities to get better information on the distribution and abundance of dugongs and their habitats in order to assess the conservation status of dugongs. To this end, the Office initiated a number of sub-regional projects in East Africa and South East Asia.

9. The projects in East Africa were "Rapid Assessment of Dugongs and their Seagrass Habitats in Northern Madagascar" and "Study to Confirm the Existence or Extinction of Dugongs in the Waters of Mauritius". Funded from Australian voluntary contribution in 2008, Madagascar project provided the means for piloting a low-cost, low-tech methodology to study dugong populations. The results showed that although dugongs were present in large numbers in the past, the population has been in decline, and that accidental capture in gillnets poses the greatest threat to the continuance of the species in the area. The likelihood of seagrass presence was determined on a broad scale for the whole of northern Madagascar and will be used to prioritize areas for finer scale mapping. This methodology is especially suited to developing countries as it provides a means to rapidly survey large areas at low cost and with limited technical input. The methods used in this study have been incorporated into the UNEP/CMS Standardised Catch/Incidental Catch Survey Questionnaire.<sup>1</sup>

10. Mauritius project aimed to confirm the existence or extinction of dugongs in the Mauritian waters through systematic surveying of fisher communities on Mauritius and Rodrigues to elicit local knowledge, present or historic, in relation to the occurrence and distribution of this species. The study found dugongs have often been confused with pinnipeds, and this is an important consideration when gathering anecdotal information on the presence of dugongs both within and beyond the Western Indian Ocean region. In

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<sup>1</sup> See complete report on [http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/pdf/c3\\_trs66\\_cms\\_prelim\\_mg.pdf](http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/pdf/c3_trs66_cms_prelim_mg.pdf).

addition, failure to find any survey information except for likely seal encounters reinforces the hypothesis that dugongs had already been exterminated by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> The project was funded from Australian voluntary contribution (2008).

11. A collaborative South Asia project “Assessment of dugong distributions, habitats and risks due to fisheries in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam” included organizing a training workshop on standardised survey methods, with objectives to identify relative dugong abundances, distribution, key habitats and threats, to develop capacity for research studies, and to enhance cooperation among countries. The project also included conducting field surveys in each of the collaborative countries. This project was submitted for funding made available from Australia’s voluntary contribution in 2008 has been successfully completed. The concluding workshop is scheduled to be held in Malaysia in July 2011. The project enabled effectively to share and build technical capacity in the 4 range states by using a standardised survey methodology to investigate dugong mortality from bycatch in artisanal fisheries as well as undertaking habitat assessment and monitoring.

12. Using the west coast of Thailand as a case study, it was demonstrated how the results of the survey generated informative data on fisher income, fishing gears, dugong abundance and trends and fishery impacts on dugong populations. In addition, on-the-ground survey allowed “ground-truthing” of previous aerial surveys. The survey had provided stimulus to further activities, including development of a regional database and automated data interpretation system, and extension of the survey into additional areas. The results confirmed the value of the dugong catch survey tool, with data on dugong distribution and “hotspots” highly correlated with previous aerial survey results.

13. The above mentioned project was used as a pilot study to develop standardised methodology and protocols for fisher surveys and related work (e.g. habitat monitoring) with the involvement of key technical experts from EAD as well as James Cook University, San Francisco State University, Marine Research Foundation and Community Centered Conservation, who have participated a global study on bycatch in artisanal fisheries. The Standardised Dugong Catch/Incidental Catch Survey Tool was published on May 2010 on the Secretariat’s website<sup>3</sup> and is now available in over six different languages, including Arabic. It is a low-cost methodology for the rapid assessment of abundance and spatial distribution of dugongs and their habitats and on impacts on dugong populations including incidental bycatch in artisanal fisheries, habitat degradation and direct harvests. While the survey tool focuses on dugongs, it can also be used for collection of data for sea turtles and dolphins, and adapted to other marine wildlife such as manatees, small cetaceans and sharks.

