



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.11

25 July 2023

Original: English

14th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 – 17 February 2024
Agenda Item 11

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

(Prepared by the UNEP)

Summary:

The present report is submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for consideration at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 23 to 28 October 2023. It provides information on the administrative and financial management support provided by UNEP to and its programmatic cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention building on the report provided to the fifty-third meeting of the Convention's Standing Committee, held on 19 and 20 October 2022 in Bonn, Germany.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for consideration at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP-14), to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 23 to 28 October 2023.
2. Building on the previous report provided to the Standing Committee at its fifty-third meeting (UNEP/CMS/StC53/Doc.8), section II of the present report provides updates on programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the CMS Secretariat on the implementation of outcomes of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Gandhinagar from 17 to 22 February 2020. Section III of the present report provides information on administrative and financial management support.
3. Pursuant to resolution 2/5 of the UN Environment Assembly, UNEP is setting the stage for a more coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and providing links to other global environmental goals and strategies through the medium-term strategy for 2022–2025 and the programme of work for the biennium 2022–2023. The climate action, nature action, science-policy and environmental governance subprogrammes are closely aligned with the priorities of the environmental issues of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the biodiversity-related conventions. SDG 6, 13, 14, 15 and 17 are at the very heart of the work conducted by UNEP in cross-cutting areas such as poverty reduction, food, water and energy security, employment, gender equality and policy coherence.

II. Programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the CMS Secretariat

A. Support for strengthening cooperation, collaboration and synergies between CMS and other biodiversity-related conventions

4. In accordance with Decision 13.20 on the Review Mechanism and National Legislation Programme, the UNEP Law Division and the CMS Secretariat have been in discussion to conduct a joint workshop to strengthen the legal framework to implement CMS including a consultation session on the Montevideo Programme. The workshop is planned to take place in 2024.
5. UNEP hosts the United Nations Information Portal on MEAs ([InforMEA](#)) which provides a one stop shop for comprehensive access to information on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The CMS secretariat continues to support InforMEA by providing advice on matters related to outreach and visibility, interoperability and data exchange, e-learning, and semantic management. The CMS course was expanded to introduce the history, role and organizational structure of CMS, the obligations of CMS Parties towards species listed on the Appendices of the Convention, and the instruments that may be developed under CMS. The new course was launched at the beginning of 2022. The CMS secretariat also actively participated in the 13th meeting of the InforMEA Initiative Steering Committee, which was held in hybrid form from 11th -13th October 2022, where participants from over 20 MEAs agreed to a series of recommendations to guide the work of InforMEA during its coming year.

6. UNEP also collaborated with the CMS Secretariat on the EU-funded *Global Public Goods and Challenges* (GPGC) project, **Scaling-up Actions to Realize Synergies for Biodiversity** and other secretariats of relevant MEAs to enhance integrated approaches and tools to support the implementation and monitoring of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). In collaboration with UNEP-WCMC, the Online Reporting Systems (ORS) and an automated Compendia of Guidance on synergies within DaRT, are currently being developed and upgraded in a modernized and gender sensitive knowledge system to enhance access to and use by CMS and AEWPA Parties among others for effective data management and reporting.
7. In response to Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP13), UNEP continued to develop and roll-out Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT) to countries, inviting CMS focal points and those of other conventions to use the tool to increase effectiveness in national reporting and collaboration at national level. Since 2021, UNEP has organized regional training workshops on DaRT with 30 countries, including participation by national focal points of CMS. The [DaRT](#) is the first platform supporting parties in improving national synergies, coordination, planning, reporting, review, and knowledge-management across biodiversity-related conventions. DaRT is hosted at the InforMEA platform and funded by EU, Switzerland and SIDA, with support from the CBD Secretariat.

