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CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LION, *Panthera leo*

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on the implementation of Resolution 11.32 on *Conservation and Management of the African Lion, Panthera leo* and recommends the adoption of decisions derived from the African Lion Range State meeting, Entebbe, May 2016, which were adopted by CITES COP17 and endorsed by the CMS Standing Committee at its 45th meeting (Bonn, November 2016).

Implementation of the attached draft Decisions will contribute towards the implementation of targets 1 and 8 of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015 – 2023.

This document has been renumbered. It was previously uploaded on the website as Document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.3.5.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LION, *Panthera leo*

Background

1. The Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting adopted Resolution 11.32 on the *Conservation and Management of the African Lion, Panthera leo*, the operative paragraphs of which are:

“1. *Requests* the Range State Parties and *invites* other Range States of *Panthera leo* to review the outcome of the IUCN process that followed the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to CITES in 2004, and the resulting *Conservation Strategy for the lion in Eastern and Southern Africa* (December 2006) and the *Conservation Strategy for the lion in West and Central Africa* (February 2006), based on the outcome of the latest IUCN assessment when available, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies;

2. *Requests* the Range State Parties and *invites* other Range States to consult with each other concerning the population status of *Panthera leo*, and *requests* the Secretariat to provide assistance in this regard;

3. *Requests* the Range State Parties and *invites* other Range States to consult with the CITES Secretariat through national focal points to receive information from the currently ongoing process for the species;

4. *Recommends* a meeting of Range State Parties, other Range States, and partner organizations, including representatives from the CMS Scientific Council, to be convened as a matter of urgency in order to assess and evaluate the implementation of the *Conservation Strategy for the lion in Eastern and Southern Africa* (2006) and the *Conservation Strategy for the lion in West and Central Africa* (2006), and develop regional conservation action plans designed to reverse population declines and possible needs for capacity-building in lion Range States;

5. *Requests* the Range State Parties to present a review of progress to the 44th and 45th Meetings of the Standing Committee;

6. *Invites* the Range State Parties, subject to the findings of consultations among Range States and relevant stakeholders, to work towards an Appendix II listing proposal to be presented to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and

7. *Invites* partners and donors to consider providing financial assistance to support this process.”

2. To implement Resolution 11.32, the CMS Secretariat commissioned WildCru, the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit of Oxford University, to prepare a review of the IUCN *Conservation Strategy for the Lion in Eastern and Southern Africa* (December 2006) and the *Conservation Strategy for the Lion in West and Central Africa* (February 2006). On the basis of the answers provided to a questionnaire which was circulated to all lion Range States in August 2015, WildCru prepared the [Review of Lion Conservation Strategies](#), which was shared with lion Range States in April 2016.
3. While the Review showed that conservation activities were undertaken by Range States, the threats to lion in Africa remained valid.
4. At the same time, the [2015 IUCN Red List Assessment](#) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) suggested that lion populations overall have experienced

a decline of 43 per cent between 1993 and 2014. This trend was based on a 12 per cent increase in 25 per cent of the lion population and a 60 per cent decrease in 75 per cent of the lion population between 1993 and 2014. The IUCN Red List classification of the species thus remains Vulnerable, noting that most populations outside of Southern Africa (including Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) are considered as Endangered.

5. The main threats to lions are identified in the assessment as indiscriminate killing (primarily as a result of retaliatory or pre-emptive killing to protect human life and livestock) and prey base depletion. Habitat loss and conversion has led to a number of subpopulations becoming small and isolated. Illegal trade in lion body parts for medicinal purposes is considered a threat to African Lion subpopulations. Trophy hunting has a net positive impact in some areas, but may have at times contributed to population declines in Botswana, Cameroon, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Discussion of *Panthera leo* under CITES

6. While the main threats to *Panthera leo* do not relate to international trade in specimens of the species, *Panthera leo* has been listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) since 1977. At the 27th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, Kenya and Namibia agreed to assist the Committee evaluate whether *Panthera leo* was correctly listed in the CITES Appendices and met relevant listing criteria. Yet the report was not produced between COP16 and COP17 as had been committed.
7. A proposal to move *Panthera leo* from Appendix II to Appendix I of CITES was submitted by the Governments of Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Togo in April 2016 for consideration by the CITES Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting (COP17) (Johannesburg, September 2016). Ultimately it proved impossible for Kenya and Namibia to submit their report and the uplisting proposal was expected to be highly contentious given the stable lion populations in some Southern African countries that derive income from trophy hunting, while at the same time knowing that the main threats to lion are not related to international trade but instead require cooperative conservation measures between lion Range States. As a result, the CMS and CITES Secretariats decided to convene a joint CMS-CITES African lion Range State meeting in May 2016

Joint CMS-CITES African lion Range State meeting in Entebbe, Uganda

8. The joint meeting was convened to discuss broadly the continent-wide conservation of African lion, while at the same time facilitate the implementation of CMS Resolution 11.32 and discuss appropriate listings of the species under CITES and CMS. (All documents relating to the meeting can be found [here](#).)
9. The joint meeting was kindly hosted by the Government of Uganda in Entebbe and made possible through the generous funding of the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
10. Over the course of two days, 28 of 32 African Lion Range States discussed constructively the threats to and conservation needs of this iconic species. Furthermore, the CMS Review of Lion Conservation Strategies was discussed and further oral feedback provided on the 2006 IUCN regional lion conservation strategies.
11. As expression of their agreement on conservation measures required, the meeting participants adopted the [Entebbe Communiqué](#).