14. Individual contacts has been made with a number of range states with regards to potential projects or other initiatives to facilitate engagement by the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office in local or regional conservation and management efforts for dugongs. Contact with range states has been facilitated by missions by the PO-Dugongs to represent the UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office at appropriate events such as conferences and specific meetings to build networks.

15. The UNEP/CMS Abu Dhabi Office has also provided letters of support to funding proposals by the Community Centered Conservation (C3), an NGO based in the UK and Egypt. The supported funding proposals were addressed to (a) the US Marine Mammal Commission to progress development of a dugong network in East Africa to share information, resources and capacity for dugong conservation and management in East

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<sup>2</sup> See complete report on [http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/pdf/c3\\_mgio2010\\_mauritius.pdf](http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/pdf/c3_mgio2010_mauritius.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong\\_noticeboard.htm](http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong_noticeboard.htm) > Standardised Dugong Catch/By-catch Questionnaire Available Now

Africa; and (b) the Secrétariat du Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) to progress dugong surveys and trial financial incentives as partner in Madagascar and Mozambique.

16. In accordance with its work plan the UNEP/CMS Office – Abu Dhabi organised, in cooperation with EAD, the First Official Signatory State Meeting (SS1) of the UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU in Abu Dhabi in October 2010. The meeting was an occasion where governments, International and Non-Governmental Organizations and experts from about 30 countries discussed solutions to protect the world's only herbivorous mammal living in marine waters. The meeting concluded that the conservation strategy should address the need for greater protection of marine biodiversity by combining different conservation tools.<sup>4</sup>

17. The signatories adopted a novel and innovative conservation strategy to protect dugongs and their habitats and the meeting was widely reported in the international media. Prior to SS1 in September 2010, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Solomon Islands signed the Dugong MOU during the 21<sup>st</sup> SPREP Senior Officials Meeting in Madang, PNG. Bahrain, Palau, Seychelles, Vanuatu and Yemen subsequently signed the Dugong MOU at the SS1. The next Dugong MOU meeting is scheduled to take place in 2012. All meetings and workshops organized to date by the UNEP/CMS Office - Abu Dhabi are listed under [http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong\\_noticeboard.htm](http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong_noticeboard.htm).

18. The Dugong Catch/Incidental Catch Survey Tool has produced some quality data from 20 countries in the Pacific Islands, South East Asia, South Asia and the United Arab Emirates. The data will be combined into a geographical information system to identify the regional and national "hot spots" by providing crucial information on existing populations and their major impacts, particularly from fishing activities, and map important habitat areas. In 2011, the survey is being extended to Range States in East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean littorals, North West Indian Ocean, South Asia as well as other countries in South East Asia. Regional workshops to support these surveys are planned to take place in India in June 2011 and in Malaysia in July 2011.

19. Conventional conservation measures for dugongs and their habitat include establishing spatial closures as marine reserves and temporal constraints to fishing operations. To date, incentives, such as loans for buying dugong-friendly fishing gear, educational campaigns and measures to improve the livelihood of local communities have not yet been applied to complement other traditional conservation tools. The Office has begun development of pilot projects to apply these new incentive based tools to dugong conservation which can also have social and economic benefits for local communities. Co-benefits to other marine species may occur as well.

20. Following the decision of the Dugong MOU Signatories in SS1, in the beginning of year 2011 the Secretariat sought expressions of interest<sup>5</sup> within dugong range states to trial financial incentives, and assessed that in the first instance, will fund pilot projects in Mozambique and Papua New Guinea. Five other projects (in India, Philippines, Solomon Island, Tanzania and Thailand) were assessed as having the potential to meet the criteria and become viable financial incentives pilot projects – subject to a available capacity, resources and funding. These potential projects have been invited to work closely with the Secretariat to further develop their proposals.