B. Support for preparation and implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

8. In response to Resolution 11.10 (Rev. COP 13), UNEP collaborated with CMS at global, regional, and national levels to facilitate integrated approaches and strengthen synergies to enhance coherence in the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions and the KM-GBF.
9. In response to CBD COP decision 14/30, UNEP, in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat and other MEAs Secretariats convened the second consultation workshop of Biodiversity-related conventions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (Bern II), from 18th January- 2nd February 2021. The aim of the consultation was to facilitate engagement of MEAs, both the Parties and Secretariats in the development and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. UNEP submitted the Bern II Consultation outcomes to the selected number of governing bodies of MEAs including to the 53rd meeting of the CMS Standing Committee (StC 53) as an information document. The Bern Process was recognized by decision CBD COP 15/13, inviting UNEP and the governing bodies of the MEAs to continue supporting the Bern process. Further, CMS Secretariat provided advice to UNEP through the Bogis-Bossey Workshop held from 27 to 30 June 2023, on the organization of the Bern III Conference to be held early 2024.
10. UNEP, on the margins of the fourth meeting of the CBD Open Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG-4), and jointly with UNDP and the SCBD launched the KM-GBF Early Action Support project. The project is aimed at assisting countries fast-track readiness and early actions to implement the KM-GBF and to align their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), including national biodiversity targets, monitoring systems, policy frameworks and biodiversity finance plans - with the framework. Some of the knowledge tools that the project is promoting to ensure the integrated commitments of other MEAs include the DaRT which brings together the different MEA focal points to collaborate on NBSAP alignment. The activities will continue through GEF-8 support.

C. Terrestrial Species

11. The secretariat of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), hosted by UNEP contributes to the implementation of the CMS gorilla agreement via several projects. The GRASP Secretariat with funding from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany supported transboundary collaboration for the conservation of the critically endangered Cross River gorillas. Through the project, the CMS Secretariat analysed the implementation of the Convention provisions through national legislation in Cameroon and Nigeria. The project developed a road map towards the nomination of the Cross River – Korup-Takamanda transboundary World Heritage Site (CRIKOT).
12. The GRASP has been implementing the mountain gorilla component of the **Vanishing Treasures project** (2018-2023), funded by Luxembourg, by developing a buffer zone management plan for mountain gorillas to reduce human wildlife conflict and promote climate smart agriculture in Uganda and Rwanda.
13. UNEP secured funding from the German International Climate Initiative (IKI) for the Congo peatlands project. Through the project, GRASP Secretariat is implementing the biodiversity and land use planning components (the full portfolio is 15 million Euros for the period 2022 -2027).

The African Elephant Fund

14. The African Elephant Fund (AEF), established to support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP), is a partnership venture between thirty-eight African elephant range States, donor States, UNEP, the CITES Secretariat, and CMS Secretariat to curtail the growing threats to elephant populations.
15. At CMS COP 12, Parties endorsed the AEAP as the principal strategy for elephant conservation under the Convention. By April 2023, the AEF has completed sixty projects in the African elephant range states since its inception.
16. In 2020, the AEF Secretariat issued an emergency call for proposals to provide funding to the African elephant range states to address elephant conservation challenges related to Covid-19 pandemic. The aim was to sustain the progress made in elephant conservation during a time when access to other sources of funding to support these activities was limited. The Sixth Virtual Meeting of the AEF Steering Committee (AEFSC) approved nineteen Covid-19 projects and by April 2023, fourteen projects have been completed and three are ongoing.
17. The ninth call of proposals with a deadline of 14 February 2020 was postponed as priority was given to the Covid-19 call for proposals. With most of the Covid-19 projects completed or ongoing, the AEF SC evaluated the proposals received during the ninth call at its eighth virtual AEF SC meeting held on 25 October 2022, where four project proposals with a total value of USD 456,375 were approved.
18. The review of AEAP has been completed and approved by the African elephant range States on 31st March 2023. The most significant change in the AEAP is the reprioritization of the first three objectives which puts Reduce Human-Elephant Conflict as the priority objective. In addition, the two-species classification of the African elephant, *Loxodonta africana* (Savanna elephant) and *Loxodonta cyclotis* (Forest elephant) has been recognized in the revised AEAP.

