



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CMS COP-7

WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2002

The seventh Conference of the Parties (COP-7) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the second Meeting of the Parties (MOP-2) to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA) opened with a joint ceremony on Wednesday morning, 18 September. Prior to the joint opening, the Federal Republic of Germany and the CMS Secretariat signed the CMS Headquarters Agreement, officially establishing Bonn as the CMS Secretariat's headquarters. Following welcoming speeches, delegates met in Plenary to begin considering CMS COP-7's agenda, including items on administrative matters and reports from the various CMS bodies. In the afternoon, a Committee of the Whole (COW) began to review implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2000-2005.

OPENING CEREMONY

Jürgen Trittin, Federal German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, welcomed delegates to Bonn for the opening of the CMS and AEWA meetings. He highlighted climate change as a major threat to migratory species, noting that the German Government has committed 500 million Euros for climate change reduction programmes, including increasing the market share of solar and wind power. He emphasized that poverty reduction, as addressed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), is a prerequisite for successful species and nature conservation projects.

Bärbel Dieckmann, Mayor of Bonn, observed that CMS COP-7 is the first post-WSSD conference. She drew attention to Bonn's role as the host of various international conferences, as well as the home of many national and international governmental and non-governmental institutions, and highlighted the February 2002 Agreement between Germany and the UN to establish a UN campus in Bonn.

Demetrio Ignacio, CMS Standing Committee Chair, praised Germany's support of the CMS since 1979. He highlighted the growing number of Parties to the CMS, as well as the expanding scope of its activities, and drew attention to the CMS-CBD joint work programme. He said challenges for CMS Parties include stimulating cooperation and enhancing activities to contribute to the WSSD 2010 target for reducing biodiversity loss.

Yousoof Mungroo, AEWA Technical Committee Chair, highlighted that the number of Parties to AEWA has doubled to 34 since MOP-1 in 1999, and called on other States to join. He also expressed gratitude for the financial support of several countries.

Claude Martin, WWF International Director, on behalf of WWF, the IUCN, Birdlife International and Wetlands International, emphasized the importance of establishing partnerships between governments, the private sector and NGOs to address transboundary conservation issues. He cautioned that time is running out to save the Earth's biodiversity.

Speaking on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, Deputy Director Shafqat Kakakhel highlighted the role of CMS in achieving relevant WSSD targets. He praised the CMS as an international framework for specialized agreements on migratory species, and highlighted its focus on Africa. He linked species and ecosystem conservation to the eradication of poverty, and drew attention to the ongoing work of the CMS regarding cooperation with other organizations.

Speaking on behalf of the Prince of Wales, Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, CMS Executive Secretary, lauded the CMS as a "splendid champion" of vulnerable species for over 20 years. While highlighting its successes to date, he noted that only a few hundred of the 5,000 known migratory species benefit from the CMS approach, and urged delegates to give full support to the Convention's ongoing work. He called on governments to ratify the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels.

CMS COP-7 PLENARY

RULES OF PROCEDURE: CMS Standing Committee Chair Ignacio opened the first CMS COP-7 Plenary session. CMS Deputy Executive Secretary Douglas Hykle introduced the adoption of rules of procedure (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.4 (Rev.1)). He noted that 17 countries were more than three years behind in their contributions and were not eligible to vote, with the exception of Argentina, which had notified the Standing Committee of its mitigating economic circumstances.

ARGENTINA, supported by CHILE, questioned the appropriateness of punitive sanctions within the rules of procedure. NORWAY noted that many developing countries have "unavoidable economic circumstances" preventing them from paying their arrears and requested that they be allowed to vote. CMS Executive-Secretary Müller-Helmbrecht said the matter had already been discussed at COP-6 and confirmed the legal basis of the current rules of procedure. The Plenary adopted the rules of procedure.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The Plenary elected: Gila Altmann, Parliamentary Secretary of State (Germany), as the Chair of the Conference; Demetrio Ignacio (the Philippines) as Chair of the COW; and Iweh Okopido, Minister of Environment (Nigeria), as Vice-Chair of the COW.

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AGENDA AND WORK SCHEDULE: Delegates adopted the list of documents for the meeting (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.2 (Rev.3)), the provisional and annotated agendas (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.1 (Rev.1), and 7.1.1) and the provisional schedule (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.3).

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES: Diana Mortimer (UK), Robert Boljesic (Slovenia), Hany Tatwany (Saudi Arabia), Mohammed Ibrahim Mohammed (Egypt) and Nancy Cespedes (Chile) were elected members of the Credentials Committee. The Committee appointed Tatwany as its Chair.

