

AGADIR DECLARATION

Second Seminar on the Conservation and Restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes and their Habitats

(Agadir, Kingdom of Morocco, 1-5 May 2003)

In order to follow up the work undertaken during the first seminar held at Djerba, Tunisia, in 1998, the representatives of the Range States of the six species of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, that is, *Oryx dammah*, *Addax nasomaculatus*, *Gazella dama*, *Gazella leptoceros*, *Gazella cuvieri*, and *Gazella dorcas*, representatives of scientific institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as experts in the field, met at Agadir, Kingdom of Morocco, from 1 to 5 May 2003, in order to:

- take stock, five years on, of the status of conservation of these species and their habitats in the various range countries;
- review the activities undertaken and the projects developed for the implementation of the CMS Action Plan;
- update the “Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes” Action Plan of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS/Bonn Convention) adopted at the end of the Djerba seminar;
- set action priorities for the conservation and/or the reintroduction of these species;
- strengthen the scope and effectiveness of the action agreed upon, under the guidance of the CMS Scientific Council;
- strengthen international co-operation in the medium and long term, including making progress towards the development of an agreement under the auspices of CMS.

This second seminar was convened by the CMS Secretariat (UNEP/CMS Secretariat) on behalf of the Conference of the Parties, at the initiative of the Scientific Council of the Convention.

The Range States represented were: Algeria, BURKINA FASO¹, CHAD, Ethiopia, MALI, MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, NIGER, SENEGAL, Sudan and TUNISIA.

BELGIUM and FRANCE were also represented, each by one or several representatives and by one or several experts.

The seminar was formally opened by the Secretary General of the Department of Water, Forests and Combat against Desertification, Mr. Mohamed Anechoum and the Executive Secretary of UNEP/CMS, Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht. It was chaired by the Director of the Conservation of Forest Resources, Department of Water, Forests and Combat against Desertification of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mr. Mohamed Ankouz. The UNEP/CMS Secretariat, represented by its Executive Secretary, and the Royal Institute of Natural Sciences of Belgium (IRSNB), represented by Dr. Roseline C. Beudels-Jamar de Bolsée,

¹ States in capital letters are Parties to CMS

who also represented the Chair of the CMS Scientific Council, and Dr. Koen Desmet, acted as the secretariat for the seminar.

The CMS Focal Point in Morocco, Mr. Mohamed Ankouz, and the scientific adviser, Mr. Abdellah El Mastour, the Director of the Souss Massa National Park, Mr. Mohammed Ribbi, other officials from the Department of Water and Forests and Combat against Desertification, together with the entire team from the Souss Massa National Park, assisted in the organization of the seminar.

For reasons of convergence of interests and motivation, the Sahelo-Saharan Interest Group (SSIG), established in 1999, held its fourth meeting following the CMS seminar. Most of the SSIG members actively participated in the work of the seminar and contributed with their various categories of expertise.

The representatives of the various Range States and invited international experts reported on the conservation status of the six species and their habitats, trends, the population dynamics, threats, and measures taken for the species' conservation and restoration, dealing particularly with the changes that had occurred in the previous five years. These reports showed that, aside from some specific situations, the status of the populations *in situ* as a whole had further worsened since the Djerba seminar, and the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes in the wild were in an increasingly critical situation and there was an urgent need to implement the Action Plan.

The main threats identified were still as follows: poaching, constant hunting, drought and desertification, the loss of favourable habitats, a lack of resources and commitment, and some indifference on the part of the international community in regard to a region that does not hold a high concentration of the world's biodiversity.

In particular, the representatives of most of the Range States pointed to excessive hunting as the main current threat; this was organized by groups from the Gulf States, in defiance of national laws and international agreements. Such hunting campaigns thwart all efforts at restoration of the Sahelo-Saharan fauna, a fact that had already been identified at the Djerba meeting. The seminar, now admitting that this situation, if not rapidly controlled, will render conservation efforts by the international community useless, has prepared, guided by a working group comprising representatives of 10 Range States, a recommendation (paragraph 6 below) to draw the immediate attention of all concerned parties to this serious problem.

The seminar organized its work through two working groups, each with geographical representation; the first group comprised the northern countries: Algeria*, MAURITANIA*, MOROCCO and TUNISIA; the second comprised countries from the central and southern Sahara, Algeria*, BURKINA FASO, CHAD, Ethiopia, MALI, MAURITANIA*, NIGER, SENEGAL and Sudan. The working groups' main work was the identification of priority actions to be implemented in the following four years. A third working group, co-ordinated by Mr. John Newby, devoted its work to updating the current information on the conservation status of Sahelo-Saharan ungulates, in consultation with each delegation and the invited experts.

* Algeria and Mauritania were represented in both groups.

The seminar also set up a small working group whose mandate was to develop, with the help of the CMS Secretariat, a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Range States, including the identification of means to develop international co-operation in order to restore, conserve and manage these species.

