



CMS COP-6 HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 1999

Delegates met in a brief morning Plenary to address administrative matters and hear reports from the Credentials Committee and the working group on information management. The COW reconvened to address institutional arrangements, as well as to amend Appendix I and II and to select Appendix II species for cooperative action. The working groups on the Strategic Plan, budgetary matters and information management reconvened throughout the day to further their discussions. Delegates also attended a special ceremony for signing the MOU on Marine Turtles.

PLENARY

Robert Hepworth (United Kingdom), COP-6 Vice-Chair, welcomed delegates to the morning Plenary and Douglas Hykle, CMS Deputy Executive Secretary, overviewed administrative matters. Carlo Custodio (the Philippines), Chair of the Credentials Committee, reported on the Committee's work and noted the acceptance of credentials from Morocco, Senegal, Slovakia, Paraguay and Egypt. Svein Aage Mehli (Norway), Chair of the working group on information management, encouraged delegates to share with the Secretariat details on difficulties faced when drafting national reports.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

GUIDELINES FOR HARMONIZATION OF AGREEMENTS: Müller-Helmbrecht introduced a revised draft of guidelines for the harmonization of future agreements (UNEP/CMS/Conf.6.10). He said delays in producing the guidelines had prevented consultation in an open working group, as requested by COP-5, and noted the Secretariat's recommendation that the COP proceed with the consultation and request the Standing Committee to supervise finalization of the guidelines. Müller-Helmbrecht underscored that the guidelines are not legally or politically binding. EUROBATS supported use of an easily-amended appendix and proposed that agreements as amended apply to new Parties. Chair Hepworth proposed finalizing the guidelines at the COP. The UK supported further consultation. EGYPT said that, given the legal content, further consideration was preferable. The Plenary agreed.

HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT: Müller-Helmbrecht presented a draft resolution (UNEP/CMS/Res.6.8) outlining the juridical personality, privileges and immunities of the headquarters' staff and the conclusion of the Headquarters Agreement. GERMANY requested some minor amendments be made to the resolution and, accommodating this request, the Chair established a small drafting group with representatives from the Secretariat, UNEP, Germany and the Netherlands to revise the resolution.

STANDING COMMITTEE: Hykle introduced the institutional arrangements for the Standing Committee (UNEP/CMS/6.14.3) and overviewed the evolution of the Committee's membership. He outlined a draft resolution that consolidates previous CMS resolutions establishing the Standing Committee (Resolutions 1.1, 2.5 and 3.7) and sets out the composition of the Committee as: one member from each of the five major geographical regions; the Depository government; and the host government for the upcoming COP. He also noted a proposal reflected in the resolution providing for alternate members to, upon completion of their term of office, automatically become full Committee members and explained that this would facilitate continuity within the Committee.

The NETHERLANDS, noting the growing number of Parties in some regions, suggested the Standing Committee and Secretariat reevaluate the representation, especially for regions such as Africa and Europe which have many Parties. TOGO, supported by the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, underscored the need for equal representation based on the number of Parties within regions. Noting Africa's tradition of alternating between French- and English-speaking representatives, he suggested appointing an assistant for each region who could alternate with the representative. NIGER commented that the Ramsar Convention bases regional representation on the number of Parties within a region and said he could not accept the proposal for the alternate to automatically become the full member. MONACO noted his support for fairer representation and, drawing attention to the Standing Committee's fragile legal status since it is established by resolutions, suggested amending the Convention to formally establish the Standing Committee.

Chair Hepworth noted ratification of changes to the Convention would be challenging. Noting general support for making the composition of the Standing Committee fairer, he suggested two models for change: establishing two representatives for Europe and Africa; or dividing Europe and Africa into two subgroups with a representative from each. He remarked that the costs of either model would be off set by the reduction in Committee size due to Germany representing both the Depository and the COP-7 host-country. In response to a question by the NETHERLANDS as to whether COP-6 could take a decision to increase representation from Europe and Africa, Chair Hepworth replied that it could. URUGUAY called for taking the Americas into account. The Chair encouraged delegates to continue discussions informally.

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: On institutional arrangements for the Scientific Council (UNEP/CMS.Conf.6.14.4), Hykle drew attention to the list of organizations with official observer status and suggested that an expert position for Asiatic fauna be created. The UK, with the PHILIPPINES, supported the addition of an expert for Asia. The resolution was approved.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Leanne Burney <leanne@iisd.org>, Richard Campbell <richcam@hotmail.com>, Laura Ivers <laurai@iisd.org> and Violette Laclache L.L.M <vlaclache@hotmail.com>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree <kimo@iisd.org>. Digital engineering by David Fernau <david@virtualstockhom.net>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Community (DG- XI). General support for the *Bulletin* during 1999 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU) and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the Government of Australia, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment of Finland, the Government of Sweden, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Ministry for the Environment in Iceland. The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages>. The satellite image was taken above Geneva ©1999 The Living Earth, Inc., <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II: On amendment of Appendices I and II (UNEP/MS/on.6.11/Add.2), Pierre Devilliers, CMS Scientific Council Chair, presented the proposed amendments and highlighted the addition of the White Shark and sturgeon. The UKRAINE underscored its support for adding sturgeon. ROMANIA reported a recently established conservation programme for the sturgeon in the lower Moldavian region. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL commended the CMS for increasing commitment to South American land birds. He noted that in this group at least two threatened species and five near-threatened species remain threatened and that BirdLife would raise this at the next Scientific Council meeting. The resolution was adopted.