19. The new AEFSC was elected in July 2021 and serves for a period of three years (2021 - 2023). The current composition of the AEFSC is listed on the AEF website.
20. In the period between March 2020 and April 2023, the AEFSC has held five formal and five informal virtual meetings.
21. In 2021 the revised Rules of Procedure (RoPs) for the Fund were adopted by the AEF SC during its Seventh Virtual Meeting. The revised Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Fund were approved by the African range States in January 2022 based on a written no-objection procedure. The revised ToRs and RoPs have been uploaded on the AEF website.
22. The AEF Secretariat has organized several side events to engage with the African elephant range States and other stakeholders in order to increase visibility of activities undertaken through the AEF. Some of these were held on World Wildlife Day, OEWG-4 and CITES COP-19. The events showcased responses of the African elephant range states to the challenges posed to elephant conservation by the Covid-19 pandemic. A short documentary on one of the Covid-19 projects was produced and an accompanying article published on the UNEP website.

D. Aquatic species

Regional strategy for the conservation of Monk Seals in the Mediterranean (2020-2025)

23. At the 19th Conference of Parties to Barcelona Convention, the regional strategy for the conservation of Monk Seals in the Mediterranean (2020-2025) was adopted through its Decision IG.24/7.¹ The strategy aims to re-establish the favourable conservation status of Monk Seal populations and their natural habitat in the region. In response to CMS decision 13.63, UNEP- Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) is supporting Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to implement the priority goals of the Strategy through the Med-Monk Seal Project (2021-2024)². The project is funded by the Monk Sea Alliance (MSA)³, and is implemented in synergy with the IMAP and the ecosystem approach, among other ongoing projects contributing to the conservation of the species.

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Outlook report

24. The Nairobi Convention and its partners published the first ever MPA Outlook report in 2021 which provides a baseline for the monitoring of implementation of the KM-GBF. The report highlights the 143 MPAs that have been established in the region, covering a total of 555 436.68km², representing 7 percent of the total combined exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the nine countries covered in the MPA Outlook. The report provides important information in the implementation of memorandum of understanding on the conservation and management of dugongs and their habitats.

Establishment of the first ever MPA in Cote d'Ivoire

25. The first ever MPA was established in Cote d'Ivoire through a presidential decree in 2020. The MPA covers an area of 2,600km² of pristine ocean off the coast of Grand-Béréby, protecting marine biodiversity including CMS-listed threatened shark and turtle

¹ Barcelona Convention COP 19 Decision IG.24/7:

https://www.racspa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop21/decision_24_7_eng.pdf

² Med-MonK Seal: Enhancing knowledge and awareness on monk seal in the Mediterranean: <https://www.rac-spa.org/node/2176>

³ <https://www.monksealalliance.org/>

species. The announcement is the culmination of years of work by the Ivorian government, the Abidjan Convention, Swedish Government, and a local NGO, Conservation des Espèces Marines (CEM), supported by the University of Exeter and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Establishment of the second MPA in Albania⁴

26. The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) of the MAP Barcelona Convention supported the government of Albania to establish its second MPA at Porto-Palermo Bay. The MPA was declared in July 2022 through a decision by the Albanian authorities. The protected area in Porto-Palermo Bay comprises marine and coastal landscapes and covers a total area of 1,694.98 hectares including 1,490.4 hectares of protected marine area. The SPA/RAC was instrumental in supporting Albania to undertake an ecological study and socio-economic studies where maps based on Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and management plans were developed and sustainable financial mechanisms were set up.

Adverse Impacts of Anthropogenic Noise on Cetaceans and Other Migratory Species (Decisions 13.58- 13.60)

27. UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC in collaboration with Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) have updated the Mediterranean Action Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans. The Action Plan was adopted by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at CoP 22 held in December 2021 in Antalya, Turkey.⁵ The Action Plan aims to provide a conservation framework and guidance, in line with decisions adopted by international bodies such as ACCOBAMS, the Pelagos Sanctuary Agreement and the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The Action Plan will be used to improve the conservation status of cetacean populations within the Mediterranean Sea. It sets priorities and activities to be undertaken to address the threats faced by cetacean species.

