



## CMS COP-6 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1999

The COW resumed consideration of the review of Article IV Agreements under development and addressed the Strategic Plan for future development of the Convention, conservation measures for Appendix I species, and financial and administrative arrangements. Working groups were established on: information management; the CMS Strategic Plan; financial and administrative matters; and albatross.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**REVIEW OF AGREEMENTS:** On the Siberian Crane MOU, Douglas Hykle, CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, updated delegates on the third meeting held in Iran which drew the participation of all ten Range States. He noted that activities allowing for significant geographical extension of conservation measures had been defined. He reported on a recently approved US\$350,000 GEF project which will encompass Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and China. He informed delegates that a pair of monitored Siberian Crane have just returned to their wintering site in India.

Regarding the Slender-billed Curlew MOU, Gerard Boere, Chair of the Slender-billed Curlew Working Group, highlighted the establishment of an expert network, a database and recent research activities. He noted a strong belief among experts that nesting sites must be located in the Middle East. To explore this hypothesis, he said Iran and the Netherlands are considering a MOU to facilitate research. Considering the elusive habits of the Slender-billed Curlew combined with frequent sighting errors, he said all observations must be verified. He described the debate amongst experts on the utility of satellite monitoring for this species.

On Marine Turtles of the African Atlantic coast, Hykle reported on a conference convened in May 1999 in Côte d'Ivoire which gathered almost all Range States to explore areas of regional cooperation. Hykle suggested that the current meeting was an opportunity for Range States to sign the MOU which resulted from the meeting. BENIN encouraged signing the MOU. NIGERIA, GHANA and TOGO stated their intent to sign. SENEGAL noted it still has unprotected sites and highlighted its comprehensive conservation efforts. NIGERIA noted its inter-ministerial committee on CMS which encompasses NGOs and all stakeholders.

Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, CMS Executive Secretary, provided updates on the Agreements under development for the Houbara Bustard and the Great Bustard. He noted that only a few unsolved issues, some of a legal nature, impede progress on the Agreements. Regarding the Great Bustard, GERMANY underscored its commitment to conservation efforts and noted some questions regarding the Agreement text. BIRDLIFE INTERNA-

TIONAL lamented the lack of progress on these Agreements and underscored the CMS's duty to solve legal problems in a timely manner.

AUSTRALIA reported on a workshop held in Australia which resulted in a commitment to new regional conservation instruments for Indian Ocean turtles which may be developed under the auspices of CMS. On albatross of the Southern hemisphere, URUGUAY highlighted mortality due to fishing activities and noted the recent Australian-hosted Valdivia Group meeting on albatross conservation as well as a draft resolution on Southern hemisphere albatross conservation. He also outlined efforts and research conclusions in Uruguay on mitigation of waterbird bycatch and the vulnerability of albatross to specific types of fishing gear. AUSTRALIA highlighted the Scientific Council's conclusion that the COP should take all necessary steps to conclude an agreement. He underscored the threat to Southern Hemisphere Albatross, the poor understanding of the conservation status of most populations, their state of decline and the primary threat of long-line fishing. The UK and FRANCE indicated support for initiatives. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL supported an agreement and offered their expertise. Also in support, SOUTH AFRICA stressed including States with fisheries in Southern oceans.

Chair Hepworth proposed nominating focal points to produce recommendations on agreements under development. The Plenary identified the EU (bustards), Nigeria (turtles in Africa), the Philippines (turtles in the Indian Ocean/Australasia), Australia (albatrosses) and Belgium (antelopes).

Müller-Helmbrecht noted other species initiatives in progress on Ungulates in the Arabian peninsula, Sand Grouse, Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes and the Aquatic Warbler. He also identified African Elephants and sturgeon as priorities. Updating progress on antelopes, BELGIUM noted publications, a working group, transfers of animals and preparation of regional projects. SENEGAL highlighted its species reintroduction projects.

**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CMS DEVELOPMENT:** Hykle introduced the Strategic Plan for the future development of CMS (UNEP/CMS/Conf.6.12). He commended the progress achieved since the Strategic Plan was first drafted in Nairobi in 1994. He noted the overall document needed more work and suggested a working group improve the presentation and content. He highlighted two parts to the plan: a review of progress in implementation of COP identified priority actions; and objectives and priority actions for the period 2000-2005. He identified the plan's objective to, *inter alia*: promote the use of the different tools available under the CMS; facilitate and improve implementation of the CMS through review of national legislation, streamlining of feedback and capacity-building; enhance global membership; mobilize

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financial resources; and strengthen institutional linkages with NGOs. FINLAND, on behalf of the EU, expressed concern on possible overlap with other conventions and called for prioritization of field actions. Chair Hepworth said the Strategic Plan and the budget should be dealt with separately and suggested the creation of a sub-group on budgetary matters.

On the wording of the Strategic Plan, NORWAY called for added emphasis on CMS harmonization with other conventions. In response, Müller-Helmbrecht highlighted that the Strategic Plan already called for the development of synergies with other international conventions and organizations and with, *inter alia*, GEF, World Bank and UNDP. He added that the Secretariat is still endeavoring to establish liaisons at the global and local level and that MOUs have been concluded with Wetlands International, Ramsar and IUCN and are under discussion with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and CITES. Müller-Helmbrecht recalled a 1994 proposal to have a senior official coordinate with other conventions which was not implemented due to budget restrictions. A working group was established to discuss the Strategic Plan as well as budgetary matters. Noting the need to ensure frank participation, GERMANY stated that in line with the procedure followed in other conventions, only Parties or future Parties should attend budgetary discussions. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, recalling a COP-4 recommendation addressing the role of NGOs, supported NGOs' admission to the discussions and noted that some conventions, such as Ramsar, welcome NGOs to attend budgetary discussions.

**CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR APPENDIX I SPECIES:** Pierre Devilliers, Chair of the Scientific Council, introduced measures to improve the conservation status of Appendix I species (UNEP/CMS/Conf.6.8) and the related draft resolution (UNEP/CMS/Res 6.1(Rev.1)). He said the resolution continues concerted action for previously selected Appendix I species (CMS Resolutions 3.2 and 4.2) and adds the following species: Whitewinged Flufftail; Blue Swallow; Aquatic Warbler; Southern Marine Otter; Southern River Otter; and Humboldt Penguin.

ITALY proposed adding Ferruginous Duck and Audouin's Gull, and Devilliers agreed to consider this proposal. In response to an inquiry by NORWAY as to whether delegates were comfortable with the procedure and criteria for listing species, Devilliers explained that the procedure for assigning a species concerted action is two tiered; the species is first listed in Appendix I and then chosen for concerted action by the Scientific Council. He identified three criteria for concerted action: adequate Range State participation; identification of definable concerted action; and identification of able implementing agents in the Range States.

ZIMBABWE, noting a lack of evidence to indicate the Whitewinged Flufftail is migratory, opposed designating it for concerted action. Devilliers responded that the Scientific Council employs the CMS definition of migratory which might diverge from other definitions and said such concerns should have been voiced when the species was proposed for Appendix I. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL emphasized that the Whitewinged Flufftail is endangered and supported listing it for concerted action. ITALY questioned the inclusion of the Mountain Gorilla, noting that not all Range States are Parties. Devilliers, identifying the Democratic Republic of Congo as the only Range State Party, highlighted a project to establish a peace park within non-party Range States which may encourage Uganda and Rwanda to become Parties.

SENEGAL noted Wild Dog conservation efforts in cooperation with Guinea and offered to submit an official proposal to list the species in Appendix I. URUGUAY highlighted an Argentine project on the Franciscana Dolphin. GUINEA, on behalf of the African region, requested that attention be given to the African Elephant and the Whale Shark. The COW agreed to accept the resolution with the possibility of adding the Ferruginous Duck and Audouin's Gull.

**FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS:** Hykle first overviewed a document addressing administration of the Trust Fund beyond 31 December 2000, contributions and expenditures and programme support charges (UNEP/CMS/Conference.6.13.1Addendum). He noted that, as of 27 October 1999, 25 Parties had paid contributions for 1999 and previous years and five had already paid for 2000. He also commented that, as of 26 October 1999, roughly US\$500,000 was outstanding for 1999 and previous years of which 93% is attributable to a small number of Parties. Hykle signaled potential cash flow difficulties if Parties continue to pay late in the year, highlighted the document's annexes and noted programme support charges to be levied on voluntary contributions from 1 January 2000.

Introducing financial and administrative matters (UNEP/CMS/Conference.6.13.1), Hykle explained that the projected increase in contributions was mainly to finance the Strategy Plan and identified additional reasons such as increases in Convention membership, new MOUs and proposed institutionalization of regional meetings. He added that the proposal for staff is modest compared to Conventions such as Ramsar and CITES.

Hykle highlighted the division of Secretariat functions into discrete units on: executive direction and management; agreement development and servicing; information and capacity building; scientific and technical support; and administration, finance and project management. He added that budget activities are linked to the Strategy Plan and noted that, as secondments come to an end, three Secretariat staffing positions would be lost.

Highlighting the draft budget resolution with attached annexes on budget estimates, scale of contributions, medium term plan for 2001-2005 and terms of reference for the administration of the Trust Fund (UNEP/CMS/Res 6.7), Hykle indicated that the budget was developed for the biennium due to lack of synchronization with the normal triennial budget and noted the budget assumes timely payment of outstanding contributions. Müller-Helmbrecht stressed that Secretariat spending of funds was modest and cautious. SENEGAL underscored the difficulty of cost increases for developing countries.

#### WORKING GROUPS

The working group on information management, chaired by Svein Aage Mehli (Norway), met briefly in the afternoon and again in the evening to consider national reporting and the information management plan. A working group on Albatross, co-chaired by Andrew McNee and Anne-Marie Delahunt (Australia), met in the evening to discuss international cooperation efforts and a draft resolution. The working group on the Strategic Plan, chaired by Delahunt, met in the evening and established a sub-group on budgetary matters, chaired by Veronique Herrens Schmidt (France).

#### IN THE CORRIDORS

After NGOs were not welcomed into discussions on budgetary matters, some delegates questioned whether the CMS is as participatory and inclusive as it claims to be and queried the secrecy surrounding financial discussions.

#### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will convene briefly in the Grand Ballroom at 9:30 am to address organizational matters.

**COW:** The COW will reconvene immediately following the Plenary to discuss institutional arrangements, including the Headquarters Agreement, Agreement Secretariats, the Standing Committee and the Scientific Council, and possibly proposed amendments to Appendices I and II.

**WORKING GROUPS:** The working groups on information management, the Strategic Plan and budgetary matters are expected to reconvene in the morning following the brief Plenary.