



CMS COP11 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2014

CMS COP11 officially opened today in Quito, Ecuador, with a ceremony moderated by Ashlan Gorse Cousteau. Participants addressed administrative and organizational matters and then discussed the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023, the Future Shape of CMS and the draft budget 2015-2017.

OPENING CEREMONY

Achmat Hassiem, South Africa, shared his experience of becoming a member of the “Shark Attack Survivors for Shark Conservation” group. He urged participants to establish protection for sharks and rays. Boyan Slat, the Netherlands, described his initiative to clean plastics from the ocean through a floating barrier that can operate in extreme conditions.

Philippe Cousteau, Jr., noted that the spirit of the CMS is inspiring, as migratory species are a reminder that challenges are global.

Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), Chair, CMS Standing Committee, noted the links between the CMS and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Lorena Tapia, Minister of Environment, Ecuador, underlined her country’s leadership in environmental management as well as the inclusion of the rights of nature in its national constitution.

Tine Sundtoft, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway, via video message, said that major threats for the conservation of biodiversity, migratory species and their habitats are known and good guidelines to mitigate them exist.

Noel Nelson Messone, Minister of Water and Forests, Gabon, described his country’s efforts to protect the environment and migratory species. He placed special focus on the African forest elephant, noting that fighting against poaching is a national priority.

Elizabeth Mrema, UNEP, delivered a message on behalf of Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP. In the message, Steiner highlighted the gravity of the threats affecting many of the species covered under CMS and called on delegates to explore how the Convention can evolve to better fulfill its mission.

John Scanlon, CITES, emphasized that delegates will consider Action Plans for argali and saker falcon and the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), each of which has been developed in collaboration with CITES. He also noted the complementary role of CMS in combating illegal wildlife trade.

Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary, CMS, highlighted this COP as a potential watershed event for the Convention and drew attention to COP agenda items, including proposals, resolutions, the new Strategic Plan and reforms to the Scientific Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

RULES OF PROCEDURE: Chair Oteng-Yeboah introduced the agenda item on rules of procedure (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.4). UGANDA called attention to a potential conflict between clause 7 of Article 7 of the Convention, and Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure on voting. Following a response by the CMS Secretariat and a brief discussion, UGANDA proposed amending Rule 16 to state “all votes on decisions by the COP shall be taken by a two thirds majority of the votes cast.” PANAMA and CHILE seconded the proposal and delegates adopted the rules of procedure, as amended.

Election of Officers: The following officers were elected: Lorena Tapia, Ecuador, as Chair of the Conference; Øystein Størkersen, Norway, as Chair of the Committee of the Whole (CoW); and Ndèye Sene Thiam, Senegal, as Vice-Chair of the CoW.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND MEETING

SCHEDULE: Chair Tapia invited the delegates to review the draft provisional agenda and the provisional annotated agenda and schedule (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.6.2). The COP adopted the agenda and schedule.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE AND OTHER SESSIONAL COMMITTEES:

Chair Tapia invited delegates to establish the CoW with open-ended membership, in accordance with Rule 24 of the Rules of Procedure, and to establish a Credentials Committee, of five members, with appropriate linguistic and geographic composition, for the purpose of reviewing the original credentials of official delegations. The COP elected: Kenya (Africa region); the Philippines (Oceania region); Italy (Europe region); Pakistan (Asia region); and Ecuador (South, Central America and Caribbean region). The COP also established a draft budget working group to be chaired by South Africa. A six member Bureau was also established.

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS: The COP admitted international and national agencies and bodies that meet the criteria set out in Article VII, paragraph 9 of the Convention to be represented at this meeting by observers (UNEP CMS/COP11/Doc.8).

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE CONVENTION: Standing

Committee: Chair Oteng-Yeboah reported on activities of the Committee since COP10. The COP took note of the oral report.

Scientific Council: Fernando Spina (Italy), Chair, CMS Scientific Council, reported on the activities of the Scientific Council.

Report of the Secretariat: CMS Executive Secretary Chambers presented an overview of the Secretariat’s activities over the previous triennium. He noted that since COP10, four



parties had joined the Convention and that, in early 2014, nine parties joined the Sharks Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). He said the Secretariat has increased its outreach activities, including through launching a new website to provide a single portal for accessing the work of all of “the CMS family.”

He noted a new publication to guide focal points on engaging with and implementing CMS and highlighted the launch of the CAMI, saying it provides a model for bringing parties together for a common regional approach.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CMS STRATEGIC PLAN: Assessment of the Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2006-2014 and Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023: The Secretariat reviewed the intersessional activities of the Strategic Plan Working Group and discussed the importance of the new draft Strategic Plan in aligning policy priorities across the CMS Family. She presented the document on the status of the implementation of the existing Strategic Plan (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.15.1), and the final draft of the new Strategic Plan (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.15.2), which presents, *inter alia*, goals and targets modeled after the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. She also introduced the draft resolution contained in the Annex to the document, which outlines the intersessional mandate for the Strategic Plan Working Group from 2015-16, including the development of a technical “Companion Volume for Implementation” to support implementation of the new Strategic Plan.