Bycatch (Decisions 13.61- 13.63)

28. The Mediterranean Bycatch Project⁶ has developed and tested bycatch mitigation measures on multiple species in selected vessels in Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey. A capacity building programme was conducted to increase capacity of relevant actors (NGOs, fisher organizations, administrations) to implement sustainable fishing practices.

Infrastructure Development and Migratory Species (Decision 13.135- 13.136)

29. The Nairobi Convention Secretariat through the WIOSAP project⁷, commissioned the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, South Africa) and the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC) to undertake a project⁸, in consultation with regional port partners and other stakeholders, aimed at advancing sustainable port development in the region. The objective of the project is to map existing and planned ports in the WIO region, develop and compare sustainable development scenarios in

⁴ <https://www.unep.org/unepmap/news/press-release/unepmap-welcomes-announcement-protected-area-porto-palermo-bay-albania>

⁵ Barcelona Convention COP 22: Decision IG.25/13:

https://www.racspa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop22/decision_25.13_en.pdf

⁶ Understanding Mediterranean multi-taxa 'bycatch' of vulnerable species and testing mitigation- a collaborative approach:

https://www.rac-spa.org/bycatch_pr

⁷ WIOSAP project

⁸ <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/node/913>

port operations and develop a tool kit for green ports development. The outputs generated from this work will enable national governments to support and guide the development of new policy options for sustainable port development in the WIO region.

Marine Turtles (Decision 13.69- 13.70)

30. In response to decision IG.24/79, the “Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region” (Post-2020 SAP BIO), was adopted at its 22nd meeting in December 2021 in Antalya, Turkey.

E. Technical and scientific support from the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Conservation Status of Migratory Species (Decision 13.24) and Application of Article III of the Convention Regarding International Trade in Appendix I-listed Species (Decision 13.17).

31. In support to the implementation of Decisions 13.1710 and 13.2411, UNEP-WCMC was contracted by the CMS Secretariat to undertake a series of activities, including the production of:
- The first ‘State of the World’s Migratory Species’ report, which provides an overview of the conservation status of migratory species and the pressures they face and gives illustrative examples of actions being taken to protect and conserve these species. The report focuses on species that are listed in the CMS Appendices, but also considers the wider context of all migratory species.
 - Ten case studies assessing the conservation status of individual CMS-listed species, prioritising species listed in Appendix I that are categorised in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as Least Concern and whose status may have improved since listing, and species listed in Appendix II that are categorised as Critically Endangered.
 - An assessment of the potential impact of direct use and trade on the conservation status of Appendix I-listed species.

Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 (Decision 13.1)

32. In support of the implementation of Decision 13.1, UNEP-WCMC was contracted by the CMS Secretariat to assess the implementation of the Convention’s Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (2015-2023) and to provide a summary of progress towards attainment of each of the targets in the Strategic Plan.

National reports (Resolution 12.5)

33. UNEP-WCMC was contracted by the CMS Secretariat to undertake a report of the analysis of national reports submitted by Parties to the convention to be presented to COP-14.
34. UNEP-WCMC has also committed to a redesign of the ORS which facilitates reporting for CMS and other MEAs. Prototype designs for the platform have been created following interviews with prospective users and the testing stage is now being rolled out.

9 Barcelona Convention COP 19 Decision IG.24/7:

https://www.racspa.org/sites/default/files/doc_cop/cop21/decision_24_7_eng.pdf

10 <https://www.cms.int/en/page/decisions-1316-1319-application-article-iii-convention-regarding-international-trade-appendix-i>

11 <https://www.cms.int/en/page/decisions-1324-1326-conservation-status-migratory-species>

