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ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR OF THE DOLPHIN

This note is meant to provide participants in the Standing Committee 32 with a short overview of YoD activities undertaken to date. The success of these activities has been the basis for the extension of the YoD to 2008.

1. Participation

The Year of the Dolphin has more than 40 official supporters worldwide who are active in the development of YoD partnerships and cooperation with a focus on research and conservation, awareness raising, fundraising, public events, publications, media and lectures.

A questionnaire concerning activities in the YoD has been sent to the supporters, and the results will be used to provide an overview of activities.

Over 140 requests for granting of supporter status for the Year of the Dolphin were received by the CMS Secretariat from all over the world. Among these were requests from NGOs, universities, research institutions, the media, museums, national parks, the corporate sector and individuals such as journalists, teachers, sailors, whale-watching guides, artists etc.

Governmental support in form of voluntary contributions and other funding, distribution of information material, provision of dedicated websites came from Australia, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Maldives, Monaco, the Netherlands and Spain.

Activities such as public awareness raising among local communities and tourists, publications on the YoD, educational activities in schools, public events, research and dolphin conservation or launches were initiated in the following countries: Canada, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, China (Hong Kong), India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, UK and the USA.

2. Conservation and Research

Several important meetings and other activities to enhance cetacean conservation were on the agenda during the Year of the Dolphin:

The WDCS Report on 'Current State of Knowledge of Cetacean Threats, Diversity and Status in the Pacific Islands Region' was released in February 2007.

The 1st Meeting of the Signatories to the South Pacific Cetaceans MoU was held in March 2007 in conjunction with a Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) 1-day workshop on cetacean and fisheries interactions, and a 2-day workshop on developing the new regional Whale and Dolphin Action Plan. The Fiji Cetacean Capacity Building Workshop in September 2007 was a 2-day workshop that was a direct support for the MoU.

CMS and its partners negotiated a new agreement on West African cetaceans in Tenerife, in October 2007 during the Western African Talks on Cetaceans and their Habitats (WATCH). It is one of the largest agreements on cetacean conservation that will help preserve cetaceans and their habitats during their migrations. Based on international cooperation, a global network of agreements will ensure their conservation in an efficient way.

A resolution on the establishment of 18 marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for some of the world's most threatened whale and dolphin populations was submitted to the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) and adopted during MOP 3 in October 2007.

The Pelagos Sanctuary serves as an example of mitigating threats in a Marine Protected Area. The PELAGOS Sanctuary is a Special Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI), which is acknowledged by all countries bordering the Mediterranean through the Barcelona Convention. During the Year of the Dolphin 2007, the permanent Secretariat will be established in Genoa.

3. Fundraising / Ambassadors

There have been several main achievements to support the Year of the Dolphin.

Prince Albert II of Monaco, who supports cetacean conservation through his foundation (princealbertfoundation.org) acted as Patron to the YoD and participated in the launch.

The Dolphin Fund has been established by the Coastal Union (EUCC) and the European Cetacean Society with support from Ministries in Belgium and the Netherlands. According to a bilateral agreement, five per cent of financial contributions from the Dolphin Fund will be made available to CMS in 2007.

In this context, a tributary concert with Portuguese Fado singer Cristina Branco was organized by the Dolphin Fund. The Dolphin Fund organized a fundraising dinner with Ambassador Princess Irene van Lippe-Biesterfeld and fundraising activities at schools. On 4 November, the so-called Dolphin Charter was published in the presence of Prince Laurent, and the Dolphin Fund handed over two symbolic cheques with a total of EUR 8,700 from the Belgian and EUR 6,045 from the Dutch campaigns to CMS at a public event in Nieuwpoort, Belgium. The Dolphin Fund offered to continue fundraising activities in 2008, with then 10% of non-earmarked proceeds going to CMS.

The dolphin song "Dolphins of Bali 2007" and the dolphin video produced by Oceanlounge Records and Scubazoo were posted in the global internet portal iTunes for download. CMS receives 0,60 € per download.

In April 2007 another tributary concert was organized by Ocean Care in Zurich, Switzerland.

Dolphin Days were organized by Oceancare and Delphis.

A German YoD exhibition in Wilhelmshaven and Norderney was financed by Group Technologies.

In the world of sports, the world league swimmers Christian Keller (Essen) and Christof Wandratsch (Haiming) and the professional sailor Andreas Hanekamp were officially nominated as ambassadors at the 2007 Boat fair in Duesseldorf, Germany.

4. Press Conferences

The Year of Dolphin was internationally launched in Monaco in September 2006 with Prince Albert as patron of the campaign. Only three months later, Germany started the YoD in December 2006. In May 2007, the Dolphin Manual in collaboration with UNESCO and WDCS was launched in Paris and Washington D.C.