BRAZIL called for an increased emphasis on implementation of goals and targets in light of disappointing progress on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as reported in the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4. Italy, on behalf of the EU and its 28 member States, cautioned that developing indicators could increase the reporting burdens of parties. He also suggested amendments to the draft Resolution and accompanying Strategic Plan, including that indicators be linked, where possible, to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and information already provided in national reports. The Chair announced that the CoW would return to this agenda item in a later session.

FUTURE SHAPE AND STRATEGIES OF CMS AND THE CMS FAMILY: Short- and Medium-Term Activities under Resolution 10.9: The Secretariat introduced the agenda item on Future Structure and Strategies of CMS (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.16.1). He highlighted key achievements over the last triennium, including: developing a migratory species strategic plan; using an online reporting system; and coordinating capacity building efforts.

BRAZIL suggested including a line in the matrix of activities on enhancing synergies with the Secretariats of other MEAs. CHILE and COSTA RICA expressed appreciation for a pre-COP training workshop for the South and Central America and Caribbean region, with CHILE suggesting including a similar activity in the mid-term workplan.

Italy, on behalf of the EU and its 28 member States, asked the Secretariat to provide information on the expected cost of planned activities.

Noting the Africa region has constraints in coordination on implementation of the Convention, SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the importance of the activity to regionalize conservation efforts.

In response to comments and questions, the Secretariat, *inter alia*: invited the EU to look at the Programme of Work and said Switzerland has introduced a resolution on synergies. Delegates took note of the progress.

Synergies with the wider CMS Family: Analysis for Shared Common Services: The Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.16.2), focusing on the rationale for synergies and merging common services between the CMS and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).

UGANDA, with KENYA, stressed the lack of quantification of potential benefits and, with CHILE and ARGENTINA, the silence concerning potential costs. Italy, on behalf of the EU and its 28 member States, called for a more comprehensive analysis of related costs and benefits, legal implications and potential barriers. SWITZERLAND and MONACO stressed that merging is meant to improve implementation and not only reduce costs.

The US said that, given the implications of such synergies, all signatories of agreements should be included in the discussion and not just parties.

A working group was formed to redraft the text of the resolution.

OTHER STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS: Gap Analysis of the Convention on Migratory Species: The Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.17.3) on a global gap analysis, which includes issues that are being addressed under the CMS and other organizations. SWITZERLAND said that while the gap analysis should be a regular task for the Scientific Council, it should not constitute a special activity requiring additional financial support.

Italy, on behalf of the EU and its 28 member States, stressed that there are numerous cross-cutting issues that are not currently addressed under the CMS and called for similar considerations to be taken into account in the Companion Volume on Implementation of the Strategic Plan.

BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION: Execution of CMS Budget 2012-2014: The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.14.1).

Draft Costed Programme of Work 2015-2017 and Draft Budget for 2015-2017: The Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.14.2 and 3). He noted the strategic objectives behind the draft budget, including continuity in the investment that parties have made in CMS through the Future Shape process. He explained the three proposed budget scenarios: status quo; status quo plus 3% growth; and status quo plus 5% growth. He noted that the third scenario is asking for the strongest commitment.

FRANCE asked the Secretariat to prepare an additional scenario based on the zero nominal growth principle. CHILE noted, among other issues, that in the PoW 2015-2017 there is no line of work for the South and Central America and Caribbean region. FIJI asked for continued funding of the CMS position supporting the work of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

IN THE CORRIDORS

After listening to Achmat Hassiem’s heart-wrenching account of the crippling shark attack that inspired him to support shark conservation efforts, and Boyan Slat’s efforts to “mop up” plastic from the oceans, delegates dove into Convention matters. Some have referred to COP11 as the “Shark COP” due to the high quantity of shark proposals; other delegates have suggested the potential for it to become the “Synergies COP” due to its opportunity for addressing synergies with other MEAs. Other important changes, such as those to the structure of the Scientific Council to improve its efficiency, could better enable the Convention to fulfill its mission.

As delegates await the start of working group discussions on the draft budget 2015-2017, uncertainty looms as to what budget scenario will be adopted: zero real growth; 3% real growth; or 5% real growth. One delegate advocated for the 5% real growth increase, explaining the Secretariat is being charged with implementing a growing number of activities. Another delegate agreed, saying “it’s high time we equipped the Secretariat with the means to execute its activities.”