



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



41st Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 27-28 November 2013

UNEP/CMS/StC41/16.1

REPORT ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH 2013

(prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary

The Document attached gives an update on activities relating to Information Management, Communication and Outreach undertaken since the last meeting of the Standing Committee.

These activities have contributed to the implementation of Objectives 1 and 3 of the CMS Strategic Plan (Resolution 10.5), namely ensuring that the conservation and management of migratory species are based on the best available information and increasing the level of engagement in the work of CMS of priority non-Parties.

Resolution 10.7 mandates the Secretariat to enhance its communication and outreach activities.

Activity 9 of the Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family (Resolution 10.9) calls for the “harmonization and interoperability of information management and reporting systems where appropriate and applicable for the CMS Family.”

Resolution 9.4 on the Future of National Reports requests the Secretariat to advance harmonization of reporting with CMS Agreements.

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number, and will not be distributed at the meeting. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copy to the meeting and not to request additional copies.

REPORT ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH 2013

Mandate

1. **Objective 1 of the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan (Resolution 10.5)** is to “ensure that the conservation and management of migratory species are based on the best available information”. This includes the collection and management of relevant data on the status of species and species groups, the threats they face and the measures taken to respond to these threats. In conjunction with the updated Strategic Plan 2006-2014, activities are being developed in collaboration with Parties, UNEP, relevant partners (NGOs, IGOs) and the media to emphasize the importance of migratory species and the role of CMS in conserving them. External communication also features the Convention’s work to meet relevant Aichi Targets to contribute to sustainable development and to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss.
2. **Objective 3 of the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan (Resolution 10.5)** seeks to increase the level of engagement in the work of CMS of priority non-Parties and the indicator identified is an increase in the number of countries joining CMS and participating in agreements.
3. **Resolution 10.7** mandates the Secretariat to enhance its communication and outreach activities through the website, publications, campaigns and press and media activities with support from CMS Ambassadors. It also recognizes the need to modernize and streamline the Convention’s information sharing capacity.
4. **Resolution 10.9 on the Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family, Annex 1, Activity 9** calls for the “harmonization and interoperability of information management and reporting systems where appropriate and applicable for the CMS Family.” A special working group consisting of representatives from AEWA, ASCOBANS, CMS and EUROBATS was established to steer the current website and database project. The same group has supported the implementation of the online workspaces. Furthermore, there is close cooperation between the Secretariats on the implementation and improvement of the CMS Family Online Reporting System (ORS).
5. **Resolution 9.4 on the Future of National Reports** requests the Secretariat to advance harmonization of reporting with CMS Agreements and with other international biodiversity agreements through the development of common reporting modules, via the framework of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and in consultation with UNEP-WCMC.

Activities since the 40th Meeting of the Standing Committee

6. Set out in the paragraphs that follow are reports on progress achieved with regard to the various aspects of the Convention’s information management, communication and outreach activities.

Web-based database

7. A new set of web-based databases which store data on species, countries, projects, contacts, reports, publications, meetings, documents and threats has been developed and implemented in 2012 and 2013 by the Secretariat of CMS, AEWA, EUROBATS and ASCOBANS. The CMS Secretariat has contracted a software company for web development to implement these databases,

allowing the storage, structuring and retrieval of different types of information which the Secretariat handles and provides to Parties and partners.

8. The development of this harmonized structure constitutes a major improvement in the way the participating Secretariats manage their information. It allows simple searches through the datasets from anywhere with internet access. Different data entries can easily be linked to each other in order to establish meaningful connections between the information.

9. Links to other entities that manage species information have already been established or are planned for the next phase of the project. This includes the IUCN Red List data as well as the Species+ database which CITES is developing with UNEP-WCMC. Data from the CMS Family are automatically fed into InforMEA through a link which has already been established.

New CMS Family website and e-community

10. The same software company has been contracted to implement the new CMS Family websites which will replace the current ones of CMS, AEWA, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS and of the Sharks MOU. While each Secretariat maintains ownership of its own website, the sites are interlinked and connected through a joint CMS Family platform which combines information from all Secretariats.

11. In addition to the public sections of the websites, a log-in area for Focal Points will be implemented as part of the CMS Family's capacity building activities. This "e-community" will include the contents of the National Focal Points Manual as well as a communication platform to facilitate the exchange of information and experience among Focal Points. Further details can be found in UNEP/CMS/StC41/16.2 on capacity building.