5. Publications

Several publications regarding the Year of the Dolphin have been produced by CMS. Among these are the YoD website www.yod2007.org in English and German (supported by German and Italian voluntary contributions and TUI) and input by WDCS. More than 5 Million website hits were achieved already in September. The Dolphin Manual in eight languages is and the Dolphin Diploma as an online award were developed with strong support from WDCS. A YoD exhibition in English and German, YoD banners, posters, leaflets, a calendar and postcards were created to better publicize the campaign. All the publications are available on the YoD websites.

6. YoD and Dolphins in other publications

Regarding publications by others, there are a number that deal with the Year of the Dolphin or at least highlight it. In Italy and Nepal, articles were published in children's magazines.

TUI and Sri Lankan Airlines are distributing in-flight magazines with information about the Year of the Dolphin. Furthermore, a media cooperation with the diving magazine "Tauchen" was established.

Moreover, "Whales and Dolphins of the North Sea" by Stichting Noordzee, "Hong Kong's Chinese White Dolphins and Finless Porpoises", as well as Thomas Beckett's children's book "Ming the Minibus and the pink Dolphin" and the "Story of the Whales and Dolphins" were published. Patrick Legrou, a well-known Belgian children's author, published a new book on dolphins.

7. Film Projects:

Two film projects are currently underway. The first one is "Leben im Kanarenstrom" ("Life in the Canaries Current"), whose shooting programme runs all through the year and which is thus not completed yet. The second one called "The Majestic Ganges River Dolphin", is still pending financial support.

The IMAX movie "Whales and Dolphins 3D" will be released in Germany and other European countries starting in March 2008, and CMS is working to promote this movie.

8. Exhibitions / educational activities

In many European countries, especially in Germany, there have been information-, photo- and art exhibitions in connection with the Year of the Dolphin.

Starting with Germany, there have been exhibitions in Stralsund, Wilhelmshaven, on the island Norderney, at Frankfurt Airport and one organized by the City of Bonn in October 2007.

There have been exhibitions in Tenerife and at various universities in Portugal. The Consulate of Albania presented an exhibition from June until September 2007 in Genoa.

In October, there was another exhibition on YoD supporters' activities on the occasion of the 3rd ACCOBAMS Meeting of the Parties in Dubrovnik, Croatia. On this same occasion, several supporters to the YoD presented for the first time their contributions to the YoD.

9. Cultural events

In June 2007, there was the launch of "Anthologie des baleines et des dauphins" in Paris, where CMS and YoD flyers were distributed to the public. On 25 September, CMS organized a lecture in cooperation with the Academy for International Education in Bonn: "In defence of dolphins" on Dolphin intelligence and abilities, highlighting the remarkable feats these marine mammals are capable of, held by Prof. Thomas White from Loyola Marymount University in Bonn. CMS supported a poetic lecture on whales and dolphins during the Festival of Children's Literature in Bonn Municipal Museum and distributed info material.

10. Public Events to promote YoD

In Mombasa, a big event involving a large audience with children as main actors and audience took place on the Kenyan coast 16-17 June. The Year of the Dolphin campaign in Kenya has been focusing on children to convey the need of conservation measures for dolphins and their habitats.

The YoD banner was displayed along the racecourse during the Grand Prix in Monaco in May 2007 to promote the Year of the Dolphin. Also in May, during the sailing race La Route de l'Equateur, Sables-Madère-Les Sables, Record SNSM and Transat 6.50, participating boats sailed under the YoD flag for the first time. A press release was also distributed on the occasion of the last race.

Furthermore, the Children's Day, Nature Conservation Day and the World Animal Day were celebrated in Portugal to mark the Year of the Dolphin. In addition, the WDCS organized a Dolphin Day in their Wildlife Centre in the Spey Bay in Scotland to introduce the Dolphin Diploma in Great Britain. Also Italy, Greece and Croatia celebrated the Mediterranean Dolphin Days (together with Delphis and Ocean Care). The launch of the Year of the Dolphin in Crete, Greece in July has initiated and developed more comprehensive support of dolphin conservation.

A further initiative of WDCS has been the exhibition of big posters with the slogan "They can't afford to wait for evolution". These posters were shown in Berlin, Potsdam, Cottbus and Göttingen in Germany.

The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany (City of Bonn) had a Dolphin week at schools in October, where children were informed about dolphins.

On 15 August 2007, a global online event focusing on the conservation and protection of dolphins was hosted at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island in South Australia. CMS and other presenters from four continents joined along with an online audience comprising students, teachers and interested organisations and individuals from around the world.

