

CMS COP 9 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2008

On Wednesday, delegates met in plenary to address, among other things, the future shape of CMS and proposals for amendments to the Appendices. The Committee of the Whole discussed terrestrial mammals, major concerted action projects, Appendix I species conservation, and priorities for CMS agreements. Working groups on resources and on the future shape of CMS also met, as well as groups on climate change, by-catch and ocean noise. MOP 1 to the Gorilla Agreement concluded its deliberations.

PLENARY

FUTURE SHAPE OF CMS: Standing Committee Chair Andrew McNee (Australia) introduced a draft resolution on the future shape of CMS (UNEP/CMS/Res.9.13), submitted by the EU and endorsed by the Standing Committee. Many delegates expressed support for the draft resolution and willingness to participate in the proposed intersessional working group to explore the issue, with NORWAY drawing attention to its draft terms of reference (UNEP/CMS/Inf.9.24). SWITZERLAND and the EU stressed the need to link this process with the development of a new strategic plan.

States and agreements called for: balanced regional representation in the intersessional working group; participation of developing countries, partner organizations, non-parties and agreement secretariats; and addressing the needs of Africa and South East Asia. CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth suggested that the format of the current Strategic Plan be maintained, with its content revised to reflect the next six-year period. IRAQ reported on the status of migratory waterbirds in southern Iraq, following restoration of marshlands. HAITI drew attention to its agreement with the Dominican Republic on the creation of an ecological corridor.

FUNDRAISING: The Secretariat reported on fundraising efforts (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.34), highlighting the establishment of the "Friends of CMS." EGYPT suggested targeting fundraising at the private sector.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION: The Secretariat provided an overview of outreach and communication activities undertaken under the Year of the Dolphin 2008 campaign (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.21), and planned initiatives for the Year of the Gorilla 2009 (YoG). The Secretariat also reported on the Outreach and Communication Plan 2009-2011 (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.22/Rev.1), noting the need for resources to continue this work, as outlined in a draft resolution (UNEP/CMS/Res.9.5).

Numerous states and organizations expressed support for YoG. GERMANY announced a donation of 200,000 euros, France of 137,000 euros and MONACO of 30,000 euros. The

EU called for more details on the results and outcomes of outreach activities in future reports. CAMEROON and GABON highlighted national actions towards gorilla conservation. MALI, GUINEA BISSAU and GUINEA underscored the conservation needs of other large primates. CHILE proposed focusing on flamingos in 2012. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO stressed that local organizations should be involved with YoG. The WORLD ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS (WAZA) highlighted the renewal of the MOU between WAZA and CMS. UNEP described its relevant activities. The UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD) highlighted collaboration between UNCCD, CMS and the Ramsar Convention. Discussion on the draft resolution was deferred, pending the outcomes of the budget deliberations.

COOPERATION: The Secretariat introduced the agenda item (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.23/Rev.1 and UNEP/CMS/Res.9.6/Rev.1), highlighting cooperation with FAO and biodiversity-related conventions, and underlining the input of NGOs and IUCN specialist groups. She underscored that the drafting of cooperation agreements should be sufficiently concrete to lead to implementation in the field.

Many delegates supported enhanced cooperation with MEAs and partners. The interim Secretariat of Environmental Matters in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (SINEPAD) drew attention to its partnership with CMS on implementation of the African marine turtles MOU. IUCN underscored its Red List of endangered species and specialist groups on sharks, primates and elephants. GUINEA BISSAU and GHANA called for cooperation with the UNFCCC Secretariat. NORWAY and MONACO suggested collaboration with the Arctic Council on arctic megafauna. SOUTH AFRICA recommended developing a code of conduct for partnership with the private sector. The EU suggested reference to the UNEP-IUCN TEMATEA project on issue-based modules for coherent implementation of biodiversity-related conventions.

CAPACITY BUILDING: The Secretariat introduced the proposed capacity-building strategy (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.30/Rev.2 and Res.9.12). The EU requested deleting references to regional CMS nodes and, with CHILE, called for identifying capacity-building priorities. The PHILIPPINES suggested examining existing national capacity assessments. IRAN called for regional and subregional thematic workshops and knowledge management projects. GUINEA BISSAU and MALI urged civil society involvement, with MALI underscoring that traditional practices should be considered. FAO noted its capacity-building activities on flyways and avian influenza and other wildlife diseases. WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL highlighted its African-Eurasian Flyway training toolkit, noting the lack of funding for countries to implement it.

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: Executive Secretary Hepworth introduced the documents on the composition and operation of the CMS Standing Committee (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.35/Rev.2 and Res.9.15). INDIA and the EU supported the new model, and the EU suggested establishing a subcommittee for budgetary and financial matters. Executive Secretary Hepworth recalled the United Arab Emirates' offer to host a coordinating unit for the region's dugongs, birds of prey and marine turtles MOUs. Delegates showed their gratitude by acclamation. UNEP reported on the experimental merger of the CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariats' functions, noting that a mid-term review is being finalized.

SPECIES LISTING PROPOSALS: Scientific Council Vice-Chair Pierre Devillers (Belgium) presented this item (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.29/Addendum), noting 13 proposals for Appendix I listings and 11 for Appendix II. He noted ongoing informal discussions on the Appendix I listing of the saker falcon and Appendix II listing of the spiny dogfish and porbeagle shark.

