UN environment programme

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

CMS

# 57th Meeting of the Standing Committee

*Campo Grande, Brazil – 22 March 2026*

UNEP/CMS/StC57/Report

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

## I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

### ITEM 1. OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

1. Ms Rhiannon Hudson-Jones, of the UK serving as Chair of the Standing Committee (StC), welcomed participants, noting this meeting provided the opportunity to ensure StC members were well prepared for the COP. She thanked all Parties for their collaboration and commitment, saying the StC was vital for ensuring continuity between COPs. She expressed appreciation to the Government of Brazil for hosting COP15 and the Secretariat for all their hard work.

2. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, noted the instrumental role the StC and its members play during the COP, including in the Bureau.

### ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING SCHEDULE

**Item 2.1. Provisional Agenda and Documents**
**Item 2.2. Annotated Agenda and Meeting Documents**

3. The Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CMS/StC57/Doc.2.1/Rev.2 *Provisional Agenda and Documents* and UNEP/CMS/StC57/Doc.2.2/Rev.2 *Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule*.

4. Ms Clara Nobbe, Head of Terrestrial Species Team, noted that for some items, there was a mandate to submit documents to the StC. For others, getting feedback from the StC would be useful as would briefing the StC so they could take the issues back to their regional groups and ensure they were prepared for discussions in the Committee of the Whole (COW).

5. The StC adopted the provisional agenda and annotated agenda without further comment.

### ITEM 3. OVERVIEW OF COP 15

6. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, introduced this agenda item, providing an overview of COP15 and the role of StC members during the COP, including as members of the Bureau. She said the formal COP would be opened by Uzbekistan and would take place following a ceremonial opening. Upon their election by the meeting, H.E. Mr João Paulo Capobianco, Deputy Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil, would serve as COP President, and Mr Khalid Cherki from Morocco, would serve as COW Chair. She said the Bureau would meet daily, and the credentials committee, made up of five representatives from three regions, would examine all credentials.

7. Ms Fraenkel explained Agenda item 10 (statements) would include brief regional statements, and that all written statements submitted to the Secretariat would be annexed to the report of the meeting. She said the COW was expected to establish the three taxa Working Groups (WG) (Avian, Terrestrial and Aquatic), a WG to address institutional and cross-cutting issues to help the COW with any issues that warranted further discussion, and the Budget WG. All agenda items addressed in the taxa WGs would also be introduced in the COW. She noted that efforts were being made to avoid too much overlap, meaning that leaving aside the Budget WG which would meet as needed, not more than three WGs would meet at once and all WGs would conclude no later than 11:00 pm. The WG schedule and timing could always be revisited by the Bureau.

8. There were no comments from the floor.

## II. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETART MATTERS

## ITEM 4. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

### Item 4.1. Execution of CMS Budget 2024-2025

9. Ms. Enkhtuya Sereenen, Head, Administration and Fund Management Team of the Secretariat, presented document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.1 *Execution of CMS Budget 2024-2025*. She presented on the status of assessed contributions for 2024 and 2025 as of 22 March 2026 distinguishing for contributions paid by 31 October 2025 (5,187,371 EUR) and after 31 October (593,345 EUR). For 2024, 45 Parties still had dues and for 2025, 58 Parties had dues, with a combined 328,977 EUR in contributions still due for 2024 and 2025. On the status of arrears as of 22 March 2026, 34 Parties were in arrears for 2021-2023, 23 for 2018-2020, and 14 prior to 2018. She noted an execution rate of 95% for the 2024-2025 budget period. Furthermore, she provided an updated status of the use of the funding from the Trust Fund balance in 2024-2025. Out of the total drawdown from the Trust Fund of 734,109 EUR, she reported expenditures amounting to 421,410 EUR resulting in an unspent balance of 312,700 EUR by the end of December 2025. Lastly, Ms Sereenen presented the revised Trust Fund balance as of 31 December 2025 considering the contributions paid in the intersessional period of 2024-2025 and updated expenditures of 2024 and 2025. As reported by her, the revised Trust Fund balance amounts to 2,758,777 as of December 2025. Actions requested included: taking note of the report on the Execution of the CMS Budget and providing comments and advice as necessary to the Secretariat; and urging Parties with arrears to settle their outstanding contributions in accordance with paragraph 7 of CMS Resolution 14.2.

