



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

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FIFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

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DATE, VENUE AND FUNDING OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Introduction

1. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in 1985 at the invitation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The second (1988) and third (1991) meetings were held at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Switzerland. The fourth meeting was held in 1994 at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi.
2. In 1994, the Conference of the Parties discussed the benefits that may accrue to the Convention and to individual Parties, particularly those with developing economies, that host meetings of the Conference of the Parties in different regions of the world. Accordingly, the Conference adopted Resolution 4.7, which invited Parties to host the fifth meeting and solicited voluntary contributions to enable it to be held in a developing country. The Conference of the Parties instructed the Standing Committee to decide on the most suitable venue from the offers received; or should no suitable offers be received from Parties, to decide after consultations with the United Nations Environment Programme on the most appropriate alternative venue.
3. The Secretariat invited all Parties, in July 1995, to offer to host the fifth meeting and three Parties expressed some interest. Ultimately, however, none was in a position to submit a formal offer to host the meeting and it was decided, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standing Committee and UNEP, that UNOG provided the most suitable alternative for the present meeting.
4. According to Article VII, paragraph 3, of the Convention, meetings of the Conference of the Parties should take place at intervals of no more than three years, unless the Conference decides otherwise. The *Strategy for the Future Development of the Convention* (document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 4.11) recommended that future meetings be scheduled at intervals of roughly 2 ½ to 3 years in order to help maintain momentum, bearing in mind that this is the minimum time needed by the Secretariat to deal with its mandate, which includes servicing the regular cycle of meetings of the Standing Committee, Scientific Council and associated working groups. In keeping with these guidelines and Resolution 4.4 (Action point 22) the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties should take place either in the fourth quarter of 1999 or in the first quarter of 2000.

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5. The Strategy also recommends that, whenever possible and appropriate, consideration should be given to holding meetings of Parties to CMS Agreements in association with the main conference. There may be economies of scale and other advantages if the conference were hosted by a Party situated in a region which would also be a suitable venue for hosting a meeting of one of the Agreements already concluded or currently being developed under CMS.

6. The Secretariat would recommend for two reasons that the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) be held in late 1999:

- (i) in 1999, the Convention will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of its conclusion and opening for signature (23 June 1979, Bonn, Germany);
- (ii) the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) is expected to enter into force by the end of 1998; if so, the first session of the Meeting of the Parties could be held in conjunction with the CMS COP6.

7. The Strategy also recommends that "Parties to the Convention should be encouraged to host meetings of the Conference of the Parties in order to raise the profile of CMS outside of the traditional meeting venues". Apart from making the Convention and its objectives better known in different parts of the world, there are both political and economic advantages to countries that host meetings of the Conference. These may be measured in terms of recognition and support for conservation initiatives in the country, as well as immediate financial benefits for the local economy of the meeting venue.

8. To this end, the Secretariat has consulted the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of the Republic of South Africa on whether that Party would be in a position to host the sixth meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP6). This proposal has been supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Nature Management of the Netherlands, which has suggested to hold the first session of the Meeting of Parties of the AEWA in association with COP6. The Convention would certainly benefit from savings that would be made by holding its COP in conjunction with the AEWA meeting. However, the Secretariat calls upon the Parties at this meeting to provide sufficient funds for holding the sixth meeting of the COP, and to make an early announcement about their voluntary contributions to the organisation of the meeting, including funding towards the travel expenses of representatives of developing countries and countries in economic transition.