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Sustainable wildlife management

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Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. By its decision 15/4, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which is aimed at guiding efforts worldwide to conserve biodiversity, promote its sustainable use and ensure the equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources through four outcome-oriented goals and 23 action-oriented targets. The Framework specifically addresses the sustainable management of wildlife through Goals A and B and Targets 4, 5 and 9.

2. Target 4 is a commitment to a reduction in species extinction and extinction rates, the maintenance of genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species and the effective management of human-wildlife interactions. Target 5 calls for the sustainable, safe and legal use of wild species, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities. Target 9 is aimed at ensuring the sustainable management and use of wild species in order to secure benefits for people, including by protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use.

3. In its decision 14/7, the Conference of the Parties welcomed the Voluntary Guidance for a Sustainable Wild Meat Sector contained in the annex to that decision. In addition to providing context and principles for sustainable wild meat, the guidance comprises three main elements: managing and improving the sustainability of wild meat supply at the source, reducing demand for unsustainably managed and/or illegal wild meat in cities and towns, and creating the enabling conditions for a legal, regulated and sustainable wild meat sector. In the same decision, however, the Conference of the Parties also noted that the voluntary guidance was applicable only to some areas of terrestrial tropical and subtropical habitats, biomes and ecosystems, and requested the Executive Secretary to identify areas that might require complementary guidance to be developed and to explore ways to apply such guidance to other geographical areas, other species and other uses.

4. In response to decision 14/7, the Executive Secretary, in consultation with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, submitted a report to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice containing a review of existing

* CBD/SBSTTA/25/1/Rev.1.

complementary guidance, including guidance and initiatives produced under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the International Institute for Environment and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, TRAFFIC, among others, and of further multidisciplinary approaches.[1]

5. In decision 15/23, the Conference of Parties requested the Executive Secretary to complete the work mandated in decision 14/7, including by identifying other areas beyond the wild meat sector that might require complementary guidance, such as other geographical areas, species and uses, making full use of the outcomes and the findings of the report of the Consultative Workshop on Sustainable Wildlife Management Beyond 2020,[2] held in Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on 25 and 26 June 2019, and the results of the survey on sustainable wildlife management.[3]

6. The present document contains an analysis of areas beyond the wild meat sector that might require complementary guidance. It gives a brief overview of the status of, trends in and possible future scenarios for sustainable wildlife management in order to identify areas requiring urgent action that are not currently covered by global guidance. The document also contains options for future work under the Convention on the issues surrounding sustainable wildlife management, in particular in the context of Targets 4, 5 and 9 of the Framework.

II. Outcomes and findings of the report of the Consultative Workshop on Sustainable Wildlife Management Beyond 2020 and the results of the survey on sustainable wildlife management

A. The Consultative Workshop on Sustainable Wildlife Management

7. The Consultative Workshop on Sustainable Wildlife Management Beyond 2020 was an initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management to develop a better understanding of how sustainable wildlife management issues can be integrated into the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The workshop was aimed at discussing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity "Living in harmony with nature" and its relation to the sustainable management of wildlife and identified gaps in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The workshop responded to decision 14/34, in which the Conference of Parties invited organizations to actively engage in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and took into account the long-term context in which the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector should be applied, pursuant to decision 14/7. Participants in the workshop also identified challenges and principles that should be addressed in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as potential milestones, targets, indicators and monitoring tools and databases related to the sustainable management of wildlife.

8. The participants in the workshop agreed to extend the discussions to include wild species of fauna, flora and fungi. Such scope is particularly relevant in the context of the second objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity on sustainable use of biodiversity components.

9. Discussions in the workshop did not directly address areas that might require complementary guidance; however, several principles for the integration of sustainable wildlife management in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework were identified, as noted in the report of the workshop. The most relevant include:

[1] CBD/SBSTTA/23/5.
[2] CBD/WG2020/1/INF/3.
[3] CBD/SBSTTA/23/INF/19.

(a) Coherent approaches must be established between international policymakers and local communities that harvest wildlife, and common understanding is needed regarding where the benefits of wildlife management should go;

(b) There should be a clear linkage between sustainable use and trade of wildlife and addressing overexploitation as a driver of biodiversity loss;

(c) Data and knowledge gaps about the risks and benefits of sustainable wildlife management should be addressed;

(d) It is important to reflect the need for good governance, including regulatory frameworks, accountability, anti-corruption measures and behavioural norms, of sustainable wildlife management at various scales;

(e) Landscape-scale conservation should be recognized and reflected beyond protected areas, as well as the significant potential contribution of sustainable wildlife use and trade for the success of landscape-scale conservation.

