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JOINT CITES-CMS AFRICAN CARNIVORES INITIATIVE

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement [Decisions 13.86 – 13.87](#) *Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivores Initiative*, as well as associated Decisions 13.88 – 13.91 *Conservation and Management of the African Lion* (*Panthera leo*), Decisions 13.92 – 13.95 *Conservation and Management of Cheetah* (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and *African Wild Dog* (*Lycaon pictus*), and Decisions 13.96 – 13.97 *Conservation and Management of the Leopard* (*Panthera pardus*) *in Africa*, and proposes new Decisions for adoption.

JOINT CITES-CMS AFRICAN CARNIVORES INITIATIVE

Background

1. The Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative is a unique mechanism to deliver on the comprehensive conservation of the most emblematic African carnivore species across the African continent. It originates from a joint meeting between CMS and CITES Parties on the African Lion (*Panthera leo*) in 2016, at which Range States adopted the [Entebbe Communiqué](#), recognizing that a broader conservation approach for Lion was needed and welcoming the complementary role of CITES and CMS in supporting the conservation and management of Lions in Africa.
2. Following the listing of Lion and Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) in CMS Appendix II in 2017, and building on the collaboration between CMS and CITES on Lion conservation, the 12th meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP12) instructed the Secretariat to establish the African Carnivores Initiative (ACI), covering African Lion, Leopard, Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*), all of which – with the exception of Wild Dog – were, by then, listed under both Conventions.
3. The two Secretariats organized the 1st Meeting of Range States to the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI1, Bonn, Germany) in 2018. The meeting issued a [Communiqué](#), acknowledging the major threats facing large African carnivores today: habitat degradation and fragmentation; conversion of habitat into agricultural land and livestock pastures; prey depletion through poaching and livestock rearing; and human-carnivore conflict, including poisoning and illegal killing. The Communiqué invited CITES COP18 and CMS COP13 to instruct the development of a Joint Programme of Work for the ACI, including a list of priority measures and activities.
4. Subsequently, CMS COP13 (2020) adopted [Resolution 13.4 Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative](#), which sets out the long-term objectives, role and focus of the Initiative. It also adopted [Decisions 13.86 – 13.87 Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative](#):

13.86 Decision directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) *work with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to include the African Carnivores Initiative in the proposals for the new CMS-CITES joint work programme for the period 2021-2025, to be developed;*
- b) *in close cooperation with the Secretariat of CITES and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), develop a draft Joint Programme of Work (POW) for the African Carnivores Initiative, taking into account the decisions adopted by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) on the African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Leopard and Lion, the outcomes of CITES COP18, as well as the recommendations emanating from the First Meeting of Range States to the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI1) and taking into consideration all threats to African carnivores that threaten their survival;*
- c) *submit the draft POW to the CMS Standing Committee for approval; and*
- d) *report on the implementation of this Decision to CMS COP14.*

13.87 Decision directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is requested to review and approve the draft Programme of Work submitted by the Secretariat.

Implementation of Decisions 13.86 – 13.87 *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative*

5. In line with Decision 13.86 (a), the CMS Standing Committee, at its 52nd meeting (online, 21 – 29 September 2021), adopted the [CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme 2021-2025 \(JWP\)](#), including Activity B9 on *Big Cats* (contained in Section B *Joint activities addressing shared species*):

Collaborate on the development and deployment of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative, including the development of a Joint Programme of Work, organization of regular range State meetings and the establishment of a sustainable funding mechanism.
6. As instructed through CMS COP Decision 13.86 (b) and CITES COP Decision 18.56 (b)(i), the two Secretariats developed, in close cooperation with IUCN, a [Programme of Work \(POW\)](#). Range States were consulted on the POW (via electronic means) prior to being approved by the Standing Committees of both Conventions in September 2021. The ACI POW takes into account all Decisions adopted by CMS COP13 on the African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Leopard and Lion, the outcomes of CITES COP18, and the recommendations emanating from the 1st Meeting of Range States to the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI1), as well as taking into consideration all threats to the survival of African carnivores.
7. As mandated, the species-specific CMS [Decisions 13.88 – 13.91 Conservation and Management of the African Lion](#) (*Panthera leo*), [Decisions 13.92 – 13.95 Conservation and Management of Cheetah](#) (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and *African Wild Dog* (*Lycaon pictus*), and [Decisions 13.96 – 13.97 Conservation and Management of the Leopard](#) (*Panthera pardus*) in Africa were integrated in the various results and activities of the POW.

