

PRESS RELEASE

High-level Panel Concludes ‘Significant’ Declaration on Wildlife and Sustainable Development

Manila, 22 October 2017_ Governmental representatives from more than 30 Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) today concluded proposals that will pave the way for greater recognition of the role of wildlife in achieving global sustainable development goals.

The *Manila Declaration on Sustainable Development and Migratory Species* will be considered for adoption to the Twelfth CMS Conference of the Parties (COP12), which opens in the Philippines tomorrow. The draft Resolution underscores the importance of wildlife to national and global economic activities, including those related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, tourism, transport, mining, medicine and trade.

At today’s CMS High Level Panel, 37 members including Government Ministers, Senior Officials, Executives of International Organizations and representatives of global NGOs, private sector and UN Environment Environment Global Goodwill Ambassador Yann Arthus-Bertrand met for three hours to debate the draft resolution. It highlights the links between sustainable development and the conservation of wildlife with a special focus on migratory species and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of CMS said: “The Manila Declaration and the commitments therein will significantly strengthen calls for global recognition of the contribution of wildlife and migratory species to sustainable development. At its core, the Declaration is a conscious decision to align international goals to protect wildlife with the UN’s 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

“Two years ago, the world’s countries unanimously pledged common action towards ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity. Today, we have strengthened the links between these core goals.”

Roy A. Cimat, Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Philippines which is hosting COP12 said:

“Their Future theme of the Conference, “*Their Future is Our Future – Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People*” highlights the inextricable connection between humanity and wildlife. It reflects the indispensable contributions of wildlife to sustainable development and the many socio-economic benefits people derive from them in the form of food, pollination, pest control, medicinal and genetic resources, and ecotourism.”

John Scanlon, Secretary General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), said: “We share our planet with millions of species of truly extraordinary wildlife. But this wildlife is facing many threats to its survival from

climate change, habitat loss, pollution and illegal and unsustainable harvesting and trade. Fortunately, we have robust international conventions in place to respond to these threats and to make sure we conserve and sustainably use wildlife in a way that benefits current generations and can support future generations as well. CITES and CMS are sister Conventions that work together every day to protect wildlife that crosses international borders, whether through migration or trade. By working together we are supporting people pursue their own development through conservation, and in doing so helping to build a more sustainable future for all of us.”

Included in the Declaration is a call for countries to develop national laws to implement their obligations under the Convention in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. It also invites the private sector to participate in discussions and align its policies and practices with the objectives of the Convention.

If adopted, the Declaration will be transmitted to the United Nations General Assembly, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Third Meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Regional quotes:

Tarsicio Granizo Tamayo, Minister for Environment Ecuador:

“It is not sufficient to have just a national view of conservation - we need a regional and international approach too, depending on the species concerned; nor is it effective to consider conservation policies in isolation. We must take account of socio-economic aspects, and to this end the linkages between CBD, CMS, CITES and UNFCCC should be the driver for greater synergies.“

Estonia holding the EU Presidency

Marku Lamp, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of the Environment, Estonia

„In the scope of CMS work a strong emphasize is put on achieving the good status of our oceans by addressing vital questions for the protection of migratory species, like the issue of marine debris, which will definitely help to give a considerable contribution for the achievement of SDG 14 targets.“

Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety Ms. Schwarzelühr-Sutter:

“CMS can make an essential contribution to the protection of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems and therefore to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 14 und 15 of the 2030-Agenda for Sustainable Development. Loss and degradation of habitat are the main threats to 85 per cent of all species described on the IUCN Red List. Species protection therefore almost always requires protecting habitat and ecosystems. This Conference of the Parties can make a big step forward towards this objective, for example by listing the African lion, leopard and giraffe, or by taking decisions on the African Carnivore Initiative and Transfrontier Conservation Areas. ”

Emeritus Zakri Abdul Hamid, Advisor to Prime Minister of Malaysia quote:

„Sustainability is not an absolute law but a necessity that is the product of human civilization. The SDGs are all about human well-being and migratory species are a key to achieving that, for instance as pollinators. While we should welcome the idea of development, our enthusiasm for it should be tempered by the realization that environmental concerns must be taken into account.“

Barbara Thomson, Deputy Minister Ministry of Environmental Affairs, South Africa: „Sustainability is not an absolute law but a necessity that is the product of human civilization. The SDGs are all about human well-being and migratory species are a key to achieving that, for instance as pollinators. While we should welcome the idea of development, our enthusiasm for it should be tempered by the realization that environmental concerns must be taken into account.“

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Notes for Editors:

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