B. The online survey on the consideration of the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector

10. In response to the request in decision 14/7, the Secretariat collected information from Parties, other Governments and organizations through an online survey on the consideration of the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector, the identification of areas for complementary guidance, monitoring tools and databases, and multidisciplinary approaches to sustainable wildlife management. The survey was disseminated through notification 2019-064 of 31 July and open until 20 September 2019.

11. Survey respondents were asked about their views on the coverage of the voluntary guidance, as well as the identification of areas that might require complementary guidance, focusing on geographical areas, species and uses outside the scope of the voluntary guidance.

12. A total of 67 per cent of respondents indicated that complementary guidance was needed, while 33 per cent indicated that it was not needed. In terms of other geographical areas, habitats and biomes that could be covered by complementary guidance, respondents listed marine ecosystems, overwintering areas for migratory birds; desert and semi-desert ecosystems in East Africa and Southern Africa; the desertic south-west of the United States of America and northern Baja California, Mexico; all regions of Mexico other than those tropical and subtropical; northern countries; and all areas in the Sudan.

13. Some survey respondents identified the following species that could be covered by complementary guidance: fishes, sharks, rays, dugongs and other marine species, and migratory birds. Some respondents indicated that all species could be covered.

14. Respondents identified the pet trade, recreational hunting, trophy hunting and products and subproducts of trade (e.g. leather) as other uses of wildlife that could be covered by complementary guidance.

15. Some of the areas identified above are adequately addressed under certain multilateral environmental agreements or by some intergovernmental organizations, such as the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals for migratory birds and overwintering sites for migratory birds, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora for trade in wild species and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for by-catch mortality and small-scale fisheries and for forest resource and biodiversity assessment for food and agriculture.

16. As can be seen from subsections A and B above, the Consultative Workshop on Sustainable Wildlife Management Beyond 2020 did not focus on addressing areas requiring complementary guidance, while the survey on sustainable wildlife management did not fully address this issue either.

III. Areas that might require complementary guidance

17. The present section provides information on areas that may require complementary guidance based on the analysis of the *Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*.

18. Identifying the areas that may demand complementary guidance requires an overview of the status and trends of the use of wildlife. Such an overview is largely based on the status and trends identified in *The Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*.[4] A review of the assessment and its implications for the work undertaken under the Convention can be found in document CBD/SBSTTA/25/7.

19. Terrestrial animals[5] are heavily harvested[6] for their ivory, horns, skin and meat, among others, which are in turn often used for food and feed, medicine, ceremonies, rituals and decorative and aesthetic uses, among others.[7]

20. According to the assessment, outcomes of sustainable use of terrestrial animal species are affected by several factors relating to governance, management, ecological and sociocultural contexts. While unsustainable use is driving the decline of many such species at the global level, the impacts of use on wild species and society can be neutral or positive in some places.

21. According to the assessment, hunting for food, medicine and recreation represents a significant proportion of terrestrial animal harvesting. Unsustainable hunting has been identified as a threat for 1,341 wild mammal species, including 669 species assessed as threatened, and declines in large-bodied species with low intrinsic rates of population increase have been linked to hunting pressure. The impacts of hunting on the abundance of wild species vary worldwide, depending on the biological characteristics of the animals and on management systems, but they are generally lower for species with high population growth rates or high ecological adaptability, and where hunting is well managed.

22. A finding of the assessment is that the harvesting of terrestrial animals for other purposes, such as pet trade, affects thousands of wild species, with the legal and illegal pet trade concerning more than 1,000 species of birds, reptiles, fish and mammals and the specimens in trade numbering in the millions.

23. According to the assessment, there are limited scenarios and projections relating to terrestrial animal harvesting. It notes, however, that trends in the sustainable use of terrestrial animals are likely to be affected by such key factors as legislation and regulations, values, illegal hunting and poaching, managing institutions and governance, technological drivers and climate change.

