



SALY DECLARATION

FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MARINE MEGAFUNA SPECIES ON THE ATLANTIC COAST OF AFRICA

We, the representatives of the concerned governments of the Atlantic Coast States of Africa (see footnote), gathered in Saly, Senegal, from 4 to 7 September 2023, as part of the Marine Megafauna Week, under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

RECOGNIZING that marine turtles, sharks and rays, cetaceans and seabirds play a crucial role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems, contributing to their productivity and resilience to pressures, including climate change;

CONCERNED about the critical conservation status of many migratory marine species due to overexploitation, habitat destruction, pollution and climate change, among other threats;

RECALLING that migratory aquatic species provide essential ecosystem services supporting livelihoods through ecotourism, artisanal fisheries and other coastal activities, thereby enhancing food security and economic development;

AWARE that movements of migratory aquatic species transcend national boundaries, making their conservation a shared responsibility of all Range States and of the importance of collaborative efforts among governments, civil society, scientists and international organizations, including CMS, to achieve effective conservation results;

RECOGNIZING the important role of Marine Protected Areas in the protection (conservation) of marine turtles and the need for their management for their preservation;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the important role of CMS and relevant adjacent agreements, including the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks, and the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia as a platform to facilitate international cooperation;

FINALLY, RECOGNIZING the role of traditional knowledge and practices of coastal communities in the conservation of migratory marine species and seeking to integrate this knowledge into our conservation strategies;

Call on the States of the African Atlantic coast as well as their partners and any other actors in the fisheries, forests and wildlife sectors including civil society, the private sector, local communities, universities, institutions and research centers, to:

1. **DEMONSTRATE A STRONG AND IMMEDIATE COMMITMENT** to the effective conservation of migratory marine species, based on sound scientific knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge, in accordance with international agreements and frameworks.
2. **ENCOURAGE** the development of responsible fishing practices, including by-catch reduction measures and the promotion of sustainable fisheries, in order to minimize negative impacts on migratory marine species.
3. **ENCOURAGE** the creation and effective management of Marine Protected Areas.
4. **COMMIT** to implement the comprehensive conservation and management measures for marine turtles and Atlantic humpback dolphins agreed at the CMS Marine Megafauna Week meetings, and to collaborate on the further development of a conservation strategy and action plan for sharks and rays for the Atlantic coast of Africa.
5. **FURTHER COMMIT to** collaborate in the implementation of the Action Plan to Control Harvesting of Aquatic Wild Meat in West Africa in order to mitigate the significant impacts of this threat on all migratory marine species in the region.
6. **WORK** collaboratively to develop alternative livelihoods and culturally sensitive solutions that reduce pressure on migratory marine species and contribute to the long-term sustainability of coastal communities and marine and coastal ecosystems.
7. **STRENGTHEN** the coordination mechanisms between different actors including the various focal points of the CMS, CITES, RAMSAR, CBD conventions and the Abidjan Convention, in particular on the sharing of information and mutual support of their different strategies and action plans for the protection of endangered wildlife.
8. **ENCOURAGE** the secretariats of CMS, PRCM and the Abidjan Convention to work together for a revitalization of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa.

Done at Saly, Senegal, 5 September 2023

Benin, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo