



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.19

19 December 2023

Original: English

14th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 – 17 February 2024
Agenda Item 19

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document provides a summary of communication, outreach and information management activities since the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (2020).

The document also proposes a new decision with a view to strengthening the communication and information management activities of the Convention.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Background

1. The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP12) adopted [Resolution 11.8 \(Rev.COP12\)](#) in which it reiterated the important role of communication in raising greater public awareness of migratory species, the multiple threats they face and the obstacles to their migration, as well as in encouraging actions to mitigate these threats both nationally and internationally. It also recognized the need to provide adequate resources in the CMS budget to support the implementation of communication and information management activities, and requested Parties to provide voluntary contributions towards the implementation of the Secretariat's ongoing communication activities.
2. The Programme of Work for the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14 ([Resolution 13.2/Annex 6](#)) contained a list of tasks and related budgetary needs under the sections on Information Management, Communications and Outreach.
3. COP13 adopted [Resolution 11.9 \(Rev.COP13\)](#) on the annual celebration of World Migratory Bird Day, a key public awareness-raising campaign dedicated to migratory birds and nature conservation. The campaign is co-organized by the Secretariats of the Convention and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), as well as other partners. The Resolution requested Parties and other relevant donors to provide voluntary contributions towards the annual organization of World Migratory Bird Days and requested the Secretariat to continue to facilitate cooperation and information exchange in support of the campaign.

Activities since COP13

4. In the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14, the Secretariat, through its Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA), delivered an extensive list of communication and outreach activities. The aim of these activities was to raise awareness of migratory species and the multiple threats they face, and boost the profile of the Convention through various forums such as new partnerships, international and national media outlets, and social media.
5. Eighty-eight articles, including press releases, were produced and published on the CMS website, with a positive impact on the number of visitors and page views. The number of website visitors in the current intersessional period (1 March 2020 – 12 December 2023) has increased by 40 per cent and the number of page views by 10 per cent, compared with the previous four-year period (1 March 2016 – 12 December 2019). These numbers are compelling given that the previous period included an increase in outreach activities at COP12 (October 2017).
6. Part of the upsurge in the usage of the CMS website relates to the increase in the Secretariat's media outreach activities, in particular the media launch of eight CMS initiatives, reports and publications, as well as garnered interviews and references to CMS in press articles. For instance, the launch of the CMS report on the [impacts of plastic pollution on migratory species](#) on 31 August 2021, was covered by more than 100 media outlets in 30 countries, including leading sources such as the BBC, the Independent, AFP, Japan Times, Newsweek and France24.
7. The Secretariat has also actively engaged with various audiences on social media. The number of followers on the Convention's official X (former Twitter) account has increased

by 35 per cent since COP13. With new platform presences, the Secretariat aims to reach both professional audiences through the official CMS LinkedIn account (launched in 2022), and the general public through its Instagram account (launched on 1 January 2023).

8. Since its inception 18 years ago, World Migratory Bird Day, the flagship campaign of CMS and AEWA (coordinated by the IMCA Unit), has grown from strength to strength, both in terms of the number of activities around the world and its core partners. The partnership established at COP12 with Environment for the Americas has expanded to include the Secretariat of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (in March 2023). With hundreds of events in celebration of migratory birds each year, the campaign has become a powerful public outreach asset for the Convention, reaching close to half a billion people around the world and engaging with new entities such as the International Space Station and Airbus through social media activities. Following consultations on the choice of the annual theme, the Secretariat also implemented [Decision 13.138](#) and highlighted the [effects of light pollution on migratory birds](#) in 2022. The campaign on light pollution resulted in a highly productive collaboration between CMS and the [International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives](#), particularly with the launch of an online '[City Guide to Curb Light Pollution](#)', contributing to CMS work on the development of new global guidelines proposed for adoption at COP14.
9. During the current intersessional period, the Secretariat initiated a strategic review of communication and outreach activities with the support of a senior communication consultant. As part of the review process, two internal workshops with all CMS Secretariat staff were organized, where ten challenges of strategic importance were identified, including the branding of the CMS Family, target audiences, internal communication, partnership development and funding priorities. An assessment of strategic communication was produced as a result of these consultations (available as [Information Document 19](#)). Based on the conclusions of this assessment, an implementation plan for a new communications strategy, which includes the recommendations of the new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species on communication, will be developed after COP14.
10. The IMCA Unit's information management activities included the technical implementation of and support for the COP14 CMS National Reporting process, as well as the technical maintenance of the websites of the Convention, its MOUs and the CMS Family Agreements (AEWA and ASCOBANS). Improvements to the user experience on the CMS website included the development of several dedicated webpages on specific topics such as ecological connectivity, the UNEP CounterMeasures Project, and the Global Initiative on Ungulate Migration.
11. The Secretariat also worked on upgrading the CMS Family websites to the latest industry norms. A working beta version of the new website with a modern design and improved information architecture to better service the needs of visitors is now available, with plans to publicly launch it after COP14. The adjustments to the new website are based on the results of two surveys conducted in 2021 among Secretariat staff and all the focal points of the CMS Family instruments.
12. The IMCA Unit requires further strengthening, both in terms of budget and staffing; proposals for these are included in the new budget proposal for 2024-2026 ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.13.2](#)).

13. In terms of organizational structure, after two years of temporary arrangements in 2020 and 2021, a Public Information Officer (P3 level) was recruited in early 2022 to lead the coordination of the unit.

Recommended actions

14. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) take note of this document and make any comments, as appropriate;
 - b) adopt the Decision contained in Annex 1 to this document;
 - c) take note of the '[Strategic Communications Assessment](#)', presented as Information Document 19.

ANNEX 1

**DRAFT DECISIONS
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.AA The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external resources, develop a plan for the recommendations provided by the 'Strategic Communications Assessment' and, to the extent possible, work towards its implementation.

Directed to Parties

- 14.BB Parties are encouraged to support the implementation of the recommendations provided in the 'Strategic Communication Assessment'.