12. It is planned to have the new websites online and functioning in time for CMS COP11. The implementation of the new CMS Family websites including the e-community is financed through contributions from the CMS Trust Fund as well as from EUROBATS, AEWA, the CMS Sharks MOU¹, the Abu Dhabi project office, and a voluntary contribution from Finland.

Online workspaces for the scientific advisory bodies of CMS-Family instruments

13. In 2012, the Secretariat contracted a consultant to update the already existing AEWA Technical Committee workspace and to programme duplicates for the CMS Scientific Council, and the EUROBATS and ASCOBANS Advisory Committees. These workspaces are now in use by the members of the scientific advisory bodies and provide the different working groups with a web-based, password-protected communication space and working area.

14. In 2013, two more workspaces were created to provide the same service to the advisory groups to the Raptors MOU as well as the Sharks MOU. Both are already populated with content and in use by their members. The Secretariat staff is supporting the respective groups by providing substantive input to different groups as well as technical support to users.

Online Reporting (National Reports)

15. As reported and endorsed at StC40, CMS will switch from Word questionnaires to the

¹ The CMS Sharks MOU is kindly funded by the European Commission through the ENRTP* Strategic Cooperation Agreement with UNEP. *Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy

Online Reporting System (ORS) for COP11 in 2014 for its national reporting needs. The reporting form has been updated with the changes of COP10 and transferred to the online system. The data submitted by countries in the previous reporting cycle has been entered into the form already to ease the work of the focal points.

16. It is planned to review the reporting form for the COP12 reporting cycle in order to make the data more suitable for electronic analysis and visualization.

17. In April 2013, a sub-group was formed within the MEA Information and Knowledge Management group to move ahead with the development and enhancement of online reporting systems for MEAs and to ensure coordinated approaches to fundraising for these projects.

18. The Secretariat reminds Parties that the deadline for submission of National Reports is six months before the start of the COP, i.e. 31 May 2014, assuming that the COP is held at the end of November that year. Parties will be notified of the precise deadline in due course.

Communication tools

19. The CMS website has long been the Secretariat's main communication platform. During the period from October 2012 to mid-July 2013 the Secretariat posted more than 60 news announcements on the website. The Media Watch feature started in July 2011 has built into a substantial archive of press coverage of issues of interest to the Convention with typically 40 articles added each month from a variety of sources worldwide.

20. In order to make full use of social media, CMS joined Facebook in November 2011 thus providing a platform to exchange views and experiences on migratory species. In March 2013, the CMS Secretariat set up a Twitter account to reach out to a wide audience through this network. As of mid-July 2013 there are almost 2,000 followers on Facebook and 600 on Twitter. New web content is being developed and restructured. The CMS website and social media tools provide detailed information about the work of the Convention, generate considerable traffic and serve as useful tools for government officials, other MEAs, the general public, civil society members and journalists. The Secretariat continues to publish audio-visual material on the CMS YouTube channel.

21. The Secretariat has continued the delivery of Notifications to Parties, which was started after COP10. Twenty-four have been issued between StC40 and 4 July 2013: 6 in 2012 and 18 in 2013.

22. After COP10 the Secretariat started to regularly inform the members of the Standing Committee about the progress made with the implementation of COP10 decisions. By mid-July 2013, one quarterly report had been sent in May.

Recruitment of New Parties

23. The Secretariat distributes information material targeted to non-Parties including country profile, relevance of CMS, procedures for accession and relevant projects. In the period since StC40, two new Parties have been recruited: the Kingdom of Swaziland and the Republic of Fiji. In addition, as parties have been informed through "Notifications" a number of countries have signed MOUs.

Press & Media

24. The Secretariat continues to raise the profile of the Convention and its leading role in conserving migratory species among key media. Contacts with German and international media representatives have been strengthened and expanded to promote coverage of CMS activities and campaigns.