### Item 4.2. CMS Budget for 2027-2029 and Programme of Work for the Intersessional Period between COP15 and COP16

10. Ms Amy Frankel presented document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.2/Rev.1 *CMS Budget for 2027-2029 and Programme of Work for the Intersessional Period between COP15 and COP16*. She noted that several countries had paid off their arrears but more needed to do so. She highlighted that the CMS: played a unique role and was a good investment, working on the ground to bring about change; contributed directly to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF); and was a leader on the cross-cutting issue ecological connectivity. She said the CMS had been able to effectively utilize its core budget and always aimed to be fiscally responsible, delivered on its mandates, and multiplied its impact globally through diverse partnerships. She also highlighted the recently published 2026 Interim Report on the State of World's Migratory Species.

11. She explained that while the budget was published on time in late December, it had to be adjusted due to the UN, in January, undertaking a comprehensive salary scale survey of general service staff in the Bonn duty station, and applied a new salary scale for general service staff. As a result, a revised budget proposal was produced and requests for funding in some areas had to be reduced. She presented the three budget scenarios in the document and provided a comparison of the originally proposed budget with changes made as reflected in the Rev.1 version.

12. For Scenario 1 with zero nominal growth, she noted: the updated standard cost with a 2% increase; proposed cuts from the core budget for meetings of governing bodies, contractual services, staff development, and Secretariat travel; and the need for significant fundraising efforts for in-person meetings and other unfunded areas.

13. Scenario 2 with zero real growth applied the 2% increase except for servicing of the Governing Bodies and travel for COP16. She said the budget adopted at COP14 was too low for StC and SC meetings, as more delegates were eligible for funding and costs for servicing meetings in Bonn had increased. Scenario 2 included a small level of funding for two core Secretariat responsibilities: an analysis of national reports and upgrading of online reporting systems; and keeping information on Range States for CMS species up to date.

14. Scenario 3 reflected moderate growth and included funding for several key positions, including: a P2 Programme Officer for the Aquatic Unit; an additional person for the science team, originally envisioned as a P2 Programme Officer, but the suggestion now was to use a contractor; and one contractor for information systems of the Secretariat.

15. For the draft resolution, she highlighted new operative text that would authorize the Executive Secretary to transfer the budget for the meeting of Convention Bodies between years within the triennium. This would provide more flexibility and avoid having to go back to the StC. She also reiterated that for the definition of holding office with regards to paragraph 12 of Resolution 14.2, there are two options for consideration by COP15: Option 1, covering the Chair, Vice Chair and members or alternates of one of the Convention bodies and Option 2, covering the Chair and Vice Chair. Parties that are three or more years in arrears could not hold offices.

16. There were no comments from the floor.

17. Ms Laura Cerasi, Fundraising & Partnerships Programme Officer of the Secretariat then introduced the Programme of Work (POW), contained in Annex 7 of UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.14.2/Rev.1. She said it: covered 2026-2029 to include new mandates that COP15 would adopt; was based on the template approved by StC56; followed a results-based methodology linked to the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS); and, as it was integrated with the budget, there were three POW tables reflecting the three budget scenarios. She said the POW would be updated during the course of the COP.

18. There were no comments from the floor.

## III. STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

## ITEM 5. PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SUBSIDIARY BODIES

### Item 5.1. Election of Parties to the Standing Committee

19. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.17 *Election of Parties to the StC* and encouraged discussions in regional groups in order to put forward nominations, on Sunday, the last day of the COP, for StC members for the next triennium. The Secretariat said that currently seven StC members could not be reelected as they had served two terms, while the others had only served one term and could be reelected.

