

## Djerba Declaration

### Seminar on the Conservation and Restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes (Djerba, Tunisia, 19-23 February 1998)

Representatives of the Governments of the Range States of six endangered Sahelo-Saharan antelope species, *Oryx dammah*, *Addax nasomaculatus*, *Gazella dama*, *Gazella leptoceros*, *Gazella cuvieri*, *Gazella dorcas*, together with representatives of neighbouring countries, of scientific institutions, of non-governmental organisations and a panel of experts met at Djerba, Tunisia, from 19-23 February 1998, for the purpose of:

- ! reporting on the conservation status of the species in each Range State,
- ! amending and adopting an Action Plan for the conservation and restoration of the species and their habitats,
- ! discussing the medium and long-term concerted actions and international cooperation, including the possibility of developing an Agreement under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS/Bonn Convention).

The Seminar was convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory species (UNEP/CMS) on behalf of the Conference of the Parties, at the initiative of the Scientific Council of the Convention. Preliminary status reports on the conservation of each of the six species and a preliminary Action Plan had been prepared in advance by the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique (IRSNB).

The Range States represented were: Algeria, BURKINA FASO<sup>1</sup>, CHAD, EGYPT, Ethiopia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, MALI, Mauritania, MOROCCO, NIGER, NIGERIA, SENEGAL, Sudan, TUNISIA.

BELGIUM, FRANCE, GERMANY and the KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA, the latter representing, *inter alia*, the Chair of the CMS Standing Committee, were also represented each by one or more governmental representatives and/or by one or more experts.

The Seminar was chaired by Dr. Ahmed Ridha Fekih Salem, Director General, Department of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tunisia. The UNEP/CMS Secretariat, represented by its Executive Secretary, Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, and the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique (IRSNB), represented by Dr. Roseline Beudels-Jamar de Bolsée, representing also the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council, acted as the secretariat for the Seminar.

The representatives of the Range States as well as a number of invited experts presented reports on the distribution, the conservation status, habitats, trends, population dynamics, causes of decline and measures undertaken for the conservation and recovery of the six species. These reports confirmed the extreme precariousness of the conservation status of the Sahelo-Saharan ungulates in the wild, and the urgency of implementing an Action Plan.

Six Working Groups, meeting in two parallel sessions, reviewed and amended the draft Action Plan prepared by the IRSNB.

---

<sup>1</sup> States in capital letters are Parties to CMS

The Seminar, meeting in Plenary, also debated the opportunity of developing, under CMS, an Agreement between the Range States, as well as the means necessary to develop international cooperation to restore, conserve and manage the species.

The Seminar:

1. **!** thanks the Government of Tunisia, represented by the Minister of Agriculture, for its generous hospitality,  
**!** thanks the various agencies and institutions that contributed to the holding of the meeting, in particular:
  - ? the Conference of the Parties of CMS;
  - ? the Department of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia;
  - ? the Environment Ministry of the Flemish Region of Belgium;
  - ? the Services of the Prime Minister for Scientific, Technical and Cultural affairs of Belgium;
  - ? the Ministry of the Environment of France;
  - ? the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung);
  - ? the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit);
  - ? the United Nations Environment Programme;**!** forwards its thanks to the COP of CMS, represented by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, and to the IRSNB, for the organisation of the meeting and for the coordination of the scientific inputs aimed at the restoration and conservation of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes;  
**!** thanks its Chairman, Dr. Ahmed Ridha Fekih Salem, Director General of the Department of Forests of Tunisia, for his excellent guidance of the meeting;
  
2. better informed of the critical conservation status of the six species concerned thanks to the reports compiled by IRSNB and those submitted by the experts of Sahelo-Saharan countries, calls upon governments of the Range States to increase their efforts towards conservation and restoration of these species and their habitats;
  
3. congratulates the Range States and contributing governmental and non-governmental organisations which have undertaken projects with commendable results, and encourages them to continue their efforts and to assist other Range States including financial assistance in benefiting from their experience;
  
4. **!** informed that serious damage is being inflicted to the wildlife of several Sahelo-Saharan countries, particularly to highly endangered species, among which are the antelopes, by foreign hunters and falconers,  
**!** considering the commitment of the countries concerned, confirmed by their ratification of a number of international conventions, to restore and/or maintain sustainable populations of these species,  
**!** considering also the negative impact that such activities have on:
  - ? the conservation status of the highly endangered species concerned, some of which are on the brink of extinction;
  - ? the conservation efforts undertaken by all the local actors for the enforcement of their respective countries' laws and regulations;
  - ? the continued assistance of the international community to the conservation efforts

- undertaken;
- ! deeply concerned by the disastrous consequences that such practices, often illegally and excessively carried out, will have, if they continue, on the wild resources and their future,
  - ! appeals to all countries concerned to comply fully with the relevant provisions of the appropriate international conventions;
5. adopts the Action Plan, and requests the Secretariat of the Seminar to finalize it according to its recommendations and to distribute it to all the participants to the Seminar as well as to all organisations competent at national and international level;
  6. invites
    - ! all national and international governmental institutions inside as well as outside the range of the species concerned, to implement the Action Plan and to integrate it into their activities,
    - ! international as well as supra-national governmental organizations, in particular the organs of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), of the Convention on Desertification, of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), of the World Bank, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Union, to support the implementation of the Action Plan by including recommended actions in the priorities of their work programmes and by providing technical and financial assistance to the development of transboundary cooperation and the implementation of concerted actions,
    - ! all international and national institutions involved in the conservation and sustainable use of African fauna and flora, to collaborate in the development and translation into action of projects identified in the Action Plan;
  7. urges the Range States of Sahelo-Saharan ungulates to develop and conclude an Agreement under the auspices of CMS in order to provide a framework for the species' long-term conservation and management;
  8. ! decides to set up a Working Group of experts who will collect and circulate the necessary information:
    - ? to enable experts from national and non-governmental organisations to develop appropriate projects;
    - ? to provide Range States with a catalogue of appropriate measures for the development of site-management plans, for capacity building, training, research and public awareness;
    - ? to facilitate the integration of conservation needs into other policy-sectors such as agriculture, forestry or wise use of fauna;
    - ? to prepare, for Range States, proposals that allow for the integration of local community development with ecosystems, habitats and species conservation;
    - ! the Working Group will report, through the Convention Secretariat, to the Scientific Council and to the Standing Committee of CMS;
  9. ! decides to meet again in two years to:
    - ? review the work performed,
    - ? update the Action Plan,
    - ? discuss possibilities of improving its implementation on the basis of the experience gained,
    - ! and requests CMS to organise such a meeting and to seek the necessary funds;

10. calls upon those Sahelo-Saharan countries who have not done so to accede to CMS as soon as possible and to implement it.

Done at Djerba, Republic of Tunisia, on the 23 day of February, 1998

*Confirming the correct wording of the Seminar's declaration:*

Dr. Roseline C. Beudels-Jamar de Bolsée  
Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique  
(IRSNB), Brussels, Belgium

Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht  
UNEP/CMS Secretariat,  
Bonn, Germany

Date: 25 March 1998