25. Press releases on CMS species meetings, conferences, outreach events and campaigns, publications and conservation issues are being distributed to target audiences in the working languages of the Secretariat and in German, when appropriate. In addition to UNEP Headquarters, the Secretariat works with the UNEP Regional Offices Europe, Africa and North America as well as with UNRIC in Bonn and UNIC in Canberra. In addition, collaboration was initiated with the UNEP Regional Office West Asia to strengthen the visibility of CMS in the regions by distributing relevant news items of interest to the region in 2013. In order to increase awareness of CMS as an efficient conservation tool, op-eds by the Executive Secretary were placed in English, French, Spanish and German speaking media with regard to sensitive issues. Interviews of CMS staff are arranged to obtain timely and reliable output of CMS activities.

Publications

26. As a follow-up to the successful species campaign Year of the Bat, and thanks to generous funding of the campaign by Switzerland, the Secretariat has compiled the electronic publication “Bats around the world” as an awareness raising tool on bats. It is available at www.cms.int/bats-around-the-world.

27. Three editions of the CMS Bulletin have been published and distributed by the CMS Secretariat at regular intervals in 2013. In addition, these Bulletins are also distributed by relevant UNEP Regional Offices.

28. The Secretariat continues to publish the Technical Series to provide advice to policy makers and conservationists in various areas. *Conserving cetaceans and manatees in the western African region* (CMS Technical Series N° 26) was published in English, French and Spanish. *A Review of Migratory Bird Flyways and Priorities for Management* (CMS Technical Series N° 27) comprises a review of existing management instruments globally, a review of current knowledge of bird flyways and policy options.

29. CMS is contributing to external publications such as the UNEP in Europe newsletter, the UNEP Annual Report, where it was featured prominently, Biodiversity Policy & Practice, a knowledge base of UN and inter-governmental activities addressing biodiversity policies by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Reporting Services and the IUCN Species Bulletin. Furthermore, the Secretariat produced a factsheet on *Migratory Species and Desertification* in English, French and Spanish in collaboration with the UNCCD Secretariat.

30. The CMS exhibition is being expanded to cover all Memoranda of Understanding and topics that are relevant to migratory species conservation.

Campaigns

31. Under the leadership of the CMS Secretariat, the Year of the Bat (2011-2012) Campaign set out to encourage the establishment of new conservation groups, especially outside Europe, to raise awareness about the need to protect bats. Throughout the campaign, schools, universities, museums, conservation groups and other initiatives shared their activities to improve the conservation status of bats with the Secretariat.

32. On 11 and 12 May, more than 350 events were held in 88 countries to mark World Migratory Bird Day including bird festivals, education programmes, presentations, film screenings and bird watching trips. This year's theme "Networking for migratory birds" highlighted the importance of ecological networks as well as networks of governments, conservation organizations and people for the survival of migratory birds. For the first time, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner provided a statement thus attaching utmost importance to the campaign.

33. A charity concert in Bonn for the benefit of a Grey-crowned Crane project and the celebrations at Lake Elementaita in Kenya were the major events. This year's campaign was jointly organized by the AEWA and CMS Secretariats.

CMS Ambassadors

34. According to the guidelines set by the 37th Meeting of the Standing Committee, CMS Ambassadors support the outreach activities of the Secretariat and argue the case for conservation in public. They use opportunities to promote the Convention and migratory species issues globally, while on their travels and using their extensive networks of conservation contacts.

35. The Secretariat envisages broadening the activities and geographic range of the existing and future Ambassadors, and welcomes Members' suggestions of potential new Ambassadors from their regions, that are media-savvy with CMS knowledge and species conservation credibility.

36. Recent activities undertaken by Ambassadors include:

- Ian Redmond, OBE, appeared in an Economist article in May, championing the story of species destruction and extinction.
- Stanley Johnson continues to travel widely and write about environmental and wildlife issues. He has also penned the new book "United Nations Environment Programme: the first forty years", published in February, which includes a section on the genesis of CMS in Bonn and, subsequently, the CMS instruments. In August 2012, he presented "Where the wild things were" about journeys across the globe to a face-to-face encounter with endangered species covered under CMS
- Kuki Gallmann participated in a celebration of World Migratory Bird Day in May 2013. The event took place on the shores of Lake Elementaita in Kenya, to raise awareness about the need to conserve the migratory birds and their habitats.

Action requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- i.) Take note and comment on the progress made, as reported in this document;
- ii.) Provide any comments and suggestions to guide the Secretariat further in its implementation of outreach and communication activities as well as information management activities in this inter-sessional period.