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS: Participants agreed to admit as observers the six Scientific Council experts appointed by the COP, as well as inter-governmental (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

OPENING STATEMENTS: CMS COP-7 Chair Altmann requested observer countries to comment on the prospects of their accession to the Convention. BANGLADESH said it hopes to sign the CMS by the end of COP-7. NEPAL, VIETNAM, SIERRA LEONE and COTE D'IVOIRE indicated that they would ratify before COP-8. DJIBOUTI stated that it would join within a few weeks or months. INDONESIA noted economic and other problems hindering its work on CMS ratification, but said that a consultative process had been initiated.

CMS Executive Secretary Müller-Helmbrecht noted that since COP-6, 15 countries have acceded to the Convention: the Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Uganda, New Zealand, Croatia, Tajikistan, Jordan, Moldova, Malta, The Gambia, Albania, Cyprus, Saõ Tomé and Príncipe, Lithuania and Libya. He said that Bolivia has ratified but has yet to transmit its instrument of accession to the depositary. NEW ZEALAND urged support for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, noting significant declines in some populations.

REPORTS: Secretariat: Introducing the Secretariat's report (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.5.1), CMS Executive Secretary Müller-Helmbrecht drew attention to: contacts made with non-Parties to encourage membership; the new Headquarters Agreement; administrative arrangements with the AEWA, ASCOBANS and EURO-BATS Secretariats; cooperation with other IGOs and NGOs; and a decrease in Secretariat staff and need for funding.

Standing Committee: Standing Committee Chair Ignacio introduced the Committee's report (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.5.2 and Inf.7.6) and highlighted the strengthening of the CMS through, *inter alia*, enhancement of efforts, the new Headquarters Agreement, recognition of the CMS as the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) lead partner, and increased participation in the CMS process due to travel assistance. He took note of the review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and welcomed the conclusions of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels and the MOUs on the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard, on the Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, and on the Bukhara Deer.

Scientific Council: Scientific Council Chair Colin Galbraith presented the Council's report (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.5.3), noting increased participation in the past triennium. The Council considered proposals for listing species in Appendices I and II, adhering strictly to scientific principles and best available knowledge. Chair Galbraith noted that while most of the proposals were non-contentious, those relating to some whale species contained information gaps. He called for more information gathering to allow further action on the proposals.

Depositary: Gerhard Adams, the German focal point for the CMS, presented the Report of the Depositary (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.5.4). He stressed Germany's strong relationship with the Secretariat, highlighting the recently signed CMS Headquarters Agreement. He also noted Germany's campaign to encourage additional countries to join the CMS.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

COW Chair Ignacio introduced a document on the review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2000-2005 (UNEP/CMS/Conf.7.10). CMS Deputy Executive Secretary Hykle explained that the objectives of the Strategic Plan include: promoting the conservation of migratory species; prioritizing conservation activities; expanding CMS membership; and facilitating implementation of the Convention by enhancing awareness and strengthening institutional arrangements. He underscored that the Strategic Plan should enable the COP to monitor implementation activities and the outcomes of such activities, and emphasized the importance of developing and using meaningful performance indicators. Hykle recommended the development of a new strategic plan for COP-8, based on experience gained from the existing Plan.

SWITZERLAND highlighted the identification of threats across *taxa* as a priority for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and called for increased attention for invertebrate and fish species. UNEP/WCMC noted that the CMS is well placed to contribute indicators for the assessment of the WSSD 2010 target to reduce biodiversity loss.

SIGNING CEREMONY

Following the closing of the COW, delegates witnessed signing ceremonies of Memorandums of Cooperation between the CMS and UNESCO Secretariats, and between the CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) Secretariats. Following this, Uzbekistan signed the MOU concerning Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer. Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire signed the MOU on Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa, and Germany signed the MOU on Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates eased into COP-7 on what could only be described as a low-key and relaxed opening day. A number of participants expressed satisfaction with the significant increase in CMS ratifications in the three years since the last COP, as well as with the number of new agreements signed under the Convention. In spite of the casual atmosphere some delegates noticed a "quiet sense of expectation" over what the first major conference following the WSSD might bring and what the impact of the Summit might be. The relative tranquility may not last long though, with several participants labeling proposed listings of whale species as an issue that might heat up proceedings.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

COW: The Committee of the Whole will meet in morning and afternoon sessions to discuss implementation in relation to Appendix I species, cooperative actions for Appendix II species, Article IV Agreements, national reports, and financial and administrative matters.