



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION
OF THE BUKHARA DEER (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*)
20 November 2011, Bergen, Norway
Agenda Item 4.0

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Evolution and Status of the MoU

1. The Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer (MoU) with the associated Action Plan was signed on 16 May 2002 by all four Range States - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Three organizations - International Council for Game & Wildlife Conservation (CIC), WWF Russia and the CMS Secretariat - have signed the MoU as collaborating organizations. The CMS Secretariat acts as the Secretariat for the MoU pursuant to paragraph 5 of the MoU (Basic Principles).
2. Implementation has been taking place in close association with the WWF Central Asia Programme. Activities have included captive breeding and reintroduction projects in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and the restoration of riparian forest habitat in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, mainly carried out through the WWF. Successes have been achieved in halting population declines in all four MoU signatory Range States; absolute numbers of the deer have increased from 350 animals at the time the MoU was signed to about 1,600 in 2010. Efforts are continuing for the establishment of a multi-country network of protected areas in riparian forests. The GEF-supported "Econet Central Asia" project has been a significant component of this.
3. Despite the increasing trend of the overall population numbers, a number of key issues continue to threaten the long-term and sustainable recovery of the species. These include poaching, the degradation of riparian forest ecosystems as critical habitat for the species, lack of systematic monitoring and best-practice for captive breeding as well as of measures for releasing captive-bred deer into the wild.
4. A session on Bukhara deer was included in a workshop on the CMS Saiga Antelope MoU and other CMS instruments for migratory ungulates in Kazakhstan, which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in February 2011. Among other things, this workshop reviewed the latest population status information for the species and discussed projects that contributed to the implementation of the Bukhara Deer MoU Action Plan in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

5. One of the outcomes of this workshop was the decision to look into the possibility of involving Afghanistan into the conservation of Bukhara Deer under the MoU, as the country is a Range State of the species. Considerations to expand the geographic scope of the MoU to include Afghanistan as a Range State are laid out in UNEP/CMS/BKD1/Doc.7 and will be discussed under Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda. Opening the MoU for signature to other States or Organizations would require amendments to the MoU.

6. Paragraph 2 of the MoU entrusts the CMS Secretariat with convening meetings involving all the authorities concerned to assess implementation of the MoU and the Action Plan. The CMS Secretariat accordingly has organized this First Meeting of the Signatories.

7. In 2010, the Government of Germany provided a Junior Professional Officer for Central Asian issues, for a period of two years, starting in October of that year. The Secretariat could thereby increase its capacity to coordinate the MoU. However, whether the Secretariat will be able to permanently establish this position will be decided at the Tenth CMS Conference of the Parties (COP10) in Bergen, Norway (20-25 November 2011).

Relevant outcomes from COP9: Taxonomic Reference

8. Following a recommendation from the 14th Meeting of the Scientific Council, the Ninth Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP9) adopted the following publication as the standard nomenclatural reference for terrestrial mammals: Wilson, D. E. & Reeder, D. M. (ed.) (2005): Mammal Species of the World. A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference. Third edition, John Hopkins University Press.

9. As a consequence, the CMS Appendices now list the Bukhara Deer as *Cervus elaphus yarkandensis*, while the MoU still refers to the species as *Cervus elaphus bactrianus*. The Secretariat considers the current reference of the MoU as appropriate and proposes not to follow the new taxonomic reference, which would also require an amendment to the MoU.

National reports and overview report

10. Paragraph 5 of the MoU invites Signatory States to provide the Secretariat with annual national reports and asks the Secretariat to distribute the reports received and compile an overview report. A draft national report format has been prepared by the Secretariat (UNEP/CMS/BKD1/Doc.10). The draft format will be discussed under the Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda in order to establish a final report format.

11. The Signatory States have been asked to provide national reports for this meeting without using a standard reporting format. As at 15 September 2011, only Tajikistan has submitted its national report. The report has been made available within the documentation for the Meeting as documents UNEP/CMS/BKD1/Inf.4.1-5.

List of National Contact Points

12. Paragraph 4 of the MoU invites the Signatory States to officially designate a competent authority to serve as a contact point for the other Signatories. The names and addresses of one

national administrative and one technical contact points were to be communicated to the Secretariat. The current List of National Contact Points (UNEP/CMS/BKD/Inf.5) results from the Secretariat's own investigations and records.

Conclusion

13. Considering the fact that the MoU was signed almost 10 years ago and that there has been little feedback from Signatories, as indicated above, the Secretariat would like to invite Signatories to recall the *raison d'être* of signing the MoU. Signatories are asked to reaffirm their interest and willingness to continue pursuing collaboration for Bukhara Deer conservation within the context of this MoU in order to ensure effective implementation in the future.