



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.26.3.3

12 October 2019

Original: English

13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Gandhinagar, India, 17 - 22 February 2020  
Agenda Item 26.3.3

**AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Resolution 12.19 *Endorsement of the African Elephant Action Plan*, pursuant to paragraph 2.e) of the Resolution and recommends adopting the draft Decisions as contained in Annex 1.

The document further recommends that the Signatories of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant align their activities with the African Elephant Action Plan to enhance synergies with ongoing conservation actions.

## AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN

### Background

1. At the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (COP12, Manila, 2017), Resolution 12.19 *Endorsement of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)* was adopted, in which Parties endorsed the AEAP as the principal strategy for the conservation of African Elephants. The AEAP includes matters relevant to the CMS.
2. Through Resolution 12.19 paragraph 2, CMS COP12 further provided instructions to the UNEP/CMS Secretariat as follows.

*Instructs the Secretariat to liaise with the Steering Committee of the African Elephant Fund in order to become an ex officio member, and to:*

- a) *cooperate with the CITES Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme to promote fundraising for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan as part of overall fundraising initiatives;*
- b) *explore opportunities for partnerships with ongoing projects and programmes of CITES and the United Nations Environment Programme to support the African Elephant Range States in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan to achieve CMS objectives;*
- c) *support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan through collaboration with African Elephant Range States to achieve CMS objectives;*
- d) *at the request of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee, invite the Scientific Council (subject to its terms of reference) to provide advice on specific activities relating to the African Elephant Action Plan; and*
- e) *report to the Conference of the Parties at each meeting on relevant actions taken to implement this resolution.*

### Activities to implement Resolution 12.19

3. The CMS Secretariat has taken a number of steps to implement its mandate from the Resolution. The CMS Secretariat liaised with the African Elephant Fund (AEF) Secretariat and attended all three of its Steering Committee meetings held in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The AEF Steering Committee, consisting of representatives of Range States and donors, governs the AEF and supports the African Elephant Range States<sup>1</sup> to implement the AEAP.
4. The 9<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting was an informal one, which was held on 29 November 2017, in the margins of the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CITES Standing Committee. The CMS Secretariat attended as an observer. At the meeting, the AEF Secretariat provided a briefing on Resolution 12.19 adopted at the CMS COP12 as well as on the AEF side event, which was held in the margins of COP12.

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<sup>1</sup> Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

5. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting held from 1 to 3 March 2018 in Kasane, Botswana, the CMS Secretariat was accepted as an *ex officio* member of the Steering Committee. At the same meeting, the Steering Committee established a task team to revise its Terms of Reference, to which the CMS Secretariat contributed. The CMS Secretariat also joined the task team under the AEF Steering Committee, which aims to develop a long-term resource mobilization strategy for the implementation of the AEAP and will support the efforts of the AEF Secretariat.
6. At the 11<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting held from 18 to 21 February 2019 in Accra, Ghana, the CMS Secretariat reaffirmed its support to the African Elephant Range States in implementing the AEAP by providing technical guidance and support. The CMS Secretariat has also agreed to support the AEF Secretariat and the Range States with communication and outreach efforts of the AEAP and AEF, within available resources. The Steering Committee also reviewed the revised Terms of Reference and the Rules of Procedure prepared by the task team. Regarding the resource mobilization strategy, the Steering Committee requested the AEF Secretariat to prepare a draft outline.
7. Throughout the intersessional period, the CMS Secretariat maintained communications with the CMS national focal points regarding funding opportunities provided by the AEF as well as by other mechanisms such as the African Ranger Award 2019<sup>2</sup>, so that the African Elephant Range States can make full use of available funding opportunities to implement the AEAP.

#### The African Elephant Action Plan

8. The International Union for Conservation of Nature through its African Elephant Specialist Group submitted a project proposal *Preparing Technical Inputs for Updating the African Elephant Action Plan* for review by the AEF Steering Committee, with the objective to gather inputs for the potential review of the AEAP. As a follow up of this grant, a technical workshop was organized in July 2019 in Pretoria, South Africa. At the workshop, the Range States and African Elephant experts discussed emerging issues, which could potentially be incorporated in an updated AEAP, upon consultation with the African Elephant Range States on the need for such an update. The AEF Secretariat is currently holding consultations with the African Elephant Range States to determine the need by the African Elephant Range States to update the AEAP.

#### Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (West African Elephant MOU)

9. The Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (West African Elephant MOU) was prepared in 2005 as an instrument under CMS to enhance cooperation on the conservation of African Elephants in 13 Range States<sup>3</sup> in West Africa. The MOU has been implemented through the Strategy for the Conservation of West African Elephants<sup>4</sup> and its Medium-Term Work Programme. The last Work Programme (2012-2014)<sup>5</sup>, expired in 2014. Due to the lack of financial resources, no Meeting of the Signatories has been held since 2011 and therefore no new Work Programme has been adopted.

2 CMS News Article on African Ranger Award 2019. Available from: <https://www.cms.int/en/news/call-nominations-african-ranger-award-2019-and-ranger-support-plan>

3 Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo

4 See [https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/strategy\\_version\\_march\\_2005\\_en.pdf](https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/strategy_version_march_2005_en.pdf)

5 See UNEP/CMS/WAE2/Report Annex

### Discussion and analysis

10. Since its establishment in 2010, the AEF supported 38 projects, of which 28 have been completed and 10 are ongoing. In addition, the 10th Steering Committee in 2018 approved 17 new projects and the 11th meeting in 2019 approved an additional seven projects which will be supported by the AEF. In total, the AEF thus far approved 62 projects. The list of the projects funded by the AEF is available on the AEF website<sup>6</sup>.
11. To date, the AEF has received in total over \$4 million, of this, over \$3.5 million has been allocated to support projects to implement the AEAP. In addition to the AEF, other funding mechanisms have also been supporting actions under the AEAP. To reverse the current declining trend of the African Elephant populations<sup>7</sup>, however, further funding is needed to support the Range States in accelerating their efforts to implement the AEAP.
12. Given the limited resources available and the increasing threats that African Elephants face, cooperation is crucial to effectively pool resources and expertise for the implementation of the AEAP. In this regard, the endorsement of the AEAP by CMS COP12 led to an enhanced partnership and coordinated efforts among CMS, CITES and AEF for the conservation of African Elephants.
13. This cooperation has also contributed to the implementation of the CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme 2015-2020<sup>8,9</sup> as well as of Resolution 11.10 (Rev. COP12) *Synergies and Partnerships*, which requested the CMS Secretariat to strengthen cooperation, coordination and synergies with other biodiversity-related conventions.
14. Furthermore, the adoption of the AEAP and the cooperation with CITES and the AEF have also contributed to the implementation of the West African Elephant MOU. Since its establishment in 2010, the AEF has supported four transboundary projects and 19 national projects in West Africa.
15. Further cooperation among the AEF, CITES, CMS and the West African Elephant MOU is, thus, desirable to effectively assist Signatories in achieving the objective of the MOU. Therefore, it is recommended that the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU replace their Work Programme with the AEAP and use the AEF structure as a conduit for implementing the MOU, considering the continuing lack of resources for the MOU.

### Recommended actions

16. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to adopt the draft Decisions as contained in the Annex of this document.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.africanelephantfund.org/page/i/summary-of-funded-projects>

<sup>7</sup> C.R. Thouless, H.T. Dublin, J.J. Blanc, D.P. Skinner, T.E. Daniel, R.D. Taylor, F. Maisels, H. L. Frederick and P. Bouché (2016). African Elephant Status Report 2016: an update from the African Elephant Database. Occasional Paper Series of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, No. 60 IUCN / SSC Africa Elephant Specialist Group. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. vi + 309pp

<sup>8</sup> UNEP/CMS/StC42/Doc.6.1

<sup>9</sup> The 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee approved the Joint Work Programme. See CMS COP11 Proceedings: Part I Annex V: Report of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee paragraph 23

DRAFT DECISIONS

**AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN**

***Directed to the Signatories of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant***

- 13.AA        The Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (West African Elephant MOU) are encouraged to consider replacing their Work Programme with the AEAP and to implement the MOU through the implementation of the AEAP and through the African Elephant Fund structure, without further convening Meetings of the Signatories.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

- 13.BB        The Secretariat shall facilitate communication among the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU, in order to allow their discussions and conclusions as per Decision 13.AA<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The CMS Secretariat suggest that a consultation between the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU be organized