



CMS COP-8 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2005

On Thursday, 24 November, delegates to the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP-8) to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) met in plenary in the morning and afternoon, to address fundraising, secretariat staff, the 2010 target, and institutional issues. The plenary also adopted amendments to the Convention Appendices and several resolutions and recommendations. The Committee of the Whole (COW) convened in the morning and afternoon, endorsing resolutions on the information management system and national reports, and considering crosscutting issues, development of future agreements and outstanding resolutions and recommendations. The avian influenza working group met in the afternoon, and the budget working group met throughout the day and into the night.

PLENARY

In the morning, the COP admitted one NGO as observer. In the afternoon, Credentials Committee Chair El Mastour Abdellah reported that, of the countries present, 62 have had their credentials accepted, six have just submitted their credentials for approval, and 13 have not submitted them yet.

SIGNING OF MOUs: The Plenary witnessed the signing of the: African Marine Turtles MOU by Liberia, IOSEA Marine Turtles MOU by Eritrea, and the Aquatic Warbler MOU by Belgium.

FUNDRAISING: The COP endorsed the private sector fundraising project (UNEP/CMS/Conf.8.20) and the CMS fundraising strategy (UNEP/CMS/Inf.8.17).

SECRETARIAT MANPOWER AND ORGANIZATION: CMS Deputy Executive Secretary Douglas Hykle introduced the Secretariat's organization and staff requirements (UNEP/CMS/Conf.8.17), urging agreement on Budget Scenario Three being discussed in the budget working group, and on appointing two additional personnel. CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth commended delegates' cooperative work to address the Convention's difficult financial situation. Stressing financial constraints that affect CMS project work, he said overall results were encouraging, and welcomed the new resolutions and projects on, *inter alia*, grassland birds and by-catch. He appealed to parties to make voluntary contributions to additional projects and to ensure that priority projects are provided for in the budget. On manpower, he reported that Australia had expressed interest in co-funding an officer at the Marine Turtle IOSEA MOU regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, to work on CMS issues pertaining to the region, with the Secretariat being requested to provide

additional funding, preferably through a budget increase. The EU expressed concern with establishing any additional posts. Chair Patrick Van Klaveren suggested continuing consideration of this item upon conclusion of the budget discussions.

2010 TARGET: Regarding the resolution on CMS and the 2010 target (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.7/Rev.1), the EU highlighted proposed amendments on taking action within the framework of the strategic plan. The Secretariat proposed an alternative title for the resolution, namely "Assessing the contribution of CMS in achieving the 2010 biodiversity target."

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: Election of the Standing Committee: COP-8 appointed to the Standing Committee for 2006-2008: Saudi Arabia, with Pakistan as alternate, for Asia; the UK, with Monaco as alternate, for Western Europe; Ukraine, with Hungary as alternate, for Central and Eastern Europe; and Australia, with New Zealand as alternate, for Oceania. The Africa and Americas groups will present their nominations at a later date.

Election of Scientific Councillors: Scientific Council Chair Colin Galbraith reported on progress in appointing councillors for the 2006-2008 Council. He highlighted the election of Roseline Beudels and Taej Mundkur as new councillors for Mammals and Asia respectively, and the creation of three new councillor positions for Fish, By-catch and Africa.

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES: COP-8 adopted the proposals for amendments to CMS Appendices I and II as endorsed by COW, with reservations on the Basking shark being tabled by NEW ZEALAND, DENMARK on behalf of the Faroe Islands, the EU, PORTUGAL and NORWAY.

On a suggestion by the Scientific Council Chair Galbraith to list the Gorilla on Appendix II, NORWAY raised a point of procedure on the introduction of a new listing proposal during the COP. Chair van Klaveren and Galbraith referred to the desire to enhance progress of a regional agreement on the Gorilla through Appendix II listing, although Galbraith highlighted the need for scientific analysis. The Secretariat suggested a precedent may exist for a listing proposal being presented during the COP, but also said that a lack of Appendix II listing should not hinder the development of a regional agreement.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Sustainable Use Working Group Co-Chair Ronel Nel introduced a revised resolution (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.1/Rev.1), which the COP adopted without amendment. The plenary also adopted resolutions on: outreach and communication (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.8); the Information Management System (IMS) (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.10/Rev.2); cooperation with other conventions (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.11); integration of migratory species into national biodiversity strategies and action plans



and CBD work programmes (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.18/Rev.1); national reports (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.24); and concerted action on Appendix I species (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.29/Rev.1). Adoption of the resolution on the review of the Global Registry of Migratory Species (GROMS) (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.9) was postponed. The plenary further adopted recommendations on raptors and owls in the African-Eurasian region (UNEP/CMS/Rec.8.12/Rev.1) and Central Eurasian aridland mammals (UNEP/CMS/Rec.8.23). Delegates also adopted the recommendation on cooperative actions for Appendix II species (UNEP/CMS/Rec.8.28/Rev.1), which no longer lists the Whale shark among species designated for cooperative actions during 2006-2008. The Secretariat explained, following enquiries from the PHILIPPINES and KENYA, that the development of an agreement on the Whale shark is ongoing, and only species for which the conclusion of an agreement is not foreseen in the next triennium are included in the cooperative actions list.

DATE AND VENUE OF COP-9: Reminding COP that no offer to host the next COP has yet been received, CMS Executive Secretary Hepworth encouraged interested parties to present their offer by the end of 2006. He emphasized the need for financial support for developing countries to attend.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES: Avian Influenza Working Group Co-Chair Reinhold Schnidrig reported on minor amendments to the draft resolution on avian influenza (UNEP/CMS/Res.27/Rev.1), and noted that the group will reconvene to finalize the draft later in the day. AUSTRALIA reported on progress regarding the by-catch draft resolution, noting that consultations are ongoing. GERMANY said a draft resolution on adverse human-induced impacts on cetaceans (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.22) was amended to refer to the UNEP Regional Seas Programme rather than to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution. On the draft resolution on climate change (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.13/Rev.1), the EU reported on ongoing discussions on a possible reference to UNFCCC in the preamble or operative text.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: The Secretariat introduced a revised resolution on IMS (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.10/Rev.2), amended to invite the Secretariat to explore synergies and linkages between IMS, GROMS and the UNEP GEO Data Portal. COW endorsed the revised resolution.

NATIONAL REPORTS: The Secretariat introduced a resolution on national reports (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.24), highlighting language on instructing the Secretariat to make available to parties, the Standing Committee and the Scientific Council an analysis of national reports by March 2006. He also urged parties to submit their reports at least six months before COPs. COW endorsed the resolution.

DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE AGREEMENTS:

Migratory sharks: AUSTRALIA reported on minor amendments to the draft resolution on migratory sharks (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.16/Rev.2). Delegates decided against a suggestion by the PHILIPPINES to include reference to existing recommendations, notably the one on the Whale shark, as this species is already addressed in the consolidated resolution on future agreements.

Grassland birds: The Secretariat introduced a draft recommendation on the conservation of grassland birds and their habitats in Southern South America (UNEP/CMS/Rec.8.26). He proposed an amendment to reflect the interest shown by Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Brazil, and text encouraging range states, parties and non-parties to CMS, to initiate an MOU.

OUTSTANDING RESOLUTIONS: In the afternoon, COW endorsed revised resolutions on migratory sharks (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.16/Rev.2) and grassland birds (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.26).

Delegates also discussed minor amendments to the resolution on by-catch. On the resolution against adverse human-induced impacts on cetaceans, NORWAY noted the deletion from the last draft of an annex containing a list of measures against adverse human-induced impacts on cetaceans. GERMANY proposed transmitting the annex as a non-paper to the Scientific Council. ARGENTINA called for keeping a reference to the International Whaling Commission (IWC), in light of the IWC specialized mandate on the conservation and management of whale populations. MONACO stressed the limited objectives of the IWC mandate concerning the conservation of whales, and its limited membership. AUSTRALIA supported a balanced approach to the competencies of IWC and CMS.

BUDGET WORKING GROUP

In the morning, Budget Working Group Chair Véronique Hessenschmidt tabled a revised budget reflecting Wednesday's discussion. Delegates debated on: the budget grand total; how to allocate funds derived from the saving measures agreed upon on Wednesday; and options for distributing such savings among projects, fundraising and delegates' transport costs. Many delegates noted that more resources should be allocated to delivery of conservation projects and publications. Participants agreed on the amount to finance "outreach and fundraising" activities. Some delegates highlighted the potential savings that could be derived from negotiations between CMS and UNEP.

In the afternoon, Chair Hessenschmidt presented an updated version of the 2006-2008 budget, and delegates agreed to a grand total of US\$7,526,698 to be shared among parties. Delegates then discussed, paragraph-by-paragraph, the operative text of the resolution on the financial and administrative matters of the CMS Trust Fund (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.3/Rev.1). The working group agreed that all contributions to the Trust Fund will be paid in Euros, on the basis of the exchange rate for the US dollar on 24 November 2005. Delegates requested the Secretariat to present the value of the total budget and the value of parties' core contributions in Euros. The working group also agreed to establish a new trust fund for voluntary contributions, and decided against charging non-parties any registration fee. In the evening, delegates finalized the revised resolution (UNEP/CMS/Res.8.3/Rev.2).

AVIAN INFLUENZA WORKING GROUP

The working group on avian influenza, co-chaired by Reinhard Schnidrig and Ward Hagemeijer, agreed to remove from the revised draft resolution reference to specific examples of large-scale monitoring and surveillance programmes, and add reference in the resolution to an annex listing key research needs, including mapping migratory routes and clarifying the virus' behavior and survival.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On Thursday afternoon, the week's sleepless nights for delegates and the Secretariat finally paid dividends as the budget working group completed its task. Participants were in high spirits after reaching consensus on the total figure for the next triennium and agreeing on the budget currency migrating to the Euro. For some, this suggests that CMS's "budget philosophy" is fuelling this small but ambitious conservation convention towards 2010.

As participants celebrated, some continued pondering the last-minute proposal for listing the Gorilla in Appendix II. One delegate even suggested that debate on procedural and substantive issues attached to this proposal may set an interesting tone for the final day of COP-8.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of CMS COP-8 will be available on Monday, 28 November 2005 at <http://www.iisd.ca/cms/cop8/>.