Discussions and outcome of CITES COP17

12. At the CITES COP17, South Africa and Uganda introduced draft decisions ([CITES COP17 Inf. 73](#)) into the discussions on the uplisting proposal for *Panthera leo* from Appendix II to Appendix I, based on the Entebbe Communiqué. Following intense discussions, building on the Entebbe Communiqué, CITES Parties agreed to retain *Panthera leo* on Appendix II of CITES, while acknowledging the urgent need for conservation measures for the species across Africa, adopted [Decisions 17.241 to 17.245 African Lion \(*Panthera leo*\)](#).
13. Decision 17.241 explicitly calls upon the CITES Secretariat to collaborate with CMS in the implementation of the decision.

Discussions at 45th Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee

14. To ensure that CMS Parties were aware of the decisions adopted by CITES and to demonstrate its implementation of CMS Resolution 11.32, the CMS Secretariat presented CITES Decisions 17.241-17.245 to the CMS Standing Committee in Document [UNEP/CMS/StC45/Inf.2](#). At the same time, the Government of Uganda proposed to the CMS Standing Committee the endorsement of the CITES Decisions as relevant to CMS ([UNEP/CMS/StC45/Inf.3](#)). The Standing Committee discussed the draft decisions submitted by Uganda and expressed its endorsement, as contained in the [Draft Meeting Report](#). The same decisions are now presented in Annex 1 to this document in the form of a COP12 Decision.

Conclusion

15. African Lion Range States both at CITES and CMS have expressed the need for CMS to support conserving the African Lion and for the two Conventions to collaborate in this effort. In fact, through the focus of CITES on regulating international trade in endangered species and CMS on conserving species and their habitats, the two Conventions can complement each other exemplarily, creating synergies through a concerted conservation effort and pooling technical and financial resources.
16. CMS Resolution 11.32 has been fully implemented, except for paragraph 6, which “*Invites* the Range State Parties, subject to the findings of consultations among Range States and relevant stakeholders, to work towards an Appendix II listing proposal to be presented to the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties”. With limited resources, work on a species that is not listed on CMS appendices may not be justifiable to Parties that are not Range States. It is, therefore, recommended that the Conference of Parties considers the listing proposal made for a listing of *Panthera leo* on Appendix II of CMS favourably. Pending the submission of the listing proposal, Resolution 11.32 will have been fully implemented and should be repealed.
17. Attention is drawn to the document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.3.1.1, proposing the establishment of an *African Carnivores Initiative*. The *Initiative* seeks to implement in a coherent manner decisions taken by the CITES and CMS Conferences of the Parties on cheetah, leopard, lion and wild dog in Africa. If *Panthera leo* is listed on CMS Appendix II and the recommended Decisions below adopted, they should be included in the *Initiative* for implementation.

Recommended actions

18. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to
 - a) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) repeal Resolution 11.32, as suggested in Document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.21

ANNEX 1

DRAFT DECISIONS

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LION, *PANTHERA LEO****Directed to the Secretariat***

12.AA The Secretariat shall:

- a) Subject to external funding and in collaboration with African Lion Range States, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):
 - i. Investigate possible mechanisms to develop and support the implementation of joint lion conservation plans and strategies, taking into consideration existing lion conservation plans and strategies;
 - ii. Develop an inventory of African Lion populations across its range, taking due consideration of existing inventories developed by African Lion Range States;
 - iii. Support the development of relevant databases by African Lion Range States;
 - iv. Develop strategies to reinforce international cooperation on the management of lions;
 - v. Undertake a comparative study of lion population trends and conservation and management practices, such as lion hunting, within and between countries, including the role, if any, of international trade;
 - vi. Support capacity-building in lion conservation and management, including where appropriate the making of non-detriment findings where a Range State requests it;
 - vii. Support public awareness raising as well as education programmes in African Lion Range States, in order to support co-existence between humans and lions and to promote measures for the conservation and recovery of African Lion populations;
 - viii. Promote fundraising, as part of its overall fundraising initiatives, to support the effective implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for African lion;
 - ix. Create a joint web portal with CITES to permit, amongst other things, the posting and sharing of information; and
- b) Report to the Standing Committee at its 48th and 49th meetings on the implementation of the above decisions.

Directed to Parties

12.BB Parties are requested to:

- a) Collaborate in implementing the decisions contained in paragraphs i. – ix;
- b) Report to the Standing Committee at its 48th and 49th meetings on the progress in implementing the decisions.

Directed to the Standing Committee

12.CC The Standing Committee shall:

- a) Consider at its 48th and 49th meetings the reports submitted by the Secretariat and the Parties and as appropriate recommend further actions to be taken;
- b) Report to the Conference of the Parties at its 13th meeting on the progress in implementing this decision.

Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities

12.DD Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to support the African Lion Range States and the Secretariat in their efforts to conserve and restore this iconic species across the continent, taking into consideration existing land-use practices; and in implementing the decisions contained in Decision 12.AA, paragraph a) i. – ix.