



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING
CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE WEST AFRICAN
POPULATIONS OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT (*Loxodonta africana*)
Accra, Ghana, 30-31 March 2009

Workshop on the African elephant Mombasa, Kenya 23 June 2008

REPORT

Background

In accordance with Decision 14.79 adopted by CITES' 14th COP, the Secretariat of CITES is required to organise a meeting on the African elephant.

That meeting scheduled in Mombasa, Kenya on the 23-25 June 2008 was assigned to the programme for the Monitoring of the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). MIKE succeeded in bringing together 34 of the 37 Range States of the African elephant (only Angola, Nigeria and Somalia were absent). The Secretariat to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), TRAFFIC and IUCN also participated (Annex 1).

The CMS Secretariat is responsible for the development of a memorandum of understanding concerning conservation measures for populations of the Western African elephant (elephant MoU), which was signed by the majority of the countries concerned in November 2005. The CMS Secretariat organised a workshop alongside the CITES meeting in order to present the progress with respect to the implementation of the MoU, which was assigned to the AfESG programme office based in West Africa by a letter of agreement in 2006 and is managed by Lamine Sebogo.

The CITES meeting was chaired by Ms Elizabeth Mrema, a representative of UNEP's Division of Environmental Law and Conventions based in Nairobi (DELIC) and assisted by the four vice presidents representing the countries of Central, East, West and South Africa respectively. The European Commission and the Dutch government were thanked for the funds provided for the organisation of that meeting, whose aims were threefold (see Decision 14.79): jointly prepare the preliminary bases of a regional plan of action for the African elephant, consider the means available to create a financial fund specifically for the elephant, draft a status report for MIKE and ETIS. (Oral report in Annex 2)

CMS Side Event

The side event organised by L. Sebogo and V. Herrenschmidt brought together 10 of the 13 countries that have signed the MoU and in addition Rwanda, Kenya and Eritrea. It took place in three sections with a presentation of CMS, its appendices and objectives, its links with CITES, by V. Herrenschmidt, and followed by a presentation of the MoU and the status of its implementation, by L. Sebogo and, finally, a discussion on the presentations and prospects for the future.

Part 1: CMS presentation

The presentation was essentially based on the CMS Convention's two appendices and their respective roles at the time of the listing of specific species.

(http://www.cms.int/documents/convtxt/cms_convtxt_fr.htm)

The elephant has been listed on Appendix II to the Convention since it was opened for signature in 1979 in Bonn. Since that time, this species has been considered as one of the species for which *“the entire population or any geographically separate part of the population of any species or lower taxon of wild animals, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries”* and which *“have an unfavourable conservation status and which require international agreements for their conservation and management...”*

The listing of the elephant in Appendix II of the CMS Convention thus allowed the development of a memorandum of understanding or MoU, which was officially signed by eleven countries in November 2005 on the occasion of the last CMS Conference of the Parties, and which Senegal and Ghana recently joined. All countries concerned have now signed the elephant MoU.

(<http://www.cms.int/species/elephants/moutxt.htm>)

Despite different principal objectives; CITES above all deals with international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora and CMS with the conservation of migratory species of wild animals across their entire range, the linkages existing between CITES and CMS are nevertheless obvious with respect to these two UNEP conventions.

Indeed, they strive toward the same overall goal of the sustainable conservation of biodiversity, and both feature listings of some of the same species in their respective appendices. This is the case with respect to the African elephant but also for many other species regarding: sturgeons, marine turtles, marine mammals etc.

The reinforcement of existing synergies or their development appears increasingly necessary for actions dealing with common issues or species. This, moreover, is the aim of the joint work programme developed by the two Secretariats and with respect to which the last draft can be found at the site

(<http://www.cites.org/fra/com/SC/57/F57-11.pdf>)

That draft needs to be reviewed for approval by the respective standing committees of the two conventions for 2008 so that it may be implemented from 2009.

