



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



First Meeting of Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa

6 - 9 May 2002, Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi Declaration

Participants to the First Meeting of Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa

Noting with satisfaction the considerable progress made to implement the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding since its adoption in Abidjan in May 1999 under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species;

Recognizing the importance of populations of marine turtles frequenting the waters of the Atlantic coast of Africa in relation to global populations, many of which are severely depleted in other regions of the world;

Aware of the social, cultural and economic values of marine turtles to the peoples of the region;

Aware that the serious threats to marine turtles cited in the Memorandum -- namely habitat destruction, pollution, unsustainable taking and by-catch in fisheries -- continue to impede the recovery of the region's marine turtle populations;

Concerned that the impact of industrial fishing operations, particularly those conducted by vessels of third countries in near-shore and off-shore waters used by marine turtles for reproduction, feeding, development and migration, is largely undocumented in the region;

Encouraged that the African Process for the Development and Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to contributing to sustainable development in Africa, also holds promise for mitigating these fundamental threats;

Appreciating the concern of African Ministers for the importance of coastal and marine ecosystems, as well as the conservation of marine biodiversity, as expressed in the *African Ministerial Statement to the World Summit on Sustainable Development* (Nairobi, October 2001);

Welcoming the establishment of sub-regional networks of non-governmental organizations in west and central Africa aimed at facilitating and co-ordinating conservation efforts in countries with geographic affinities;

HEREBY

Endorse the contents of the Conservation Plan finalized in Nairobi through a process of extensive discussion and revision, with input from both governmental and non-governmental sources of expertise from throughout the region;

Welcome the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding by representatives of the Governments of Angola, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, joining twelve other States (Benin, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, and Togo) having already made a commitment in this regard;

Invite all Signatory States that have not already done so to nominate a national correspondent to serve as a focal point for the Memorandum of Understanding and to communicate the relevant details without delay to the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species;

Acknowledge with satisfaction the positive indication from the Government of Spain of its intention to sign the Memorandum of Understanding at the earliest opportunity, and welcome the undertaking by the Government of France to study the possibility of becoming a Signatory State;

Urge other States of the region that have yet to sign the Memorandum - namely, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Namibia, Portugal, South Africa, and United Kingdom - to make the necessary arrangements to become members as soon as possible; and encourage other States that may have an impact on marine turtle populations in the region and/or may be in a position to contribute to the fulfillment of the Memorandum's objectives to consider their participation;

Encourage the contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region to use the Memorandum of Understanding as the principal tool through which to implement the provisions of that Convention as they relate to the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats;

Invite international and national non-governmental organizations to recognize the Conservation Plan as contributing to their own activities in order to complement and strengthen the conservation measures contained in the Memorandum of Understanding;

Encourage Signatory States to continue and strengthen the integration of resident communities in the development and implementation of activities provided for in the Conservation Plan, and affirm that the participation of resident communities should contribute, as far as possible, to an improvement of their socio-economic condition, such improvement being necessary for the sustainable conservation of marine turtles;

Recommend that a marine turtle conservation component be incorporated in the framework of coastal zone management projects being developed or implemented with funding from the Global Environment Facility and other sources;

Express appreciation to the Government of France, in particular, for its continuing support towards implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and encourage other countries to follow this example;

Invite the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with the Convention on Migratory Species and other interested partners, to pursue the elaboration of a project in selected countries to contribute to the conservation of marine turtles and the habitats on which they depend; and

Urge the African Process for the Development and Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa to take note of these positive developments and seek to ensure the full integration of marine turtle conservation in its programme of intervention.

Done at Nairobi, 9 May 2002