REPORT OF THE AD HOC MEETING OF THE GORILLA AGREEMENT

Frankfurt am Main, Thursday, 11 June 2009

I.   Opening of Meeting

1.   Melanie Virtue (CMS) opened the meeting at 0928hrs. She invited the participants to introduce themselves (see annex for list of participants). In the absence of interpreters, bilingual participants were asked to provide impromptu translations of interventions where necessary.

II.   Introduction

2.   Melanie Virtue explained that the CMS Secretariat was responsible for administering the Gorilla Agreement. The meeting had been called to take advantage of the presence of so many key players in Frankfurt for the symposium and report on progress achieved so far. She pointed out that background documents in English and French were available in the room.

III.   Background

3.   The Agreement had been negotiated in 2007 and entered into force in 2008. Six of the ten Range States were now Parties (Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Nigeria and Rwanda). The remaining four (Angola, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Uganda) have all indicated their intention of acceding and were in various stages of ratification. The Agreement had to establish a Technical Committee with one representative per Range State. To date only Republic of Congo and Nigeria had notified the Secretariat of their nominee.

4.   The First Meeting of the Parties had been held in November in Rome, back-to-back with the CMS COP9 conference. Two resolutions had been adopted - one on establishing the Technical Committee, and the other on establishing a working group on monitoring - together with an Action Plan for each subspecies. Unfortunately progress had been limited due to the lack of nominations for the Technical Committee which would be responsible for overseeing the Action Plans' implementation. It was vital that the Action Plan should be dynamic and actively monitoring gorilla populations and rigorous enforcement of the law protecting the animals.

5.   The meeting was opened to the floor for comments.

IV. MIST (GTZ's Spatial Management Information System)

6.   Ian Redmond (CMS YoG Ambassador) suggested that the Range States should adopt MIST. Some training would be required and a Capacity Building Workshop might be arranged to provide it. It was similar to the MIKE system used by CITES to monitor the illegal taking of elephants. In many cases the same rangers responsible for elephants were also responsible for gorilla conservation.

7.   Fiona Maisels (WCS) gave a brief explanation of how MIST and MIKE operated. Site managers entered data into the system without needing great expertise in GIS technology. In the Congo, MIKE had been used for ten years and conservation staff were now familiar with it.

8.   David Greer (WWF) pointed out some problems with MIST but said that the newest version seemed to be much better. He asked whether the new system could follow tribunal decisions. In the Republic of the Congo, Florent Ikoli was following up judicial cases and this was an important element in conservation work.

9.   Melanie Virtue reminded the meeting of the MOP resolution calling for the establishment of an ad hoc Working Group on a monitoring and reporting system, with a deadline of 31 January 2009 for nominations, and 1 July 2009 for its establishment. WWF had also offered to facilitate the Range States' work. David Greer suggested that the WG should conduct its business electronically. He spoke of his experience in the Central African Republic, where the judiciary did not pursue cases involving gorillas, thus undermining the deterrents to poachers and illegal traders. He reiterated that WWF and WCS had provided support to the Range States but had not become involved in the legal process.

10.   John Mshelbwala (Nigeria, Chair, CMS Scientific Council) recalled that when MIKE was adopted at CITES COP14 in The Hague, some southern African countries had been sceptical about its usefulness. The new MIKE system seemed to be robust and had assuaged the concerns expressed. He agreed that as the same law enforcement officers tended to be responsible for both elephants and gorillas, developing MIST in parallel wit MIKE would be beneficial.

11.   Minister Serapio Rukundo (Uganda) pointed to the effective cooperation being achieved trilaterally in East Africa between Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The law was being enforced better and the CITES "Lusaka process" was being managed from Nairobi. A meeting in 2007 in Rwanda had identified the precarious security situation in the DRC as the main issue.   Security was a prerequisite for conservation programmes to be implemented.

12.   Radar Nishuli (KBNP, DRC) said that from a technician's point of view, he welcomed MIST as did his colleagues.

13.   Guy Mbayama (Congo, DR) said that his country had good legislation in place but the problem was that the gorilla habitat coincided with the areas where rebel forces were most active. The transborder cooperation had been most helpful but the wider international community needed to help restore peace. With regard to MIST, he had concerns that the updated system, although a great improvement, might not be able to absorb old data and up to

40% might be lost. It was pointed out, however, that paper records should exist containing historic information.

14.   Justus Tindigarukayo (Uganda) stated that Uganda had been using MIST and the Conservation Agency was looking to upgrade. A question that arose was how to interlink reporting for different MEAs and for different species. The system had to be user-friendly for staff on the ground and provide data upon which political decisions could be made.

15.   In summary, Ian Redmond welcomed the positive feedback on the revised MIST software and the scope for synergies with MIKE. Although MIST was not the answer to all the Gorilla Agreement's requirements, it seemed a very useful tool. Questions remained about how Range States could acquire the programme and whether it could be adapted. Range States also needed training in its use.

V.   Technical Committee

16.   Minister Rukundo proposed using the break for informal discussions on how to expedite the establishment of the Technical Committee.

17.   John Mshelbwala proposed an interim solution for the provision of scientific support for the Agreement while the Technical Committee was being established. He recommended that the CMS Scientific Council fulfil the role. The Scientific Council had a Working Group for terrestrial mammals, led by Roseline Beudels (IRSNB), which had the requisite expertise available, and he, therefore, suggested that this Working Group act *de facto* as the Agreement's interim Technical Committee. This proposal attracted universal support.

18.   Those Range States that had not yet nominated their representative to the Technical Committee were urged to do so, and once six countries had appointed their expert, the CMS Secretariat would be able to convene the first meeting where officers could be elected and rules of procedure could be adopted. The Secretariat would issue reminders to countries which had not yet made their nominations.

VI.   Project in Republic of Congo

19.   Germain Kombo (Republic of Congo) gave a brief report on a project supported by the John Aspinell Foundation and US Fisheries and Wildlife Service, which had signed a protocol with the government. The project was working well on the ground and infractions were being followed through the courts and beyond.

VII.   Closure of the Meeting

20.   Minister Rukundo in summary said that the CMS Scientific Council would act as the Agreement's Technical Committee until such time as the Range States had appointed a sufficient number of experts. The CMS Secretariat would remind the eight Range States which had not yet done so, to appoint an expert. As the roles and responsibilities for achieving the immediate next steps were clear, the meeting was closed.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Guy Mbayama	Democratic Republic of Congo
Radar Nishuli	Democratic Republic of Congo
Patrick van Klaveren	Monaco
Fidelis Omeni	Nigeria
Germain Kombo	Republic of Congo
Minister Serapio Rukundo	Uganda
Justus K Tindigarukayo	Uganda
Sylvie Ouellet	GTZ
Roseline Beudels	IRSNB
René-Marie Lafontaine	IRSNB
Dominique Bikaba	Pole Foundation, DRC
Fiona Maisels	WCS
Andrew Dunn	WCS
David Greer	WWF
Liz McFie	Consultant
John H Mshelbwala	CMS Scientific Council of Nigeria
Ian Redmond	CMS YOG Ambassador
Melanie Virtue	CMS
Daniel Karr	CMS
Robert Vagg	CMS