20. There were no comments from the floor.

### Item 5.2. Scientific Council Membership

21. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.16/Rev.2 *Sessional Committee Members*, noting membership consisted of COP-Appointed Councillors and Party-Appointed Councillors representing regional groups. For COP-Appointed Councillors, since Ms Ruth Cromie was stepping down as COP-Appointed Councillor for Wildlife Health, a new one needed to be appointed, with the document containing information about the candidates and recommendations from the 8th Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC8). ScC-SC8 also proposed to reestablish the position of the COP-Appointed Councillor for Terrestrial Mammals as shared by two councillors; the documents contains information about the candidates and recommendations from the Sessional Committee.

22. There were no comments from the floor.

## ITEM 6. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES

### Item 6.1. Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

23. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.18.2 *Cooperation with IPBES*, which had been endorsed by the ScC-SC without comment or revisions. Luthando Dziba, IPBES Executive Secretary, noted its ongoing assessment on integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and ecological connectivity and encouraged input from CMS Parties during the external review process between 1 June and 26 July. He added that the Summary for Policy-Makers of IPBES' Second Global Assessment should be available for comment from June to August and that many elements were relevant to CMS. He highlighted the value of partnership, and the fact that the work of IPBES could respond to the priorities of CMS. He extended his appreciation to CMS Parties for their support.

24. There were no comments from the floor.

### Item 6.2. Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

25. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.18.3 *Contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* and referred to the UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.18.3 *Report of the Bogis-Bossey Expert Workshop 2025* on the Bern process and the contribution of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

26. There were no comments.

## IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF TAXA-SPECIFIC AND CROSS-CUTTING MANDATES

### ITEM 7. JAGUAR

27. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.27.4/Rev.1 *Jaguar*, noting the mandate to develop a Joint CITES-CMS POW for the jaguar. Under the lead of Mexico and Brazil and intense negotiations in the Jaguar Range State meeting held in Mexico in September 2025, the POW was finalized and titled the Regional Action Plan for Jaguar Conservation. The Secretariat said the StC was requested to review and approve the Regional Action Plan for Jaguar Conservation. The StC approved the Action Plan.

### ITEM 8. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SOUTH-WEST ASIA ILLEGAL TAKING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE (SWAITB)

28. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/StC57/Doc.8 *Terms of Reference for South-West Asia Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force (SWAITB)*, which was discussed in Saudi Arabia in May 2025. The COP had requested that the StC approve the TOR. The StC approved the TOR.

## V. INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

### ITEM 9. NATIONAL REPORTS

29. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CMS/COP15/Doc.22 *National Reports*, mentioning also UNEP/CMS/COP15/Inf.22 *Recommendations for Revising the CMS National Report: Proposal for Consideration*. The Secretariat noted the revised template was requested by COP14 to align with the SPMS, and would be developed for the next reporting cycle and finalized at the end of May 2026, for submission to StC59. The Secretariat suggested that StC58 may wish to establish an intersessional WG on national reports to provide input to the draft which will be submitted by the Secretariat to StC59.

There were no further comments on this issue.

### ITEM 10. REVIEW MECHANISM

30. The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CMS/StC57/Doc.10 *Review Mechanism*, describing implementation of the Vlora International Airport project in Albania, which remained under consideration by the StC, acting in its capacity as the Review Body. The document reported on progress since StC56 and invited StC57 to determine an appropriate way forward given that Albania had not responded to a letter sent by the StC Chair following StC56.

31. Italy, representing Europe, expressed strong regret that Albania had not responded to the letter or progress made and that the mitigation measures and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) were insufficient. Italy said the project should be suspended until a proper EIA was undertaken, this should be conveyed to Albania, and Albania should report on progress to StC59.

32. Brazil, representing the COP15 Presidency, also expressed regret that Albania had not responded to the letter and that another request should be made for additional measures

to protect species by the airport. They said they could help in drafting text to ensure language put forward was adequate and in line with the Convention.

