



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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Agenda Item 23

NATIONAL REPORTS

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on the implementation of Resolution 12.5 *National Reports* and associated Decisions 13.14 and 13.15.

It contains an analysis of CMS National Reports to COP14, based on the information provided by Parties.

NATIONAL REPORTS

Background

1. Monitoring and reporting on activities by Parties to implement the Convention, and on the outcomes of those activities, are essential for tracking progress, learning lessons from past experience (to guide future action), and assessing the status of both the Convention and of migratory species. This is an invaluable resource for all stakeholders who play a part in implementing the Convention at national and local levels. It supports an integrated approach by state authorities across all sectors, together with non-governmental organizations, community groups, academia and the private sector. The common approach to reporting also facilitates cooperation between countries in transboundary and regional contexts.
2. An overview of the data provided helps highlight, inter alia, general patterns and trends, progress in implementing Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP), notable successes, and challenges that need be addressed. This includes an indication of progress towards the achievement of goals and targets in the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 (SPMS), which, in turn, contributes to the delivery of aspects of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals). The overview therefore helps to inform new COP Decisions, while also feeding into wider processes of international environmental governance.
3. Article VI, paragraph 3, of the Convention requires Parties that are Range States of migratory species listed in Appendices I and II to inform the Conference of the Parties, through the Secretariat, of the measures they are taking to implement the provisions of the Convention for those species.
4. The Conference of the Parties, at its 12th meeting (COP12, 2017), adopted [Resolution 12.5 National Reports](#), which outlines the reporting process. Subsequently, COP13 adopted [Decisions 13.14 and 13.15 National Reports](#), which read as follows:

13.14 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, shall undertake a revision of the National Report format and its guidance document to reflect lessons learnt during the reporting period and take into account the outcomes of the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, to the extent appropriate, further strengthen synergies within the CMS Family and with reporting processes of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and submit the revisions to the Standing Committee at its 52nd meeting.

13.15 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is requested to consider and, as appropriate, endorse the revision of the National Report format and the guidance document produced by the Secretariat further to Decision 13.14, so that it can be issued at least a year (preferably more) in advance of the deadline for submission of reports to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and make any appropriate recommendations to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties concerning the National Report format, including on its subsequent use.

5. COP13 also addressed the desire of Parties to include in their National Reports information on a number of specific activities. For example, Decision 13.127 on *Climate Change and Migratory Species* requested the Secretariat to identify information gaps regarding the implementation of the Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species, and to develop further the guidance associated with the report for the relevant section:

Decision 13.127 *Climate Change and Migratory Species*

13.127 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) *identify information gaps regarding the implementation of the Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species and take them into consideration while evaluating the need to revise the National Report format;*
- b) *develop further the guidance associated with the report for the relevant section of the template as a possible measure for eliciting more and better reports on the implementation of Resolution 12.21 Climate Change and Migratory Species;*
- c) *use existing synergies under other instruments, in particular the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to obtain relevant information without increasing the reporting burden on Parties.*

Other relevant Decisions include:

Decision 13.126 *Climate Change and Migratory Species*

13.126 Directed to the Parties, Scientific Council

Parties and the Scientific Council are requested to report on progress in implementing the Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species, including monitoring and the efficacy of measures taken, to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as part of the National Reporting process.

Decisions 13.41 and 13.43 *Flyways*

13.41 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external resources [...] b) [...] develop and disseminate guidance to help Parties to provide information on implementation of the Flyways work programme in their National Report [...].

13.43 Directed to the Working Groups & Task Forces

The Flyways Working Group shall, subject to the availability of external resources: [...] d) with support of the Secretariat, develop guidance for Parties on using their National Report to provide information on contributions to implementation and outcomes of actions of the Programme of Work [...].

Decision 13.66 *Marine Wildlife Watching*

13.66 Directed to the Parties

Parties are requested to: a) provide the Secretariat with copies of the relevant documents for any measures as described in paragraph 1 of Resolution 12.16 Recreational In-Water Interaction with Aquatic Mammals that they have adopted regarding recreational in-water interactions with aquatic mammals or other CMS-listed species, attached to the National Report [...]