21. The Secretariat will also be looking for substantial external funding for the pilot projects to cover actions for the next three years and to secure sustainable funding streams in the

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<sup>4</sup> See SS1 meeting report on [http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/meeting\\_of\\_sign\\_1/meeting\\_report.pdf](http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/meeting_of_sign_1/meeting_report.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong\\_noticeboard.htm](http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/dugong_noticeboard.htm) > Expressions of Interest (EoI)

long term. A Strategic Support Team of selected advisors<sup>6</sup> assists the Secretariat in this process. The main fundraising platform is through the Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative which has been developed based on an innovative toolbox for dugong and seagrass conservation: solutions to coastal environmental challenges, throughout the range of the dugong, which can be crafted and implemented on a site-specific basis. This innovative approach integrates two services: opportunities for sustainable economic development, and financial incentives for coastal biodiversity conservation. The toolbox of solutions includes financial incentives, rapid assessment questionnaires, gear modifications, and monitoring methodologies.

22. The Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative is focused on outcome-based approaches that explicitly link livelihood improvement, incentives for environmental stewardship, and innovative finance. With the support of a number of international, national and local partners, the initiative targets rural coastal communities where dugongs are present, to create livelihood improvement and economic opportunities for those communities, in exchange for environmental stewardship actions centred on dugongs and seagrass habitats.

23. Two initial pilot projects within the Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative to trial financial incentive tools are currently being advanced in Mozambique and Papua New Guinea. In Bazaruto Bay, Mozambique, the Secretariat is working with the Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism, Natural History Museum/Eduardo Mondlane University and WWF-Mozambique as well as local government agencies and fishing cooperatives to develop a program that focuses on generating market demand for seafood that is harvested in a way that produces positive benefits for dugongs and seagrass habitat. In Daru, Papua New Guinea, the Secretariat is working with SPREP, the PNG Department of Environmental Conservation, Mama Graun Conservation Trust Fund, and local partners in the Western Province, to pilot a project which is a global priority for dugong conservation. By leveraging a market opportunity for artisanal fishery aquaculture, the pilot project is aimed at improving livelihoods and providing a stable food source for a suite of villages, while also reducing pressure on seagrass habitat, dugongs, and the marine environment in general.

24. During the 2nd Marine Conservation Forum in December 2010 in Abu Dhabi, the Office supported a side event in collaboration with the organisers (EWS-WWF). The side event facilitated group discussions with participants from GCC area, aimed at exploring opportunities for regional cooperation in the implementation of dugong and marine turtle conservation initiatives. It was agreed that a regional dugong/turtle/cetacean workshop should be organised to address stranding/bycatch issues. A priority for the regional workshop will be addressing the emerging issue of high mortalities of dugongs presumably from interactions with shark fisheries, especially those targeting shark fins. The workshop is at an early planning state and preliminary date has been set to March 2012.

25. The Secretariat is also supporting the 2011 Pacific Year of the Dugong<sup>7</sup>, an initiative of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), by allocating US\$3,000 to each Pacific dugong range state for their national campaign launches (New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). In addition, in March 2011 the PO-Dugongs travelled to Palau for the regional launch of the campaign, and to Papua New Guinea for a national launch. The regional launch was internationally reported in the media. The Secretariat will also contribute funding to support a concluding event in Palau

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<sup>6</sup> Josh Donlan (Advanced Conservation Strategies), Alana Grech (James Cook University), Jeff Kinch (National Fisheries College), Helene Marsh (James Cook University), Hoyt Peckham (Grupo Tortuguero / Ocean Foundation), Nicolas Pilcher (Marine Research Foundation), Chris Wilcox (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), Simon Woodley (incl. consultant to the Australian Institute of Marine Science).

<sup>7</sup> See campaign website <http://www.sprep.org/Biodiversity/PYoD/index.asp>.

to mark the end of the Pacific Year of the Dugong in association with the revision of the 2008-2012 SPREP Action Plan for Dugongs.

26. It is noteworthy to highlight that a comprehensive programme of work aiming at maintaining momentum on the implementation of the MOU's Conservation and Management Plan has been incorporated in the new reviewed budget for the triennium 2012-2014 that has been presented by this Office to the donor. It is expected that – based on the tangible positive results achieved – this programme will maintain its performance with the core funding available and efforts to attract external funds from GEF as well as other major donors.