Throughout the whole year, children and young people all over the world are being awarded a Dolphin Diploma by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) for their active contribution to dolphin protection. This initiative is also part of the official "Year of the Dolphin 2007" initiative. Furthermore, various educational activities took place at Belgian and German schools in order to raise awareness among kids and teenagers. In the USA and Germany, activities took place in several kindergartens. In addition, Portugal dedicated the Animal Day to the Year of the Dolphin on 4 October 2007 and on the German island of Sylt, there has been a workshop in a new hotel where children as well as adults learned about animal conservation.

During with the CMS Latin America and Caribbean Capacity Building Workshop in Panama City, the YoD campaign was launched on 27 August 2007.

During the Bonn Open Day in August 2007, which was held for the first time at the UN Campus, and during the UN Day in October 2007 YoD materials were distributed to the public and questions answered.

11. Activities developed by partners and supporters

Starting with educational activities, campaigns have been developed in Kenya, the Netherlands and Belgium. In Kenya Tour operator Pollmans, TUI's partner in Kenya, has organized a major event in Mombasa in cooperation with CMS and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to raise awareness on dolphins. An essential contribution to responsible ecotourism was the release of new guidelines for whale watching, which have been reproduced as a direct result of the Kenyan YoD campaign.

On the occasion of the World Ocean Day 8 June, the Loro Parque Fundación started its educational activities on the Year of the Dolphin 2007. A new exhibition in Spanish, English and German with a focus on the threats to whales and dolphins was on display in the Sea Classroom until the end of October. It remained there until the end of the Western African Talks on Cetaceans and their Habitat conference (WATCH) in Tenerife.

TUI supported the development of the YoD website in English and German, video, promotional items and the printing and distribution of the Dolphin Manual in tourist destinations. In June, the YoD was launched with TUI in Kenya and further activities were scheduled on Sylt, in Croatia and Romania. The YoD was publicised in 15 million TUI catalogues and 1.5 million Nouvelles-Frontières (travel agency) catalogues. In addition, the WDCA produced 50,000 magazines to highlight YoD and distributed 25,000 leaflets on the Year of the Dolphin.

Furthermore, several activities such as the support of translations of dolphin related publications by Portuguese organisations and the translation of ACCOBAMS Guidelines into Greek are underway, as well as the support of a workshop on fisheries in Greece by a YoD supporter.

In Australia, a website based on the Year of the Dolphin was created for children and in the Netherlands and Belgium, dedicated websites for YoD and the Dolphin Fund have been developed.

In 2008, two Portuguese swimmers are going to cross the English Channel under the slogan "open water Portugal" to promote the Year of the Dolphin.

In Latin America, Panama was given good news coverage on NGO activities through educational material such as posters, DVDs and CDs.

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) held 7 events in Germany and Austria, mainly of educational nature, spending nearly 25,000 EUR on them. These events received some media coverage and certainly stand out due to their scope and ripple effect.

Morigenos, a YoD supporter from Slovenia, had lectures, multimedia presentations in kindergartens, schools and universities, seminars, events and fairs.

BICREF of Malta undertook awareness raising activities and does scientific research on dolphins in the Mediterranean.

IEC Oceania, an Australia-based whale watching body which caters especially to Japanese tourists, received info-material and promotes dolphin conservation with Japanese tourists, which is especially important.

Mare Nostrum of Romania had a number of events, mainly focusing on educational and awareness

aspects, but also some scientific monitoring of strandings.

The BDRI (Bottlenose Dolphin Research Institute) of Italy had educational (lectures, slide shows) and scientific (articles) activities and achieved some media coverage by local Italian media.

During the the 12th Jeux des petits Etats d'Europe (Games of small European States) held 4 - 9 June in Monaco, the Olympic Committee of Monaco, distributed information material on the campaign. On the occasion of the Monaco Yacht Show in September 2007, YoD brochures were distributed. During an event on 30 September in cooperation with the Fédération Monégasque des Activités Subaquatiques (FMAS), an educational exhibition on cetaceans was displayed in Monaco.

A group of young conservationists from the Philippines have been supported in their efforts (educational and awareness) with YoD material.

A broad awareness raising initiative developed by a teacher from Mumbai, India, is supported with materials by CMS, WDCS and TUI. He held lectures and distributed info material, encouraging children to draw pictures and write essays for the YoD website, at (so far) 8 schools in and around Mumbai, and the campaign is still underway in Nov. 2007.

The Year of the Dolphin campaign shows that its success world wide depends on the commitment of dedicated individuals and organizations that helped to raise public awareness.