STANDARD NOMENCLATURE: Presenting recommendations on standardizing Appendices nomenclature, Devilliers stressed that the nomenclature divisions were purely technical and would not affect conservation measures. The resolution was adopted.

COOPERATIVE ACTION FOR APPENDIX II SPECIES: Chair Hepworth introduced the draft recommendation on cooperative action for Appendix II species (UNEP/CMS/Rec.6.2 (Rev.1)). He explained that the recommendation calls for cooperative action for new species, including seven species of petrels and the Whale Shark, subject to their inclusion in Appendix II, and for species listed in Appendix II, including the African Elephant, the African Penguin, all albatrosses and dolphins of South America. Devilliers noted the omission of reference to the status of species previously selected for cooperative action. In response, the COW agreed to include a paragraph extending cooperative action to those species selected at COP-5 (Recommendation 5.2) for the biennium 2001-2002. GERMANY urged, and Devilliers supported, the addition of the sturgeon to the list of new species for cooperative action. Noting that the species had just been listed in Appendix II, the COW added 18 sturgeon species for cooperative action. BURKINA FASO noted it is ready to take the lead on cooperative action for the African Elephant. SENEGAL questioned the status of action on the African Wild Dog. In response, Devilliers encouraged including it in Appendix I at the next COP. Delegates adopted the recommendation.

OTHER MATTERS: On the status of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: relevance for CMS (UNEP/CMS/Conference.6.4.1), Müller-Helmbrecht invited comment from China. CHINA reaffirmed that the CMS continues to apply to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. She noted a formal reply was pending on the Secretariat's request for advice on whether the People's Republic of China would submit proposals concerning the addition of Hong Kong species to the Appendices, pay contributions and consider accession to the CMS. She did not see the need for action on the part of the Secretariat at present and highlighted China's support for initiatives on migratory species. Müller-Helmbrecht noted the matter would be resolved between China and the Depository. The Plenary agreed to postpone the matter pending a further report.

Regarding the Global Register of Migratory Species, GERMANY noted the project will be finalized at the end of 2000 but that information would continue to be added to the database for several more years. He proposed consideration of the matter at the next COP.

WORKING GROUPS

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT: The working group on information management amended and streamlined a draft CMS information management plan which tabulates information in terms of action, objective, priority, CMS resource needs, degree of difficulty, current capacity within the CMS and partners. The group also considered a draft resolution.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN: The working group on the CMS Strategic Plan reconvened to review and prioritize the objectives and actions as outlined in the Strategic Plan (UNEP/CMS/Conf.6.12). The group focused on actions which identify the Secretariat as the main actor, and thus have clear budgetary ramifications for the CMS, confining their preliminary comments to reviewing the gradations of priority for actions - high, medium or low - as set out in the Strategic Plan. Delegates noted, *inter alia*: difficulty with prioritizing actions without knowledge of resource allocation; the need to draw on the work and expertise of the Scientific Council between CMS sessions; and the need to commission appropriate organizations familiar with the CMS to carry out CMS actions to ensure effective outcomes. In considering the group's recommendation on the Strategic Plan to be reported to the COP, there was general agreement that the Strategic Plan is too dense and long for adoption, and support for submitting a summarized version for adoption. In a subsequent session, the working group reviewed a revised resolution on the Strategic Plan and a draft summary of the operational objectives of the Strategic Plan which will be annexed to the resolution.

BUDGETARY MATTERS: The group on budgetary matters, chaired by Véronique Herrenschildt (France), met throughout the day in sessions closed to non-Parties to consider the proposed budget.

SIGNING OF THE MARINE TURTLE MOU

In a special signing ceremony, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, the GAMBIA, GHANA, NIGERIA and TOGO signed the MOU on Conservation for Marine Turtles which resulted from the International Conference on the Conservation of Sea Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa held in May 1999 in Côte d'Ivoire. Imeh Okopido, Minister of the Environment of Nigeria, noted the recent creation of the Nigerian Ministry of the Environment and expressed his hope that the MOU would address beach erosion which increases the mortality rate of Marine Turtles.

Range States and signatories to the MOU convened for an informal meeting and discussed ways to address: coordination of national projects; creation of a regional conservation plan; financial support; and the format for the future action plan. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the future action plan, NIGERIA suggested that each Range State forward data on the national conservation status of the species and on any technical, legislative or financial obstacles to the implementation of the MOU. Offering to coordinate the work, he suggested that national issues be addressed prior to developing a regional plan. Colin Limpus, COP-appointed Scientific Councillor, offered his technical assistance to Range States.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Many delegates expressed their support for the resolution on by-catch, hoping that advancing a unified CMS position on the issue would increase awareness of the magnitude of the problem and tackle the dilemma of high-sea long-line fishing. Some fretted that obstacles to adopting the resolution would rear in the form of lack of clearance from governments' headquarters and obstruction due to fractured regional positions and procedural formalities.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary will convene at 9:30 am to address organizational matters.

COW: Following Plenary, the COW will revisit the review of implementation, the Strategic Plan and financial matters, and consider outstanding issues.