



**Third Regional Seminar on the Conservation and Restoration of  
Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna**

*Agadir, Morocco, 14 – 16 March 2023*

UNEP/CMS/SSMF-RS3/Doc.5

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE SAHELO-SAHARAN MEGAFUNA  
CONCERTED ACTION**

Background

***Evolution of the Concerted Action on Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna***

1. In order to give further impact to the listing of Scimitar-Horned Oryx (*Oryx dammah*), Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*), Dama Gazelle (*Nanger dama*), Slender-Horned Gazelle (*Gazella leptoceros*), Cuvier's Gazelle (*Gazella cuvieri*), and Dorcas Gazelle (*Gazella dorcas*) on Appendix I of CMS, the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP4, Nairobi, Kenya) adopted [Recommendation 4.5](#) in 1994, incepting the Sahelo-Saharan Ungulates Concerted Action. The objective of this Concerted Action was to encourage the 15 Range States (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia) to revise and implement an action plan, that was based on the findings on the conservation status of the different species and their habitats, and structured objectives, programmes and activities at both the species and Range States levels.
2. CMS COP9 (Rome, Italy) adopted [Recommendation 9.2 in 2008](#), renaming the Sahelo-Saharan Ungulates Concerted Action to Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action and extending it to other species of large mammals occurring within the area of the Concerted Action. The Concerted Action was set to, in due course, cover all threatened migratory large mammals of the temperate and cold deserts, semi-deserts, steppes and associated mountains of the Sahelo-Saharan region, and include an Action Plan and status reports for all species concerned.
3. In 2020 CMS COP13, in Gandhinagar, India adopted [Concerted Action 13.4](#) extending the Concerted Action to include the CMS Appendix I listed Red-fronted Gazelle (*Eudorcas rufifrons*) and CMS Appendix II listed Barbary Sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*). The inclusion of the additional species resulted in the inclusion of Eritrea in the geographical coverage of the Concerted Action. Concerted Action 13.4 invites the Range States and other stakeholders to discuss at the third regional seminar, the future directions of the Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Concerted Action including its operational arrangements, identifying that lessons could be learnt from existing Initiatives such as the Central Asian Mammals Initiative.

***Lessons learned from the Central Asian Mammals Initiative***

4. In 2005, CMS COP8 requested the Scientific Council, in cooperation with the CMS Secretariat, Mongolia and other concerned Parties to initiate the Central Eurasian Aridland Concerted Action and Associated Cooperative Action ([Recommendation 8.23](#)) with the objective to improve the conservation state of many species of large mammal fauna of the arid lands of Eurasia that have threatened populations. The Central Eurasian Aridland Concerted Action and Associated Cooperative Action was adopted by CMS COP9 (Rome, Italy) in 2008 ([Recommendation 9.1](#)). In 2014, CMS COP11 (Quito, Ecuador) adopted [Resolution 11.24](#)

establishing the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI). CAMI was established to strengthen the conservation of Central Asian migratory mammals, through a common framework to coordinate conservation activities in the region and to coherently address major threats to migratory species. Annexed to Resolution 11.24 that established the Initiative, is a comprehensive Programme of Work (POW) set out for a period of six years, which addresses the main threats faced by individual species covered by the Initiative and establishes overarching conservation measures required by all species.

5. Apart from determining conservation actions, the POW also calls for the provision of implementation support in the form of outreach and awareness raising activities, funding, synergies and stakeholder involvement and coordination, data sharing and review processes. Species and country focal points have been nominated to provide their expertise and ensure liaison with the Range States; and the Second CAMI Range State Meeting also established the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Initiative. Hence, governance structures have been established that provide a targeted support to the implementation of the POW. Compared to governance structures that exist for Memoranda of Understanding or legally binding agreements concluded under CMS, the CAMI structures are quite light, incurring only limited overhead costs.
6. While Governments are the agreed decision-makers within CAMI, the Initiative greatly benefits from its cooperation with a range of scientific institutions and non-governmental conservation organizations. This makes CAMI a lively platform, in which different stakeholders take on responsibilities to implement the CAMI POW in accordance with their expertise and capacities.

#### ***Options for the establishment of a Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Initiative***

7. The conservation of the Sahelo-Saharan megafauna and their habitats requires regional cooperation. Coordinated policy and conservation actions are crucial for effective implementation of conservation and management measures. With this understanding, the Sahelo-Saharan Antelope Concerted Action was initiated in 1994 and renewed in 2020. Given the need for a long-lasting cooperation mechanism for the conservation of Sahelo-Saharan megafauna, the establishment of a Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Initiative (SSMFI), similar to CAMI should be explored noting the successes and lessons learned from CAMI in implementing its POW.
8. The approach of CAMI is also in line with the provisions contained in CMS [Resolution 10.9](#) on the Future Structure and Strategies of the CMS and CMS Family adopted by CMS COP10 (Bergen, Norway), urging Parties to “identify opportunities for cooperation and coordination at the local and regional level through the creation of synergies based on geography”, and “to seek opportunities to develop synergistic relationships either based on geography or species clustering”, such as with the development of a common conservation programme. Hence, establishing an initiative for the Sahelo-Saharan region along the lines of CAMI would also be aligned with CMS provisions.
9. Establishing the SSMFI similar to CAMI would provide a common strategic and governance framework for action at the international level to conserve migratory mammals and their habitat in the region. It could bring together and harmonize the implementation of existing mandates under CMS and the Action Plan, discussed by this Meeting as well as initiatives undertaken by partners. It would focus on promoting synergies between existing stakeholders, as well as on sharing communication and strengthening cooperation across sectors and borders.

### **Sahel & Sahara Interest Group**

10. The potential for synergies with existing initiatives in the region such as the Sahel & Sahara Interest Group (SSIG) could be beneficial to the conservation efforts of the Sahelo-Saharan megafauna species and their habitats. The SSIG is an independent, non-governmental and apolitical association, set up, organized, and moderated by SaharaConservation. It is composed of members from a wide range of institutions, including research centres, zoos and zoological associations, museums, IUCN Specialist Groups, NGOs, government and inter-governmental agencies, studbook keepers, species survival coordinators (Species Survival Plan and European Endangered Species Programme), and universities. The SSIG boasts a broad range of wildlife management and conservation expertise and disciplines.
11. Although it is not a formal membership organization, SSIG plays a unique role as a forum for experts to share scientific information, provide updates on work undertaken, discuss projects for the coming year and build strong partnerships for Sahelo-Saharan conservation through its annual meetings. One of the SSIG's main aims is to promote and contribute tangibly to the implementation of CMS mandates in the region and beyond.
12. The SSIG could be a natural partner to the SSMFI providing a pool of species' expertise as well as expertise on the threats facing the species such as climate change, desertification, poaching and pastoralism. Focal points for each species and threat could be established to provide technical support on the implementation of the SSMFI.
13. Furthermore, SSIG annual meetings could be organized in conjunction with the meetings of the Range States of the Sahelo-Saharan megafauna species every three years, merging the leading scientific and policy meetings related to Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna.

### **Recommended actions**

14. The Range States of the eight Sahelo-Saharan megafauna species attending the Third Regional Seminar on the Conservation and Restoration of Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna could agree to submit a Resolution to CMS COP14, requesting the establishment of a Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Initiative, based on the example of CAMI, with a focus on implementing the Action Plan endorsed by this meeting.
15. Parties are recommended to:
  - a) Discuss the value of establishing a Sahelo-Saharan Megafauna Initiative;
  - b) If agreeing on the value added of such an Initiative, agree on submitting a draft proposal to the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CMS.