33. New Zealand, for Oceania, agreed with Italy and Brazil that the situation was regrettable and that another letter should be drafted in line with the Convention.

34. In response to a query by Brazil, the Secretariat conveyed that Albania would not be present at COP15 to discuss the issue in person.

35. Italy read out its proposed text, reflecting that the StC strongly regretted that Albania did not respond to repeated outreach, including the letter sent by the StC Chair as an outcome of StC56, and that no progress report had been provided. The proposed text warned Albania that the mitigation and compensation measures proposed for the construction and operation phases were inadequate and the EIA contained methodological deficiencies. The text proposed by Italy urged Albania to suspend construction and/or operation until a proper EIA was undertaken and sufficient mitigation and compensation measures were implemented. The text also requested that Albania report on implementation of the recommendations at StC59 and that the StC transit the decision taken by StC57 to Albania in a letter prepared jointly with the Bern and AEWA Secretariats.

36. Brazil felt this text would need to be more tightly aligned with the terms of the Review Mechanism and that some elements in the draft letter proposed by Italy, including suspension, went beyond the scope of the Mechanism. Brazil supported constructive rather than punitive language.

37. Germany, representing the Depository, noted this was the first time dealing with such an issue under the Mechanism and reiterated that nothing new was being proposed in the text put forward by Italy. Germany mentioned that the opinion of the ScC-SC was requested to ensure a science-based approach. Germany clarified that a suspension in construction was being requested but that it would not be permanent if the unresolved issues mentioned were remedied. Germany believed that the request was within the mandate of the StC and in line with the Review Mechanism.

38. The StC Chair said this letter would communicate a warning and was a reiteration of information in the previous letter regarding halting construction until a proper EIA was conducted.

39. There was some discussion about the process and the way forward, for example whether to circulate the proposed letter and allow for members to take a decision intersessionally, but Germany preferred concluding the issue here at StC57. Brazil suggested deferring action as he was only seeing this language for the first time. The StC Chair suggested either agreeing now or circulating the proposal during the week and deciding at StC58 after the COP.

40. Brazil said the point of contention for them was with language that “urges” the Government of Albania to suspend construction. Brazil suggested “advises” instead of urges. Germany and Italy said they could accept this suggestion from Brazil in order to reach an agreement. Brazil also requested language to better reflect the feedback from the ScC on this issue, which was agreed.

41. Instead of referring to “proper EIA” text was modified to reflect the need to address the deficiencies in the current EIA. With this and the addition of language underscoring the importance of engaging meaningfully in the Review Mechanism, the draft text was approved (see Outcome 1) and the Secretariat was instructed to transit this text in letter format to the Government of Albania.

## VI. CONCLUDING ITEMS

### ITEM 11. HOSTING OF COP16

42. Ms Amy Fraenkel, CMS Executive Secretary, noted that the Secretariat had not yet received any offers to host COP16, and encouraged raising the issue in regional groups and to contact the Secretariat if any interest arose.

### ITEM 12. DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

43. On meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies, the Secretariat proposed that StC59 would meet in the spring of 2027 and StC60 in the spring of 2028. For the ScC-SC meetings, it was suggested that instead of discussing the POW for the ScC-SC at the first intersessional meeting (ScC-SC9), this could be done electronically, so that ScC-SC9 could hold more substantive discussion on the mandates given by COP and possibly meet in October 2027. Depending on when COP16 were to take place, ScC-SC10 could meet in either Nov/Dec 2028 or June/July 2029. The Secretariat noted that in accordance with the Convention, ordinary COP meetings should take place within a period of three years.

### ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

44. There were no issues raised under this agenda item.

### ITEM 14. CONCLUDING REMARKS

45. The StC Chair thanked all for their constructive engagement and Ms Fraenkel for her efforts. Ms Fraenkel said this StC meeting set a good tone for the week ahead. The meeting adjourned at 12:48.