24. It is reported in the assessment that fisheries constitute a major source of food from wild species, with more than 60 per cent of the total annual harvest of 90 million tons destined for direct human consumption, with small-scale fisheries contributing two-thirds of that amount.

25. While there are strong regional variations, the assessment estimates that about 66 per cent of marine wild fish stocks are fished within biologically sustainable levels and 34 per cent are overfished. Some of the variation is accounted for by strong fisheries management in regions and countries where average stocks are increasing in abundance. In turn, the status of stocks is less understood in countries and regions with weaker fisheries management. Many small-scale fisheries

[4] Available at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6425599.
[5] Four broad species groups (aquatic animals; plants –excluding trees–, fungi and algae; trees; and terrestrial animals), as well as biomes, ecoregions and ecosystems are used in the IBPES assessment.
[6] Harvesting is divided in the assessment into non-extractive practices and four broad extractive practices (fishing, gathering, logging and terrestrial animal harvesting).
[7] The uses of wild species listed in the assessment are: ceremony and ritual expression, decorative and aesthetic uses, energy, food and feed, learning and education, materials and construction, medicine and hygiene, recreation and other.

in Africa (inland and marine fisheries), Asia, Latin America and Europe (coastal marine fisheries) are considered to be unsustainable or partially sustainable.

26. According to the assessment, by-catch is a significant problem for several large-scale and small-scale fisheries. For many populations of marine turtles, sea snakes, seabirds, sharks, rays, chimaeras and marine mammals, by-catch fishing mortality is unsustainable. This is the case for 99 per cent of shark and ray species that are caught as by-catch but retained for food, owing to their high value. This has resulted in steep declines in shark species since the 1970s. The conservation status of by-catch species and other associated and dependent species is often poorly known.

27. It is indicated in the assessment that recreational fishing is becoming a significant cause of fish stock declines. Recreational catch-and-release fishing can have negative impacts but can be conducted sustainably if responsibly practised.

28. According to projections in the assessment, global demand for and consumption of fish will increase, while climate change is expected to affect catch potential and food security for fisheries-dependent communities, particularly those in vulnerable regions, such as the tropics.

29. It is noted in the assessment that harvest control rules and marine protected areas may provide benefits to rebuilding depleted populations, including by preventing overfishing. These management approaches should take into consideration responses to climate change, which could reduce future yields or aggravate the poor status of many stocks.

30. A continuing reduction in global forest cover, despite increasing forest restoration, is also noted in the assessment, suggesting a trend of net forest loss and fragmentation, driven by logging for energy, wood and wood products.

31. It is indicated in the assessment that 50 per cent of wood used globally and 90 per cent used in Africa is for energy purposes, and while fuelwood use is declining in most regions, it is increasing in sub-Saharan Africa. Though analyses demonstrate that demand for fuelwood can be met at the global and national levels, it is at the local level that challenges may occur, when people have few energy alternatives.

32. According to the assessment, logging is carried out by smallholders, communities and industrial entities, with an estimated 15 per cent of global forests managed as community resources by indigenous peoples and local communities. Industrial logging occurs in more than one quarter of the world's forests.

33. It is said in the assessment that wild tree species continue to be the main sources of wood and wood products at the global level and that destructive logging practices and illegal logging threaten the sustainable use of natural forests. While an increase in the production of plantation wood is expected, it will not be sufficient to meet the projected increase in demand for timber.

34. As reported in the assessment, trends in illegal logging and trade are mixed at the global level, with declines in parts of the tropical Americas, and the tropical and mountain regions of Asia, and increases in South-East and North-East Asia and in parts of Africa. The impacts of logging could be reduced, but this depends on the planning, techniques and implementation used to minimize damage to the residual forest stand, as well as on forest soils, flora and fauna.

35. Scenarios and future projections provided in the assessment suggest that sustainable use can be supported by integrated management, which could be aided by technological innovations and by increasing the success rate of large-scale reforestation.

36. It is reported in the assessment that the gathering of and trade in wild fungi, plants and algae continue to be economically and culturally important activities worldwide.

37. It is also noted that the gathering of wild plants, algae and fungi (a billion-dollar industry) has increased rapidly, fuelled by trade in ornamental plants and growing demand for wild foods and products produced at least in part from wild-harvested plants and fungi. The survival of species may

be threatened by the poaching of ornamental species from the wild and the unsustainable gathering for several plant groups, notably cacti, cycads and orchids, as well as other plants and fungi harvested for medicinal purposes.