Implementation of the African Carnivores Initiative Programme of Work

8. As mandated by Resolution 13.4, the CMS Secretariat will report on the implementation of the Resolution to COP14.
9. As required by paragraph 6 of the Resolution, the CMS Secretariat, in close cooperation with the CITES Secretariat, organized the [2nd Meeting of Range States of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative \(ACI2, Entebbe, Uganda, 1-4 May 2023\)](#). [The meeting](#) brought together representatives of all countries that are Range States to one or more of the four species covered by the ACI, as well as relevant observer organizations. The meeting was attended by a total of 80 participants, comprised of 47 delegates from 38 Range States, 8 delegates from IUCN, and 22 delegates from 18 NGOs. The main objective of the meeting in Entebbe was for Range States to discuss the implementation of the [ACI Programme of Work](#) and prioritization of activities (including an implementation stocktake), conservation issues specific to the species covered by the ACI, and operational matters for the future of the ACI (including its governance, modus operandi and funding).
10. The Range State representatives agreed on the Outcomes of the ACI2 meeting (contained in [CITES-CMS/ACI2/Outcomes](#)), some key aspects of which are briefly summarized below.

11. Regarding transboundary cooperation on big cats, the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) and the W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP Complex) tripartite cooperation of Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger were considered models that can be replicated in other areas, where multiple States can establish TFCAs. The key requirements for establishing TFCAs include high-level political support, functional governance and coordination, harmonized legislation, and security.
12. Priority results across all sub-regions of the ACI Range States revolved around funding and finance, partnerships and cooperation between Range States and other institutions and stakeholders, conflict and coexistence between ACI species and humans, illegal trade resource kits for the four species, disease management, an operational African Lion Database (ALD), and an ACI web-portal (see Annex 1 of the ACI Outcomes document).
13. Subregional conservation priorities for African Cheetah and Wild Dog included common high-priority needs, such as sustainable funding and strategic fundraising; national action/management plans; strategies to promote coexistence with humans; national surveys; information accessibility and awareness-raising; capacity-building and training; and harmonized legislation and policies. Other issues included connectivity, land-use planning that considered the species' conservation needs, law enforcement, and illegal trade and poaching, as well as roadkill and diseases.
14. The specific severity of the threats to the North-East African Cheetah (*A. j. soemmeringii*) from illegal taking and trade in the Horn of Africa and East Africa requires urgent conservation action. The meeting participants agreed on a set of recommendations grouped around improving the knowledge base, reducing demand, improving cooperation and information exchange, and enhancing protection and conservation.
15. The meeting also agreed that human-wildlife conflict and habitat fragmentation were the main threats to Leopards across Africa. It was agreed that IUCN will update the [Roadmap for the Conservation of the Leopard in Africa \(RCLA\) in the Annex to Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.3.1.3/Rev.1](#) and finalize it in consultation with Range States; and that Range States will then focus on the development of regional conservation strategies for Leopard, using the Road Map as strategic guidance. A way forward on Leopard surveys in all Western African Range States was also agreed.
16. Regarding the [Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa](#) (GCLA) contained in Document UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC5/Doc.6.3.1.1/Annex, the meeting participants agreed that IUCN, in consultation with the Range States, will update and, in collaboration with the Secretariats, prepare a web-based document on the ACI web-portal that will be a 'living' document and updated as new information becomes available.
17. Regarding the development process of Lion Monitoring Guidelines by IUCN and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) in collaboration with experts (initiated prior to the establishment of the ACI), the meeting participants agreed that monitoring is essential to understand the conservation status of carnivores and both consumptive and non-consumptive use; that different methods can be applied, spanning over varying lengths of time and requiring various financial and technical skills. The meeting also noted that Southern African countries are keen to share their long-term experience in monitoring with other Range States.

18. Meeting participants agreed that the establishment of the African Lion Database (ALD) – which was initiated prior to the establishment of the ACI, developed under the auspices of the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, and is hosted by EWT – is critical to conservation efforts. That said, the participants agreed that Range States should be involved in the processes relating to the further development of the ALD.
19. To further advance work on the Lion in Africa, the meeting established two Working Groups to: 1) review the GCLA; 2) discuss the ALD. A third Working Group was established to further discuss the governance and funding of the ACI.
20. While Range States welcomed the launch of the new IUCN [Guidelines on Human Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence](#) (HWCC) in May 2023, they raised a number of concerns, including the challenges of implementing them at grassroots level, the lack of sustainable financial and technical support, and the difficulties in addressing conflict origins (people attacking species vs. species attacking people). The meeting participants agreed that the guidelines should be translated into practical and accessible tools, including training courses, and that the IUCN SSC HWCC Group should prioritize resource mobilization and assistance to enable Range States to implement and use the tools available.
21. Conservation science institutions could provide support to the implementation of the ACI in terms of surveys, networks of experts that could be consulted, and contributions to survey data and assessments. The meeting participants agreed on the importance of integrated approaches that include government authorities throughout the research process in order to: i) address concerns over data ownership and obtaining of permits to conduct research; ii) provide data to governments for re-analysis and to avoid duplication of efforts; iii) improve the practical usefulness of research for informed conservation or policy development; and iv) ensure that results are communicated or published in consultation with relevant government authorities.
22. In terms of funding and partnership options, the meeting participants agreed that if cooperation of the IUCN SOS Initiative were established with the ACI, any resulting granting mechanism should be tailored to the needs of the ACI.
23. Many donors only provide financial resources to NGOs. Hence, partnerships with NGOs enable Range State governments access to much-needed conservation funding. The meeting participants agreed that direct allocation of funds to governments would be desirable as well as greater transparency relating to the allocation, access to and use of funds was needed, and that cooperation between Range State governments and donor agencies must be strengthened.

