



Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane

Extract from the Report of the Sixth Meeting of the Siberian Crane Range States

**Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan
15-19 May 2007**

Agenda Item 8: Future implementation and further development of the MoU and Conservation Plans

Agenda Item 8.3: Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds (WCASN)

59. Ms. Elena Ilyashenko, Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, and Mr. Taej Mundkur, Wetlands International, gave an update on the development of the WCASN, referring to the Report of the Meeting to Endorse the WCASN, India, 2005 (information document UNEP/CMS/SC-6/Inf-9) and post meeting activity. They presented the concept of the WCASN, which focuses on:

- 1) Sites of importance for conservation, recovery (or re-introduction) of Siberian Cranes;
- 2) Current or historical Siberian Crane sites which are also important for other migratory cranes and waterbirds; and
- 3) Involving local people in conservation efforts at the sites.

60. The WCASN is an integral part of the Siberian Crane MoU, providing a means for the protection of migratory waterbirds and their habitats along the Siberian Crane migration routes. As such, Range States that historically held Siberian Cranes but with no current records can still participate. It is intended that the site network will secure breeding, staging, and wintering sites for waterbirds across the flyway. Ms. Ilyashenko provided an update on post meeting activity on the development of Guidelines for Preparing Site Nomination Documentation including facilitation of the procedure for site nomination (documents UNEP/CMS/SC-6/8 with Annex), and reviewing nominated sites.

61. Mr. Taej Mundkur, chair of the Site Review Working Group (SRWG), presented results of the SRWG meeting on 14 May 2007. The SRWG reviewed 15 Site Information Sheets presented by Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The SRWG recommended 10 sites for approval by the Site Network Committee (5 from Kazakhstan, 2 from Iran, 1 from India, 1 from Turkmenistan, and 1 from Uzbekistan). The Site Information Sheets for these sites were prepared according to the Guidelines for Preparing Site Nomination Documentation, responded to the criteria and qualifiers for site selection, and were submitted along with an appropriate Letter of Endorsement by the responsible government agencies. Site Information Sheets for one site from India and two sites from Pakistan did not respond to the requirements of the Guidelines, therefore it was recommended that these should be improved and additional information should be provided on these sites. Site Information Sheets for two sites from Azerbaijan were not supported by an official Letter of Endorsement and therefore could not be recommended for approval.

62. The Site Network Committee (official Range States representatives) approved the 10 sites

recommended by the SRWG, recognizing that there was a good basis for establishing the site network, and that sufficient information was provided to formally accept the nominated sites during a ceremony at the meeting. , additional sites have been proposed for nomination by some countries to strengthen the site network; and the meeting urged the respective governments to finalise the documentation for site nomination and to provide official letters of endorsement as soon as possible, in order to allow their formal inclusion into the network.

63. Some delegates remarked that WCASN needs a significant funding source that might be found elsewhere, such as in the Gulf States or UAE in particular. The Range States were invited to contribute to this network as well. The proposed or nominated sites were presented country by country and discussed. Government representatives from each Range State confirmed their sites. The WCASN site list and plans for nominations during the coming 3 year period were endorsed by the meeting (conditionally for countries, whose governments have not yet sent their official letters of endorsement for sites).

Agenda Item 10: Launch Ceremony for Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds

64. Mr. Hykle invited the meeting to discuss the procedures for receiving nominations between the meetings which requires finalization and endorsement of the WCASN terms of reference (TOR). If a country (like Azerbaijan) only misses a letter of endorsement it will be very easy – as soon as the letter has been delivered the nominated site(s) will be included in the site network. The terms of reference for the Site Network Committee and Site Review Working Group were presented by CMS and endorsed by the meeting.

65. Mr. Hykle opened the network launch ceremony and expressed hope that each participating country will arrange ceremonies at local level to dedicate their sites. He reminded the participants that this ceremony was a result of several years of hard work by many people and a very good demonstration of synergy to establish this network as a common goal. The WCASN is building on the strengths of the existing crane site network in North East Asia (NEACWG). The representatives of the five countries were been invited to come forward and receive the certificates for the approved sites; photographs were taken of the ceremony and a press release was issued subsequently.

66. Ms. Elena Ilyashenko, SCFC, presented each of the nominated sites approved by the Site Network Committee on behalf of the Secretariat. Five sites from Kazakhstan (Naurzum lake System, Zharsor–Urkash Lake System, Kulykol-Taldykol Lake System, Tyuntyugur – Zhansura Lake System, and Ural River Delta and Coastal Zone of Caspian Sea); two sites from Iran (Fereydoon Kenar, Ezbaran and Sorkh Ruds Ab-bandas and Bujagh National Park); one site from India (Keoladeo-Gana National Park), one site from Turkmenistan (Durnaly, which means “Crane Motherland”), and one site from Uzbekistan (Termez, which has potential for reintroduction of the Siberian Crane) were officially dedicated.