



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



## 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, 8-9 November 2007

CMS/StC32/6  
Agenda Item 7

### CMS & ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

*(Note by the Executive Secretary)*

1. Since 2005, the debate on environmental governance has intensified, and it is a key topic at the new session of the UN General Assembly, which opened in September 2007. It will also feature at the next meeting of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2008 in Monaco. The CMS Secretariat has been following a number of recent reviews and reports which examine different aspects of governance, linking it to the UN objective of “delivering as one”.
2. It is important that CMS Parties and the Secretariat ensure that the Convention’s achievements and future potential are recognised in New York as well as Geneva and Nairobi. There has been considerable emphasis from high level actors in intergovernmental discussions on the need to streamline global environmental governance processes, including MEAs, and to keep down costs, minimise burdens on Parties and improve effectiveness. However recent reports on this prepared for the UNGA demonstrate considerable ignorance about the actual work undertaken by bodies like the CMS Family. Over-simplified emphasis on “reducing duplication”, leading to unworkable ideas such as back-to-back meetings which might last for months or even mass-mergers of MEAs under the UNGA, show that we are some distance from a workable concept which would actually improve environmental governance in relation to wildlife conservation.
3. The challenge for CMS and its Parties is to ensure that sensible ideas, including greater co-operation with other bodies, joint delivery of UN programmes at regional/national level, a broader funding base, a balance between conservation and human needs and innovation such as IT based reporting are introduced, but that suggestions which would weaken the precarious protection won by Parties for migratory species over a period of almost 30 years, are not lost either by deliberate intent or accident. The proposals for a “clustered and decentralised” CMS presented separately to StC Members (CMS/StC32/Doc.7) are designed in part to meet the governance agenda.
4. **The Secretariat believes that Parties have an important role to play in ensuring that the current debate on environmental governance in the UN does not damage the Convention.** CMS Standing Committee Members should articulate their views in the appropriate regional bodies in UN, and all CMS national focal points should be asked to ensure that their Government’s representatives to the UN are fully briefed on the Convention. From 2009, as mentioned in the paper CMS/StC32/Doc.7, CMS could take the opportunity to increase its capacity at UNHQ by buying a share of an existing P4 post shared with UNEP/CBD and UNCCD.
5. The CMS Secretariat will continue to engage in the debate on governance. However Parties need to be aware that this is already putting considerable strain on Secretariat resources. A recent survey showed that we had spent more than €26,000 (mainly in staff costs) dealing with governance-related exercises initiated by central UN bodies over the last 12 months. Given the demanding nature of the CMS programme to implement as much as possible of the Strategic Plan

with limited resources, and then to prepare for the CMS CoP next year, the Secretariat would like to request the Standing Committee to share the burden of dealing with any further work in the next 12 months, including representation of CMS in New York and Nairobi using the relevant embassy staff.

6. **The CMS Secretariat should target its efforts on supporting Parties and on those activities which are essential to protect CMS interests, or are likely to bring benefits to the Convention.** Continued CMS engagement in the Biodiversity Liaison Group, spanning all the wildlife-related MEAs, is also important, particularly in the context of the forthcoming CBD Conference of Parties in Bonn (May 2008), the Ramsar COP (October 2008) and CMS' own COP in Rome (December 2008). The Secretariat last hosted a BLG meeting in October 2005 and we intend to offer to host a meeting in May 2008 during the period of the CBD Conference of Parties in Bonn. Exercises not meeting these criteria should be given low priority, and the CMS Secretariat requested to engage in them only if those seeking our involvement compensate net additional costs, including travel and staff time.

**Action requested:**

The Standing Committee is invited to

- (a) Request members of the Committee, and all CMS focal points, to brief their own Government delegations, as appropriate, on the need to take account of CMS Family interests in the current debates on environmental governance at the UN General Assembly and beyond;
- (b) Request the CMS Secretariat to (i) provide support on priority issues to Committee Members, CMS Focal Points and other Government representatives in furthering CMS Family interests in the discussions on environmental governance, (ii) continue to support the Biodiversity Liaison Group e.g. by hosting a meeting in Bonn during the CBD Conference in May 2008 and (iii) treat non-priority issues as suggested in paragraph 6 of the paper.