The seminar:

1. * expresses its gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco, represented by the Secretary General of the Department of Water, Forests and Combat against Desertification, Mr. Mohamed Anechoum, and the Director of the Conservation of Forest Resources of the same Department, Mr. Mohamed Ankouz, for its generous hospitality;
 - * thanks the various institutions that had contributed to the holding of the meeting, in particular:
 - the Department of Water, Forests and Combat against Desertification of the Kingdom of Morocco;
 - the Conference of the Parties of CMS;
 - the Services of the Prime Minister for Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs of Belgium;
 - the Environment Ministry of the Flemish Region of Belgium;
 - the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
 - * forwards its thanks to the Conference of the Parties of CMS, represented by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, and to IRSNB for the organization of the meeting and for the co-ordination of the scientific aspects of the implementation of the restoration and conservation of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes;
 - * also expresses its thanks to its Chair, Mr. Mohamed Ankouz, Director of the Conservation of Forest Resources, Department of Water, Forests and Combat against Desertification of the Kingdom of Morocco, for his excellent guidance of the meeting;
2. having been more fully briefed on the critical conservation status of the six species concerned, through the reports of the experts from Sahelo-Saharan countries, calls upon the Governments of those countries to increase their efforts towards the protection and restoration of these species and their habitats;
3. congratulates the Range States and governmental and non-governmental organizations for the projects undertaken to date, which had yielded promising results, and encourages them to continue their efforts, including financial assistance, and encourages them to assist other Range States to benefit from their experience;
4. thanks the Royal Institute of Natural Sciences of Belgium (IRSNB), the French Global Environment Fund and the National Hunting and Wildlife Agency (ONCFS) for their generous contributions and the assistance of their experts, in the development and funding of the first regional project for the implementation of the “Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes” Action Plan of CMS;

5. thanks the Sahelo-Saharan Interest group (SSIG), its President, Dr. Steve Montfort, and all its members, for their valuable technical contributions to the work of the seminar, and for their major contributions in support and implementation of the CMS Action Plan;
6. Notes the Djerba appeal concerning the serious harm caused by some hunters and falconers to the wildlife of many countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, in particular to highly endangered species, among which are the antelopes and other species strictly protected and listed in Annex I of CMS and in the national laws of the concerned countries;

and, based on the report of a working group of representatives of ten countries in the range area of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes,

- takes note that the appeal of the Djerba seminar of February 1998 has had no effect and that hunters and falconers are still causing serious harm to wildlife in the Sahelo-Saharan region, including species which are on the brink of extinction and strictly protected, such as antelopes and bustards;
 - notes that these hunting practices are in flagrant contradiction of national laws and legal commitments undertaken in international treaties and compromise the efforts of the relevant authorities in the Range States and those of the international community, States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, efforts that try to preserve the last individuals surviving in the wild and re-establish viable populations of those species;
 - appeals to the political authorities of the countries concerned, as well as to hunters and falconers:
 - to respect the legislation of the Range States of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes;
 - to support the efforts of States to re-establish, under the auspices of CMS, viable numbers of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes; and
 - to respect the commitments entered into by the States concerned, confirmed by their ratification of international conventions, to restore and/or maintain sustainable populations of these species;
 - requests CMS to review the present appeal, within the rules of the Convention, and take the appropriate steps with the authorities of all the countries concerned in order to undertake the appropriate technical and institutional measures to put an end to all practices of capture that are not in conformity with the legal provisions in this area or with the sound and sustainable use of resources;
7. adopts the Action Plan as modified by the outcome of the two working groups of the seminar, and requests the seminar secretariat to finalize it following its recommendations, and distribute it to all the seminar participants as well as to all relevant organizations at a national and international level;
 8. invites:

- all governmental, national and international institutions inside as well as outside the range of species concerned to implement this revised “Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes” Action Plan and to integrate it into their activities, including their conservation and development strategies as well as in strategies for combating desertification;
 - international and supra-national governmental institutions, in particular the organs of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), of the United Nations Convention on Desertification, of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), of the World Bank, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Union, to support the implementation of the revised Action Plan by including recommended actions in the priorities of their work programmes and by providing technical and financial assistance to the development of transboundary co-operation and the implementation of concerted actions;
 - the international and national institutions involved in the conservation and sustainable use of African fauna and flora to collaborate in the development and translation into action of the projects identified in the Action Plan;
9. urges the Range States of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes to develop and conclude an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding under the auspices of CMS in order to provide a framework for the species’ long-term conservation and management;
10. notes with satisfaction that the representatives of the Range States of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes have proposed to form a working group to assist the UNEP/CMS Secretariat to prepare a first draft of a Memorandum of Understanding;
11. urges the SSA Working Group of CMS to continue in its tasks of gathering information and its necessary dissemination, so as to:
- enable experts of national and non-governmental organizations to develop appropriate projects;
 - make available to Range States a repertoire of appropriate measures for the development of management plans for sites, for institutional strengthening, and training and research, and public awareness-raising;
 - facilitate the integration of environmental concerns into various sectors, such as agriculture, forestry and the wise use of wild fauna;
 - prepare proposals for the Range States aiming at integrating the conservation of species, habitats and ecosystems into the development of local populations;
 - continue to report to the Scientific Council of CMS, as well as to the CMS Standing Committee;
 - complete and keep up to date the database and the internet site initiated by IRSNB.

12. decides to meet again in four years to:

- take stock of the progress achieved;
- revise the Action Plan in the light of the progress made and setbacks encountered;
- discuss the options for improving the implementation of this Action Plan, based on the experience acquired;

13. requests CMS to organize such a meeting and to seek the necessary funds;

14. calls upon those Sahelo-Saharan countries that have not yet done so to accede to CMS and to implement the Convention.

Done at Agadir, Kingdom of Morocco, on 6 May 2003

We confirm the correct formulation of the Seminar Declaration:



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