

## Joint CMS-CITES Technical Workshop under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*)

*Isle of Vilm, Germany, 1-4 April 2019*

### COMMUNIQUÉ

We, the government representatives of the Saiga Antelope Range States, cooperating organizations and other stakeholders of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*), having met on the Isle of Vilm, Germany from 1 to 4 April 2019 to discuss the conservation status of saiga antelopes and actions for a new Medium-Term International Work Programme (MTIWP) 2021-2025 in support of the MOU:

*Welcome* the close cooperation between the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) under the Joint Work Programme 2016-2020 of both Conventions, which identifies Saiga Antelopes (*Saiga spp.*) as one of the target species for joint actions, focusing on supporting the implementation of the MTIWP under the MOU;

*Underline* the important role of the MOU and its MTIWP in coordinating conservation actions for Saiga, in facilitating cooperation and promoting joint activities among range states and other stakeholders and driving national and international efforts for saiga conservation;

*Recognize* the work of governments and cooperating organizations in carrying out conservation efforts for Saiga, leading to positive steps in the implementation of the MOU and its current MTIWP;

*Acknowledge* the following trends in Saiga populations since the last meeting of Signatories to the MOU in 2015, as presented at the meeting:

Population	2006	2010	2015	2018	Trend
NW Pre-Caspian	15,000-20,000	10,000-20,000	4,500-5,000	7,000	N/A
Ural [KZ, RU]	12,900	27,140	51,700	135,000	Increasing
Ustiurt [KZ, TM, UZ]	17,800	4,900	1,270	3,700	N/A
Betpak-dala [KZ]	18,300	53,440	31,300	76,400	Increasing
Mongolia [MN]	3,169	8,016	14,869	6,000	Decreasing
Total	67,169-72,169	103,496-113,496	103,639-104,139	228,000	

*Reiterate* the importance of continuing and expanding the ongoing conservation work under the Saiga MOU to address the many threats Saigas are facing, including from linear infrastructure (fences, railroads, pipelines), disease, habitat deterioration and poaching;

*Welcome* the development of a new draft MTIWP for the period 2021-2025, outlining the future priority actions for saiga conservation, which will be submitted for adoption to the Fourth Meeting of Signatories to the MOU scheduled to take place in the Russian Federation in August 2020;

*Support* the recommendations in CITES Document CoP18 Doc. 86 on Saiga Antelopes concerning trade in and conservation of saiga antelopes, and the further collaboration between CITES and CMS for implementing the new MTIWP for the period 2021-2025, to be presented at CITES CoP18;

*Underline* the need to continue supporting and promoting the implementation of conservation measures included in the draft new MTIWP relating to sustainable use and trade, local people, awareness, habitat and environmental factors, protected areas, monitoring, anti-poaching, disease and captive breeding, as well as population-specific measures;

*Acknowledge* that the Mongolian Saiga population recently experienced a dramatic decline due to infection with Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and that urgent actions are needed to stabilize and increase population numbers;

*Acknowledge* that disease is an emerging major factor limiting saiga antelope population recovery across the species' range, and that in order to jointly tackle this threat a new section has been added to the new draft MTIWP 2021-2025;

*Emphasize* the urgency to maintain the PPR-targeted vaccination of livestock for the purpose of saving the Saiga Antelopes and other wildlife in Mongolia, aligned with the principles of the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE);

*Support* CITES Document CoP18 Doc. 56 on *Simplified procedures for permits and certificates* to facilitate the movement of diagnostic and other health/disease related samples to OIE reference laboratories;

*Welcome* in particular the set of priority measures relating to sustainable use of, and trade in Saiga Antelopes in the new draft MTIWP, including encouraging registration, control and monitoring of stockpiles; establishing internal market controls for Saiga parts and products; reducing demand for and use of Saiga horn in traditional medicines; encouraging cooperation between *in-situ* conservation and the Asian medicine industry for promoting saiga conservation and sustainable use; improving collaboration amongst Range States to implement CITES by further harmonizing legislation and strengthening implementation of legislation; and initiating research on the feasibility, conditions and requirements for sustainable use of specific populations of saigas;

*Send* our deepest respect and regards to the family of Yerlan Nurgaliyev, who lost his life and to Pyiotr Nitzyk who was seriously injured during their work as rangers protecting the saiga antelope in Kazakhstan and *appreciate* the important work and efforts rangers around the world are doing to protect threatened wildlife;

*Call upon* Saiga Antelope Range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to

collaborate in the conservation and restoration of the saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.), and to support the implementation of the new MTIWP (2021-2025);

*Extend* our sincere thanks to the International Academy for Nature Conservation of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN INA) for co-organizing and hosting this meeting on the Isle of Vilm and to the German Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) for their generous financial support that has enabled this meeting to take place.