19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES COP19)

24. At CITES COP19 (2022), the Parties adopted [Decisions 18.59, 18.60 \(Rev. CoP19\), 18.61, 19.24 and 19.25](#) *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative*, requesting (among other things) Range States to work through the ACI to implement mandates relevant to the initiative, to seek synergies with complementary mandates of CITES; for Parties to support Range States in the implementation of the ACI; and the Secretariat to exchange information and advice with the CITES Animals Committee on ACI activities and outputs.

25. CITES COP19 also adopted Decisions 19.104 – 19.106 *Illegal trade in cheetahs* (*Acinonyx jubatus*); Decisions 19.205 – 19.210 *African lions* (*Panthera leo*); Decisions 19.211 and 19.212 *Leopards* (*Panthera pardus*) *in Africa*; and Decisions 18.166, 18.168 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.169 (Rev. CoP19) *Guidance on non-detriment findings for trade in leopard* (*Panthera pardus*) *hunting trophies*.
26. Any activities in the ACI POW that were based on previous CITES Decision text were revised at the ACI2 Meeting in order to reflect the updated and new Decisions. These can be found in Document [CITES-CMS/ACI2/Doc.2 Updates to and Prioritization of Activities in the Programme of Work of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative](#).

Discussion and analysis

27. The ACI POW is currently being implemented by Range States and relevant organizations. However, it will expire in 2025. Given its comprehensiveness, it is impossible to fully implement the POW within the set period. Based on the prioritization that was undertaken by the Range States at their recent meeting, certain activities have been accorded high priority, as indicated in the Outcomes document contained in [CITES-CMS/ACI2/Outcomes](#).
28. In accordance with Resolution 13.4, which requests the CMS Secretariat to convene regular Range State meetings, in cooperation with the Secretariat of CITES, to assess the implementation of the Programme of Work, revise the Programme of Work as necessary, and monitor the functionality of the Initiative, another meeting of the Range States of the ACI will be required in 2025.
29. Since all Decisions on the species covered by the ACI have been included in the ACI POW, and given that the CMS Scientific Council has delegated the review of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa (GCLA)* and the *Roadmap for the Conservation of the Leopard in Africa (RCLA)* to the Range States, the Secretariat proposes that no additional Decisions be adopted on matters directly relating to the conservation of these species.

Recommended actions

30. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft Decisions contained in the Annex of this document.
 - b) delete Decisions 13.88 – 13.91, 13.92 – 13.95 and 13.96 – 13.97.

ANNEX

DRAFT DECISIONS

JOINT CITES-CMS AFRICAN CARNIVORES INITIATIVE

Directed to Party and non-Party Range States to the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative:

14.AA Parties and non-Parties that are Range States to the African Carnivores Initiative (ACI) are requested to review and extend the Programme of Work (POW), and thereby ensure the further implementation of the POW and Resolution 13.4.

Directed to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations:

14.BB Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide financial and technical support for the implementation of the ACI, its POW and the Range States meeting.

Directed to the Secretariat:

14.CC The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external resources:

- a) support Range States with the implementation of the ACI POW, specifically the results and activities prioritized by the Range States at their second meeting and set out in CITES-CMS/ACI2/Outcomes;
- b) in close cooperation with the Secretariat of CITES, convene an ACI Range State meeting in 2025 to support Range States with the implementation of Decision 14.AA.

Directed to Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe:

14.DD Botswana and Namibia are invited and Zimbabwe is requested to supply, by the end of the first quarter of 2024, data information on the conservation status of their Cheetah populations to the CMS Secretariat for review and consideration by the 7th meeting of its Sessional Committee.

Directed to the Scientific Council:

14.EE The Scientific Council is requested to:

- a) at the 7th meeting of its Sessional Committee and in collaboration with the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, discuss the information provided to the Secretariat in response to Decision 14.DD and the report on the Conservation status of the Cheetah populations of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe and considerations for listing on CMS appendices; and
- b) provide recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 56th or 57th meeting.

Directed to the Standing Committee:

14.FF The Standing Committee is requested to consider the recommendations emanating from the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council as per Decision 14.EE and approve or reject the recommendations.