Part 2: Status of the implementation of the memorandum

The main elements of the implementation of the MoU to date concern:

- The promotion of the memorandum as well as the promotion of the sub-regional strategy annexed. Senegal and Ghana joined the group of the eleven preliminary parties by signing the MoU in 2007;
- The identification of national focal points. Annex II attached provides a current list of the focal points;
- The development of a standard report format. The format has been prepared and is currently being reviewed by the CMS Secretariat in Bonn;
- Assistance in the development of national strategies: Benin, Niger, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone;
- The development of trans-boundary initiatives. This has particularly involved the following areas: **Ziama-Wenegisi (Liberia-Guinea)** with the organisation of a technical workshop and the preparation of a plan of action; **Bia-Gossou-Bossemati (Ghana-Cote d'Ivoire)** also with the organisation of a technical workshop and the preparation of a management plan; **Nazinga-parc National Kabore Tambi-Réserves forestières Nord Est Ghana (Burkina Faso Ghana)** with the preparation of a management plan and the initiation of a bilateral agreement for the management of the previously defined corridor; **Gourma malien-Sahel Burkinabe (Mali-Burkina)** with the organization of an inter-State consultation workshop, an ecological appraisal of the corridor, provision of advice concerning trans-boundary management between the two countries; **Parc W-Arly-Pendjari-Réserves Nord Est Burkina (Burkina – Niger – Bénin)** with the implementation of a trans-boundary management programme, the initiation of the implementation of a joint monitoring agreement and the reinforcement of capacities.

Part 3: Discussion – viewpoints

Discussion was essentially held on two subjects:

- 1) The first concerned **the position of the elephant on the two conventions' different appendices**. Annex II for CMS, Annex I or II for CITES. A desire for the appendices to be homogenised, a clarification of the listings or rather their naming was clearly expressed by the participants even though it was well clarified that the listings do not create the same immediate obligations at all. The overall objective of the two conventions of course remained on both sides to ensure the long-term sustainable conservation of the species, which is an overall objective that can be found in numerous decisions adopted during the Conferences of the Parties of each convention.
- 2) The second, **the desire and the urgency of developing or reinforcing trans-boundary projects concerning questions linked both to the implementation of CITES and capacity building for the implementation of the elephant MoU**. The struggle against poaching which is growing on the borders, the appraisal of the impact of climate change on access to water resources and other more general issues like the level of participation of local communities or the seeking of the necessary funds remain the key questions to jointly resolve such that the actions

planned in the management plan may be implemented in a rational and efficient manner.

Togo, Bénin, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali particularly emphasised the necessity of developing synergies between CMS/CITES concerning their respective trans-boundary corridors.

It was also stated on that occasion that the meeting of the signatories to the MoU would in all likelihood occur at the beginning of 2009. That could be the occasion to clarify those issues and to consider the continuation of the bilateral projects commenced or to be commenced.

Conclusion

This meeting mainly involved the focal points of the CITES/MIKE network for the area covered by the MoU with the exception of the three countries Niger, Togo and Mali for which the CITES/MIKE focal points are identical to the CMS/MoU focal points. Accordingly, the meeting seemed very useful as a tool for providing training and information. In addition, it allowed those countries present to obtain a more detailed appreciation of CMS's issues as against those of CITES, and to understand the potential links between the two conventions and their respective activities. The interest in and the possibility of developing synergies regarding this shared species seemed obvious, particularly regarding trans-boundary areas and especially on technical issues such as the fight against poaching or access to water but also on more complex issues such as the participation of local communities in the conservation of natural resources or the seeking of adequate and necessary financing for the implementation of trans-boundary projects.

A follow-up meeting that brings together the CITES focal points and the CMS/MoU focal points for the area covered by the MoU could now be highly beneficial in order to tackle the development of small joint projects in a more detailed manner that may be submitted to potential lenders by partner countries under a joint CMS/CITES umbrella.