III. Administrative and financial management support provided to CMS Secretariat

35. **Umoja Costs** - As presented in the Executive Director to StC53, the roll out of the Integrated Planning Management and Reporting (IPMR) module of the United Nations Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (Umoja) has led to an increase in license fees attributed to all UN entities that are currently using the system. The cost allocation methodology is based on the number of users and the increased user support provided by UN Headquarters. The increase places further burden on the already constrained share of the Programme Support Cost (PSC) budget allocated to CMS. The Parties to CMS are therefore requested to consider funding the Umoja costs from the Convention's core funds.
36. **PSC Waiver** – In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and UN procedures stipulated in the administrative instruction on Programme Support Accounts (ST/AI/286), PSC is charged on all extrabudgetary resources at a standard rate of 13 per cent to recover the incremental costs incurred while supporting activities financed through such resources. Full waiver and/or a reduction in the PSC rate is strongly discouraged by the Controller as this would lead to inability to meet administrative costs associated with the programme implementation. In his memo dated 10 June 2022, the Controller noted that decreasing programme support resources could not sustain demands unless the established PSC rates of 13 per cent charged against voluntary contributions is applied consistently to all donors, including Member States. Any deviation would draw the attention of auditors and other compliance-monitoring bodies. Requests for lower PSC rates must be approved by the Controller. In 2022, based on UNEA resolution 2/18 on “Relationship between UNEP and MEAs for which it provides the secretariats”, a MEA Secretariat requested a waiver of PSC for contributions to support travel to meetings by participants from developing countries. However, this request was not approved by the Controller. This decision set precedence for all such requests, therefore no further requests will be considered.
37. **PSC Income** - The amount of PSC income available in any given year is dependent on the income generated in the previous year. 67 per cent of the income is allocated to the CMS Secretariat while 33 per cent is retained by UNEP to fund the provision of advisory and policy formulation and core services in human resource, finance, procurement, legal and other administrative services provided by UNEP and its main service provider, the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON). The administrative staff of the CMS Secretariat is funded by its PSC allocation. Due to the unpredictable nature of the PSC income, it is recommended that fixed long-term costs, such as administrative staff salaries, not be funded from this source of income.
38. **Coordination Levy** - As per UN General Assembly resolution 72/279 on “Repositioning of the UN development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system” adopted on 31 May 2018, a one percent coordination levy is applied to earmarked contributions to fund the Resident Coordinator activities. This levy applies to earmarked contributions to the activities of CMS.
39. **After Service Health Insurance (ASHI)** - The ASHI programme is a benefit provided to eligible staff members of the UN that ensures continued health insurance coverage throughout their retirement. This programme allows retired staff to access the same health insurance schemes available to active staff. However, since this benefit is earned during active service but utilized after retirement, it creates an accrued liability for the UN. The financing of the ASHI liability has been a topic of discussion among various

UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administration and Budget Questions (ACABQ). These bodies have made various recommendations to the executive heads of the UN organizations, urging them to explore ways of financing the unfunded portion of the liability. The goal is to ensure that UN organizations do not continue to have unfunded ASHI liability by applying the available funds to the recognized liability. In the case of UNEP, it has been accruing 6 per cent of staff costs to offset the ASHI liability. However, a financial review has determined that this rate is not sufficient to cover the liability. Urgent containment measures are required to address the growing portion of the unfunded liability. As a response to this situation, the UN Controller has approved an increase in the ASHI accrual rate to 9 per cent during the last quarter of 2022, and all staff budgets should now reflect the increased cost associated with the ASHI programme. The Parties to the CMS may wish to consider increasing its 2024-2026 staff budget accordingly.

40. **Settlement of contributions** – The UN Secretariat adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2014. The IPSAS liquidity management principle requires that cash be available for the settlement of payments. The Parties are therefore encouraged to settle their assessed contributions in full early in the year to guarantee continuity of operations. Those Parties that are in arrears are requested to engage with the CMS Secretariat on settlement of outstanding contributions
41. **Payment of Contributions by Credit Card** – At CMS COP 13, Parties requested UNEP to provide alternative modalities that make it easier for the Parties to settle small, assessed amounts. UNEP is in the process of setting up an online payments platform that will enable small contributions from the Parties and other donors to be made by credit or debit cards. To facilitate successful implementation and uptake of this platform, UNEP's Corporate Service Division, in collaboration with UNHQ Treasury Division, arranged a training session on the use of the platform in June 2023. Administrative staff of the CMS Secretariat will be invited to the training sessions to enable the Secretariat to effectively support those Parties who will be using the platform to pay their dues.