Decisions 13.74 and 13.75 Live Capture of Cetaceans from the Wild for Commercial Purposes

13.74 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall: a) request Parties to submit information on the implementation of the Best Practice Guidelines relating to the Live Capture of Cetaceans from the Wild for Commercial Purposes via the National Report process [...]

13.75 Directed to the Parties

Parties are requested to cooperate with the Secretariat in the implementation of Decision 13.74, by providing information in response to the request mentioned in paragraph (a).

Decision 13.113 Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species

13.113 Directed to the Parties

Parties are invited to: a) address connectivity, including through international cooperation, in the conservation of migratory species set out in Decisions and Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties, making use of available guidance, as appropriate, and include connectivity in the implementation of other relevant and applicable international agreements, such as in commitments, including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and include such actions in the National Report to be submitted to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties [...]

Decision 13.133 Infrastructure Development and Migratory Species

13.133 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall: a) identify information gaps regarding the implementation of Resolution 7.2 (Rev.COP12) Impact Assessment and Migratory Species and, based on any identified gaps, consider improvements to guidance on preparing National Reports to improve collection of information regarding infrastructure development for review by the Standing Committee as part of amendment(s) to the National Report format under Decision 13.14 [...]

Decision 13.137 Sustainable Development and Migratory Species

13.137 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall: [...] c) take into account the need to assess the contribution made to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the implementation of CMS when developing proposals towards the revision of the National Report Format.

Activities

Revision of the National Report format

6. Pursuant to Decision 13.14, the Secretariat developed a proposal for revising the format for the National Report and the accompanying guidance document. The proposal was submitted to the 52nd meeting of the Standing Committee (StC52, 2021, [UNEP/CMS/StC52/Doc.11](#)) for its consideration.
7. In developing the proposal, a few main guiding principles and rationales were followed:
 - Alterations to wording in existing questions and guidance were generally aimed at enhancing respondents' understanding of what information was being requested, taking into account feedback from Parties, lessons learnt and relevant COP13 Resolutions and/or Decisions, without changing the general intent of the question. Other alterations to wording in questions and guidance were aimed at keeping word usage consistent.

- Inclusion of new questions was generally aimed at fulfilling requests for information from COP13 Resolutions and/or Decisions.
 - Addition of new boxes in the guidance document was generally aimed at providing explanations for the information to be compiled on specific topics.
 - Specific COP13 Resolutions and/or Decisions were noted as potentially relevant in some guidance boxes.
 - References to information sources from other MEAs or international processes were made throughout the revised document with the purpose of encouraging respondents to consult them to identify relevant information from these other sources and promote synergies and consistencies among different reporting and assessment processes.
 - Finally, some structural alterations were proposed with a view to better align the questionnaire structure with the capabilities of the Online Report System used by CMS. This included changes to the format of question X.1 and the addition of 'short descriptions' for some questions.
8. As noted above, several COP13 Decisions called for additional areas of work to be included in National Reports. To address these specific needs, without affecting the consistency and balance of the whole template, the Secretariat proposed providing targeted guidance for these areas.
9. Following the mandate set out in Decision 13.127 *Climate Change and Migratory Species*, the Secretariat developed an example of additional guidance for reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Work on Climate Change and Migratory Species, to assist Parties and the Scientific Council in implementing Decision 13.126 *Climate Change and Migratory Species*.
10. StC52 (2021) reviewed the proposal and adopted the revised format for National Reports. This was made available (in Word format) in three languages on the [CMS website](#), in January 2022.

Launching of the national reporting cycle

11. With the assistance of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMS), the online version of the National Report template for COP14, developed using the Online Reporting System, was made available in November 2022, in the three working languages of the Convention. The template was accompanied by a guidance document. The deadline for submissions was 26 April 2023, later extended to 11 June 2023. The period covered by this round of reports is from August 2019 (the submissions deadline for COP13 reports) to June 2023.
12. The Secretariat also prepared a technical User Guide to facilitate access to and usage of the system in order to assist CMS focal points with submitting their reports. Regular communication was established to help CMS focal points resolve any technical issues, and fill out and submit their reports.
13. As of August 2023, a total of 55 Parties have submitted their National Reports (41 per cent response rate), though certain number of reports were sent after the official deadline. National Reports are made available on the [CMS website](#).