SAUDI ARABIA, with others, opposed the Croatian proposal to list the saker falcon on Appendix I, noting it is based on insufficient data. He suggested: referring the issue to the birds of prey MOU; holding a survey in range states; and organizing a meeting for falcon range states in the United Arab Emirates. CROATIA emphasized the proposal was accepted by the majority of the Scientific Council and pointed to the precautionary principle. Discussion will resume on Thursday.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS: Rosaline Beudels-Jamar, CMS Scientific Council, introduced the item (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.28), highlighting the existing concerted actions on Sahelo-Saharan antelopes and on Central Eurasian Aridlands, and possible future initiatives, including on Atlantic and North European megafauna. She also drew attention to a draft recommendation on tigers and other Asian big cats submitted by the Scientific Council (UNEP/CMS/Rec.9.3).

JORDAN and YEMEN expressed their formal interest in taking part in the Central Eurasian Aridland concerted action. NORWAY, with the EU, called for reference to existing initiatives on megafauna species. The EU suggested an assessment of conservation needs. INDIA, with WWF, suggested that CMS engage in tiger conservation through existing initiatives, and IFAW and IUCN suggested assessing the added value of CMS in this regard. PAKISTAN suggested exploring mechanisms to compensate communities for long-term conservation. KENYA supported future action on the African elephant.

MAJOR CONCERTED ACTION PROJECTS: The Secretariat presented the document on major species projects (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.14/Rev.1), elaborating on concerted actions on, *inter alia*, Sahelo-Saharan antelopes. A representative of the Scientific Committee emphasized that all actions are taken in cooperation with other conventions and range states. EGYPT offered to share information on the gazelle, ibex and barbary sheep. Delegates approved the recommendations contained in the document, noting that some may be streamlined.

APPENDIX I SPECIES CONSERVATION: The Secretariat presented on the draft resolution on concerted and cooperative actions to promote Appendix I species conservation (UNEP/CMS/Res.9.1/Rev.1). MONGOLIA requested funding for single-species action plan development for the Dalmatian pelican and the swan goose. Delegates approved the list of species.

AGREEMENTS: The Secretariat introduced a draft resolution on priorities for CMS agreements (UNEP/CMS/Res.9.2/Rev.1). Paraguay, on behalf of GRULAC, called for reference to the migratory flyways of the Americas, rather than the American and Central Pacific flyways. GRULAC supported setting up a working group under the Scientific Council to revise the instruments. The EU stressed the new instruments under development should be linked to the intersessional process on the future shape, and called for focus on implementing existing

agreements. AUSTRALIA noted priorities, including work on Pacific islands marine turtles and small cetaceans of South East Asia. The REPUBLIC OF CONGO drew attention to its proposal on Central African elephants. The EU emphasized sturgeon-related activities under the Bern Convention. AUSTRALIA and ARGENTINA cautioned against preempting the results of forthcoming discussions on sharks. Discussion will continue on Thursday.

WORKING GROUPS

FUTURE SHAPE: The working group on the future shape of CMS discussed the intersessional working group's structure and membership. Many supported establishing a core, regionally-balanced group of parties, which would then be opened to broader consultations. The need to involve the CMS agreements and their Secretariats, non-parties and partner organizations was also stressed. Participants agreed to designate regional representatives to the intersessional working group, following the Standing Committee's structure, to be decided upon by COP 9. Discussions will continue on Thursday.

RESOURCES: The Secretariat produced revised drafts of the budget, which clarified the differences between the 2006-2008 budget and the proposed 2009-2011 one, as well as differences between past revisions that included upgrades and downgrades of certain posts. Delegates agreed to review the budget line-by-line, reducing amounts where possible, and then judging whether they could approve the final amount after the reductions, noting that the increase will likely lie between 0 and 5.5%. Delegates: explored options of removing all proposed staffing upgrades and reducing travel and information technology costs; discussed other costly items; and debated the number of new positions. Discussions continued into the night.

CLIMATE CHANGE: In a short session, delegates finished their discussions on the revised draft resolution (UNEP/CMS/Res.9.7/Rev.2). They agreed on a streamlined version that, among other things, focuses on current and potential future climate change impacts on Appendix I species, and draws states' attention to potentially adverse effects on migratory species of climate change mitigation measures.

BY-CATCH: Delegates discussed a revised draft resolution on by-catch, submitted by Australia. Debate centered on the definition of by-catch, with delegates deciding in the end not to include one. Delegates also discussed adding references to CMS agreements, data collection, and encouraging parties to implement measures to reduce by-catch.

OCEAN NOISE: Delegates discussed NGOs' revisions of the EU draft resolution on ocean noise impacts on cetaceans (UNEP/CMS/Res.9.19/Rev.1). In view of several points of contention, including whether to undertake impact assessments on all activities or just on newly introduced ones, delegates decided to defer discussions until Thursday, pending legal consultations.

RESUMED GORILLA AGREEMENT MOP 1

Gorilla Agreement MOP 1 met for a final session. Delegates adopted revised draft resolutions on monitoring and reporting (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP/Res.1.1/Rev.1) and the Technical Committee (UNEP/CMS/GOR-MOP/Res.1.2/Rev.1), and agreed on parties' minimum annual contributions of 3000 euros.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A five-minute discussion on species listings, cut short at the end of a busy Wednesday, whetted some appetites for finally getting to the meaty part of the meeting's agenda. While some saw the Arab countries' offer to look into a variety of conservation options for the saker falcon as generous, most got ready for a sticky debate ahead. This excitement however did not prevent several late-night groups from continuing their diligent drafting and producing mostly good results. Some participants expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes on climate change and by-catch; others noted that some battles still lie ahead in discussing ocean noise and marine animals.