

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)

Opening Statement

WAZA wishes to congratulate CMS for the work on the world's threatened migratory species and is happy to support the work of the convention through the Partnership Agreement which was signed during the 9th Conference of the Parties of CMS in Rome, December 2008.

The partnership between CMS and WAZA began to flourish immediately and the well received and effective campaigns on gorillas and bats supported the conservation of the mentioned species and raised their public perception.

It was a great honour to have the CMS Executive Secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, as keynote speaker at WAZA's 65th Annual Conference, which was held in Cologne, 2008. She said: "WAZA, needless to say, is a leading forum and umbrella organisation for quality zoos and aquariums throughout the world. Through its many member zoos and aquariums, WAZA has the potential to reach and educate millions of visitors and influence their position towards animals and conservation. We all know well how fundraising and implementing in situ conservation is an essential part of everyday work in any good zoo and it is our hope that WAZA is well supported to accomplish this noble task.

In late 2008, WAZA and CMS signed a Partnership Agreement. As most of you will know, this agreement was then immediately filled with life as WAZA and CMS, together with the UNEP Great Ape Survival Partnership, worked together closely during the 2009 Year of the Gorilla (YoG) campaign. WAZA, through direct action and through the engagement of its numerous members, played an important role in making this campaign truly global. It reached out to the public through educational displays, talks and tours, and the over 100 participating WAZA zoos were crucial for delivering the message of YoG to a broad and multifaceted audience, from the enthusiastic naturalist to the chance visitor. Fundraising activities for a variety of gorilla conservation projects and activities were a further key contribution that WAZA was well positioned to make."

WAZA remains committed to support the work on migratory species with a focus on conservation, education and public awareness. WAZA is also a partner of the UN Decade on Biodiversity and will try to address the conservation needs of migratory species within this framework.

WAZA also wishes CMS that the ongoing "Future Shape" process will lead to an improved and effective –possibly less beaucroatic- approach to the conservation of migratory species.