



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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17TH MEETING OF THE
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
Bergen, 17-18 November 2011

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON WILDLIFE DISEASES Bergen, 18 November 2011 (afternoon)

Chair: No specific chair was identified during the meeting, Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana, Vice-Chair, CMS StC) identified afterwards to present information in the Scientific Council Plenary.

Participants: Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), John Mshelbwala (Chair ScC), Marianne Courouble (France), Lkhagvasuren Badamjav (Mongolia), Øystein Størkersen (Norway), Malta Qwathekana (South Africa), Barbara Soto-Largo Meroño (Spain), Akankwasah Barirega (Uganda), David Morgan (CITES Secretariat), Lindsey McCrickard (FAO), Borja Heredia and Marie Mevellec (CMS Secretariat)

Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease

1. The background, purpose, anticipated outcomes and draft resolution were presented to the group by FAO. This Task Force was created by Res.9.8 from the CMS COP9 in 2008 and was co-convened by UNEP-CMS Secretariat and the FAO Animal Health Division.
 - a. Major purposes of the group included facilitating coordination, information sharing and communication across organizations of various disciplines to improve integration of relevant work and support international collaboration within a One Health framework.
 - b. The Task Force was launched in Beijing at the end of June 2011 and was attended by 22 people, from 12 countries, representing 15 organizations.
 - c. The main working areas of the Task Force as identified by participants in the launching meeting include: the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, Diseases of Priority to Core Affiliates, Bridging the Gap between Natural Resource Professionals and Public Health Professionals, Wildlife Morbidity and Mortality Event Monitoring, Human-Wildlife-Livestock-Ecosystem Interface Issues, and Migration and Disease Ecology. Please refer to the Terms of Reference for further information.
 - d. Readers are invited to refer to background documents for further information regarding the Terms of Reference of the group and different participant categories.
2. Links with other Organizations: The importance of recognizing the OIE's role in official disease reporting was noted by the group and emphasis was placed on recognizing the notification sent from the DG of the OIE to OIE delegates requesting input from OIE parties regarding the proposed CMS resolution. The version of the resolution edited by OIE was

acknowledged and these edits were provided to the Working Group for discussion and potential inclusion along with other edits and comments from participants.

- a. The group clarified that any work undertaken by the Task Force would be coordinated with related international programmes such as IUCN, OIE and other organizations to ensure work is synergistic and not duplicative.

3. Reporting System: The purpose of the reporting system mentioned in the resolution was clarified. Since many wildlife morbidity and mortality events were caused by events not-associated with pathogens including plant poisonings, environmental contaminants, natural disasters or other non-infectious causes that are of concern to CMS parties, this system creates greater awareness about ongoing issues potentially affecting wildlife population health. By utilizing the WHER system to track these morbidity and mortality events, they could be followed up through the FAO EMPRES-i Disease Intelligence System as appropriate (in the same way that information obtained through media reports, GPHIN, Promed, and other unofficial sources is utilized) to attempt to verify the information through existing networks, for example the existing Global Early Warning System(GLEWS) between FAO-OIE-WHO that allows the three organizations to share confidential information. Information to be reported through already existing systems and mechanisms may actually enhance, contribute, and improve information provided to OIE's official reporting system – WAHIS - although this view was not shared by every participant at the meeting. The question raised by those not in agreement was whether or not the current system provides enough information about the infectious disease related and non-infectious disease related causes of wildlife morbidity and mortality events. The importance of avoiding unnecessary overlapof global reporting requirements was stressed.

4. Scope of Task Force: The importance of incorporating human health within the different areas of the Task Force was stressed and it was suggested to begin reaching out to more human-health specific organizations in addition to WHO.

5. Other International Initiatives in One Health: The One Health Central and Eastern Africa Initiative (supported by USAID) was discussed as an initiative in some countries in Africa to popularize the One Health approach by organizing a country coordinating committee that included representation from different ministries of government within each country. This was meant to increase trans-disciplinary problem solving and could be used as a potential success story that could be used in a case study by the Task Force.

6. Facilitating Workshops In-country: There was a proposal for CMS Secretariat to facilitate workshops to enhance cooperation and collaboration among different conventions/multi-lateral environmental agreements through national focal points with the financial support from parties, governments or donor groups. These could be specifically targeted at countries where conventions or multilateral environmental agreements were not managed from the same office. The importance of this was further stressed when discussing knowledge gaps especially related to public health professionals and natural resource professionals.

7. Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza: The group acknowledged the continued good work of the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza. The recent identification of a new virus within the 2.3.2.1 clade of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza highlighted the group's ability to respond to situations in an efficient and rapid fashion. As such, the group agreed to place the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds

structurally within the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Disease while allowing the group to maintain its identify, work plan and current function. The structural placement would allow FAO and CMS to better organize the two co-convened Task Forces while maximizing resource management.

8. Decision to put forth the edited resolution to the CMS COP with the understanding that the WHER specific portion of the system could not reach total consensus within the working group on wildlife disease.