Analysis of National Reports

14. Thanks to the voluntary contributions of the Governments of Germany and Switzerland, the CMS Secretariat was able to commission an analysis of the National Reports by UNEP-WCMC. The full analysis prepared by UNEP-WCMC is contained in Annex 3. It is based on reports provided by Parties that had been submitted by the formal deadline, and those that arrived shortly after – a total of 55 reports.
15. The analysis concludes that:

“Parties have made progress in strengthening governance arrangements, raising levels of awareness, and developing systems to exchange knowledge on migratory species. Parties also reported recent successes in their efforts to enact and update legislation, combat specific threats and safeguard important sites for migratory species. Enhanced international cooperation also featured prominently in the list of positive actions undertaken by Parties, as evidenced by the active engagement of 44% of reporting Parties in a wide range of collaborative international agreements, processes and initiatives.

While progress has been made, some clear implementation gaps remain. Notably, a small number of Parties have yet to prohibit taking for all Appendix I species, in accordance with Article III(5), and this number could be higher if all 133 CMS Parties are considered. Although new and updated legislation featured among the most widely reported types of successful action, only a minority of Parties indicated that they had adopted legislation or other measures to prevent obstacles to migration, or to conserve or restore habitats, in response to CMS Article III(4). Progress towards identifying all important sites for migratory species, tackling harmful incentives and integrating migratory species considerations into national plans and strategies could be strengthened. Additionally, despite the active involvement of many Parties in collaborative international initiatives, updates on engagement might have been expected from a higher proportion of Parties, given the central importance of international and regional cooperation to CMS.

More broadly, the information provided by reporting Parties indicates that multiple anthropogenic pressures remain at levels that are detrimental to the conservation of many migratory species, despite ongoing efforts to combat specific threats. In particular, climate change, habitat destruction/degradation and illegal hunting were widely regarded by reporting Parties as having a severe impact. Climate change-related threats and habitat destruction/degradation also emerged as major drivers of significant negative trends in the threats faced by migratory species.

As only 41% of all CMS Parties submitted a National Report by the reporting deadline, the analysis presented here may not provide a representative picture of all the implementation efforts that are taking place across all Parties. Despite the limitations imposed by the relatively low reporting rate, the information provided by reporting Parties suggests some priority areas where intensified action may be needed. As well as helping to identify general priorities and opportunities, the National Reports themselves contain a wealth of data, which can potentially be mined, analysed and presented in many different ways. The resulting insights can offer a unique perspective on efforts to conserve migratory species and their habitats.”

16. The Secretariat also conducted an internal analysis of the section on climate change, as per the mandate in Decision 13.127. The analysis showed that close-ended questions have a much higher response rate than open-ended ones. Moreover, the open-ended questions tend to solicit a wide range of answers, making it difficult to analyse the responses. The Secretariat, therefore, suggests that these findings inform further revision of the National Report format.

Recommended actions

17. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
- a) adopt the draft amendments to Resolution 12.5 contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 2 of this document;
 - c) take note of the *Analysis of CMS National Reports to COP14* contained in Annex 3 of this document;
 - d) delete Decisions 13.14 and 13.15.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 12.5

NATIONAL REPORTS

NB: Proposed new text is underlined. Text to be deleted is ~~crossed-out~~.

Recalling Resolutions 4.1, 6.5, and 9.4,

Pursuant to Article VI (3) of the Convention which obliges Parties to submit national reports on the measures they are taking to implement the provisions of the Convention,

Emphasizing the important role of national reports as vital indicators of the implementation of the Convention,

Noting the importance for such reports to be submitted at least six months before any given meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to allow the Secretariat to prepare a meaningful synthesis,

Reminding Parties of the necessity of timely submission of their reports before the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to enable a thorough synthesis to be prepared,

Aware of the difficulties experienced by some Governments in the compilation and development of national reports,

Aware that many Parties to the Convention have not submitted national reports for each reporting cycle or have not submitted information in sufficient detail,

