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EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Nairobi, 20-25 November 2005
Agenda item 13 (a)

**INFORMAL BULLET SUMMARY OF THE DIALOGUE MEETING ON
SAIGA ANTELOPE CONSERVATION**

**Organised by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and
IUCN/SSC European Sustainable Use Specialist Group (ESUSG)
within the framework of the IUCN World Conservation Congress**

**21 November 2004
Bangkok, Thailand**

(Summary jointly prepared by the Chairman of the ESUSG and the CMS Secretariat)

A list of those present and their organisations is at Annex 1.

The participants agreed that Mr Robin Sharp, Chairman of the IUCN European Sustainable Use Specialist Group, would facilitate the meeting. Lyle Glowka, Agreements Officer at the CMS Secretariat, acted as rapporteur.

Agenda item 1: Conservation Status (*Saiga tatarica tatarica* and *mongolica*)

A status report presented by Flora and Fauna International and obtained via the Imperial College Darwin Initiative project, with data supplied by the Institute of Zoology, Kazakhstan, the Academy of Science, Mongolia, and the Department of Game & Hunting, Kalmykia, confirmed that population numbers had plummeted from 1 million around 1990 to some 31,000 individuals in 2003, including the sub-species *Saiga tatarica mongolica*.

ACTION POINT: There was agreement that the PowerPoint presentation should be circulated to the participants.

Agenda item 2: CITES Outcomes

The decision of the CITES Conference in Bangkok in October 2004 (CITES COP Decisions 13.27-13.35 found at < http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid13/13-27_35.shtml >) to promote various actions on behalf of Saiga was noted with appreciation.

ACTION POINT: CMS & ESUSG would liaise with the CITES Secretariat about follow-up to the CITES decisions to ensure synergy and best use of resources.

Agenda item 3: Status of the CMS MoU and Action Plan for *Saiga tatarica tatarica*, including options for involving non-Range States

Russian Federation: Mr Amirkhan Amirkhanov, Deputy Director of the Department of State Environmental Policy, Ministry of Natural Resources, reported. He noted that the Ministry of Agriculture is the competent Ministry for Saiga issues in the Russian Federation and has provided comments on the MoU; that the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources would like to see strengthened protection measures for the Saiga in Kalmykia and fully supports the MoU; the government is still undertaking a process of reviewing the MoU vis a vis its signing and Mr Amirkhanov undertook to enquire into the process and contact the CMS Secretariat with an update.

Turkmenistan: Ms Ogulsoltan Hojaevna Ashirova, Turkmenistan Society for Nature Protection, reported. She did not have information on the status of the government's consideration, noting that the Minister of Environment recently passed away. She did note however that two protected areas, both in the north of Turkmenistan could protect Saiga habitat. One of these, a transboundary protected area, in the northwest of Turkmenistan, on the border with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, is planned but there was need for Turkmenistan to coordinate with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on this at this time.

Uzbekistan: Dr Alexander Kreuzberg, Uzbekistan Zoological Society, reported. He noted that Saiga was particularly important for Uzbekistan. Saiga are found in the Aral Sea area. There was a moral dimension to the current poaching of Saiga as it was not truly hunting but mass mechanised killing. The Uzbek authorities were willing to sign the MoU even if some procedures were outstanding.

Kazakhstan: Mr Roman Jashenko, Institute of Zoology, reported noting that the CMS Secretariat should update the competent ministry listed for Kazakhstan at the beginning of the MoU.

China: Ms Li Ting, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reported that China had made great efforts to cooperate with the Saiga Range States, especially through the CITES process; the government has prioritised creating a legal regulation for generally implementing CITES because China is a "category B" country; this would apply to Saiga; several ministries were involved in controlling the international and domestic trade in the existing stocks of Saiga horns (both legal and illegal stocks); she announced the recent seizure of some 2,300 kg of illegally imported Saiga horn, along with measures to register legally held stocks and to initiate tougher enforcement action against smuggling of and trade in illegal horn; she suggested that more collaboration between the Range States and consumer countries is needed and China is prepared to engage in this.

Discussion followed about the possible association of China and Mongolia with the MoU. It was generally felt that all future strategies for conserving the Saiga should include both of these States and the subspecies *Saiga tatarica mongolica*, but that any changes to the MoU should be avoided at this stage since it was undesirable to re-open processes already undertaken in future signatory States.

Agenda item 4: Priority activities under the Action Plan and suggestions on how to initiate them

The CMS Secretariat emphasised the importance of signing the MoU and its subsequent entry into effect; three countries were needed to sign but ideally all four Range States should sign; it would send a strong signal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other donors that the Range States were serious about Saiga's conservation and were ready to cooperate.

A list of projects on Saiga was generated:

- Imperial College funded by Darwin Initiative (Kazakhstan and Kalmykia): strong socio-economic component;
- Imperial College and partners research funded by INTAS(Kazakhstan and Russian Federation, Kalmykia) : focus on reproduction factors and fecundity;
- Fauna and Flora International funded by Netherlands Government (Uzbekistan): socio-economic and livelihood focus;
- WWF (Frankfurt Zoo) (Kazakhstan): Socio-economics; needs more funding;
- Wildlife Conservation Society (Mongolian Saiga; interest in working in other Range States); and
- GEF
 - Kazakhstan: UNDP Country office in Kazakhstan has assumed project development from UNEP GEF Secretariat
 - Uzbekistan: Transboundary protected areas (includes a steppe area important for Saiga).

ACTION POINT: The CMS Secretariat agreed to contact both UNEP and UNDP to determine the status of the first project; it will also contact the GEF Secretariat to determine if other projects intersect with Saiga conservation; the CMS Secretariat will also contact IUCN.

Agenda item 5: MoU coordinator concept

The CMS Secretariat would provide the MoU secretariat and would undertake to identify the modalities for coordinating the MoU.

Agenda item 6: World Conservation Congress recommendation

Those present agreed to work by consensus to achieve a balanced motion on Saiga conservation based on the proposal originally submitted by the Uzbekistan Zoological Society. (The delegates at the Plenary Business Session of the Congress later adopted the motion (Congress reference REC 031)¹.)

¹ Adopted recommendation number RECWCC3.113
(http://www.iucn.org/congress/members/submitted_motions.htm).

Table of attendance
Saiga Antelope

21.11.04

Bangkok

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