Also noting that 58 reports had been submitted to the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties,

Further noting that 60 reports were submitted to the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties out of 102 that were due, as detailed in Conference Document 9.10; of the current total of 110 Parties, 8 were not yet required to submit reports,

Further noting that 68 out of 113 eligible Parties submitted national reports prior to the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties and 59 out of 118 eligible Parties submitted national reports using the standard online reporting prior to the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties,

Recognizing that a standard format for national reports would provide a useful structure for organizing the information received, and would facilitate its incorporation in a comprehensive database,

Acknowledging the need to ensure consistency and best practice in the compilation of national reports, containing the best available information and scientific knowledge,

Noting the importance of harmonizing reporting procedures across all biodiversity instruments, especially the Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding related to the Convention, thereby increasing collaboration between convention secretariats,

Underlining that reporting should be kept concise and focused, avoid duplication and be outcome orientated so that there is more time for the implementation of conservation measures,

Noting the progress made by the CMS Secretariat since COP8 in amending the national reporting format,

Welcoming the development of online reporting, which should make significant advances both in the reporting process and harmonization of reports within the CMS Family;

Recognizing the need for an evaluation of implementation based, in part, on a synthesis of all previous national reports,

Recognizing the opportunity to use national reports and the associated synthesis to promote the objectives of the Convention and its implementation at the local and national level, and to national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations,

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

1. *Requests* the Secretariat to make the format for the next National Report available to Parties at least 15 months in advance of the deadline for submission of that National Report;
2. *Urges* all Contracting Parties, in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Convention, to submit national reports to the Secretariat at least six months before each ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
3. *Requests* the Secretariat to send a reminder to Parties well in advance of the deadline for submission of reports, which is six months before the meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to issue reminders if the reports are not received by the said date;
4. *Calls* upon the Parties to nominate focal points for correspondence, including national reporting, and to nominate contacts in other national authorities, as appropriate, for other issues;
5. *Encourages* national focal points and their Scientific Councillor counterparts to liaise on the preparation of national reports before they are submitted to the Secretariat through official channels;
6. *Directs* the Secretariat to compile the information received from Parties in a database, to be updated intersessionally with any new information that may be made available by Parties;
7. *Urges* the Secretariat to identify, in cooperation with Parties, possible obstacles and/or constraints in preparing national reports;
8. *Recommends* that the Secretariat develop mechanisms to support countries in submitting their national reports, including assistance for developing countries to help gather the required information;

9. *Instructs* the Secretariat to perform an analysis of the reports received and to make the results available to the Parties, consistent with the rules for submission of documents to meetings of the Conference of the Parties so that the findings can help inform their activities and decision-making;
10. *Further requests* the Secretariat to advance harmonization of reporting with other international biodiversity agreements through the development of common reporting modules, via the framework of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and in consulting with UNEP-WCMC;
11. *Requests* the CMS Secretariat to continue to liaise with the CBD Secretariat and the other biodiversity-related conventions and relevant institutions with a view to adopting suitable indicators to measure the achievement of relevant ~~Aichi~~Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets;
12. *Also requests* UNEP to continue to seek opportunities to support the Convention through the Knowledge Management and related projects; and
13. *Repeals*
 - a) Resolution 4.1, *Party Reports*;
 - b) Resolution 6.5, *Information Management Plan and National Reporting*; and
 - c) Resolution 9.4, *The Future of National Reports*.

ANNEX 2

DRAFT DECISIONS

NATIONAL REPORTS

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 14.AA The Standing Committee is requested to consider and, as appropriate, endorse the revision of the National Report format and the guidance document produced by the Secretariat further to Decision 14.BB, so that it can be issued at least a year (preferably more) in advance of the deadline for submission of reports to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and make any appropriate recommendations to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties concerning the National Report format, including on its subsequent use.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.BB The Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, is requested to consider the need for, and, as appropriate, undertake a revision of the National Report format and its guidance document to reflect lessons learned during the reporting period and the outcomes of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

ANNEX 3

ANALYSIS OF CMS NATIONAL REPORTS TO COP14

[to be published]