38. In addition to unsustainable gathering practices and increased trade, it is reported in the assessment that land-use change, environmental degradation, deforestation and climate change pose serious threats to wild plants, algae and fungi. It is noted that traditional management practices, cultivation and silviculture are promising approaches to increasing the sustainable use of wild species and that indigenous and local knowledge can serve as a source of information for designing and implementing sustainable landscape management and gathering techniques.

39. Gathering is often a gendered activity in many parts of the world, whereby women perform the bulk of the gathering and processing of wild plants for food, medicine, fuel and handicrafts for subsistence purposes and sale on local markets.

40. It is noted in the assessment that scenarios and projections for gathering are limited and that a lack of baseline data makes trends difficult to determine. It is highlighted that expanding markets could prompt unsustainable gathering that ignores established techniques and protocols. New technology also poses a risk, as it could result in unsustainable harvesting practices, for example, through an increase in harvesting volumes or the collection of the entire organism instead of parts of it.

41. According to the assessment, four related factors could determine the sustainability of gathering: (a) species biology and ecology; (b) land use and land cover, and changes thereto; (c) climate change; and (d) gathering technique. However, it is also noted in the assessment that responses will have to be context-specific, with the capacity to adapt to changing conditions.

42. It is indicated in the assessment that agroforestry and cultivation may be viable alternatives for supplying commercial markets. Protecting habitat for gathered species will be especially important for the long-term sustainability of gathering.

43. As noted in the assessment, the sustainable use of wild species is central to the identity, cultural expressions and livelihoods of many indigenous peoples and local communities. Subsistence uses of wild species are important sources of food, medicine, fuel and other livelihood resources, and trade in wild species, including products derived from them, is an important source of goods and monetary income. Furthermore, for many indigenous peoples and local communities, the sustainable use of wild species is embedded in and maintained through indigenous and local knowledge, practices and spirituality.

44. According to the assessment, the ability of indigenous peoples and local communities to maintain and restore practices associated with the sustainable use of wild species can be constrained by multiple factors, including the lack of implementation of international instruments at the national level and the lack of data and indicators to monitor progress. Furthermore, sectoral policies often compromise access to traditional lands and resources by indigenous peoples and local communities. Other factors include the loss of languages, educational programmes that do not take the local, cultural and environmental context into consideration and a lack of attention to gender roles.

45. In the light of the information from the assessment presented in the preceding paragraphs, the following areas may require the development of complementary guidance in order to achieve sustainable wildlife management:

(a) Unsustainable hunting, in particular for species with low intrinsic rates of population increase and in areas where hunting is not well managed;

(b) Unsustainable harvesting of terrestrial animals for the pet trade;

(c) Unsustainable or partially sustainable small-scale fisheries in certain regions of the world;

(d) By-catch fishing mortality, in particular for marine turtles, sea snakes, seabirds, sharks, rays, chimaeras and marine mammals;

(e) Destructive logging practices and illegal logging and related trade, in particular in certain regions of the world;

(f) Poaching of wild specimens of ornamental species and unsustainable gathering for several plant groups; notably cacti, cycads and orchids;

(g) New technology that could result in unsustainable practices.

D. Considerations for future work

46. Further analysis on experience and needs of Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, rights holders and other relevant stakeholders, would help to identify areas not adequately covered at the global level, in terms of additional complementary guidance.

47. Further work is also needed to better understand other areas already covered under the relevant multilateral environmental agreements and competent intergovernmental organizations, in the context of the Framework and as part of the actions needed to achieve the targets related to sustainable wildlife management.

48. To support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management agreed to a set of five thematic objectives at its strategic meeting held in Dublin, in February 2023. These thematic objectives are: (a) to support countries to ensure that the use and trade of wildlife is legal, sustainable and safe; (b) to raise awareness of the links between sustainable use of wildlife, food security, livelihoods and well-being, culture and the integrity of landscapes; (c) to promote the prevention, management and reduction of human-wildlife conflict and enhance coexistence; (d) to embed sustainable use and management of wildlife in the One Health agenda; and (e) to advocate for sustainable and inclusive wildlife economies. Its 2023–2025 workplan incorporate activities aimed at delivering on each of these thematic objectives.

49. The Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management has indicated, through its 2023–2025 workplan, its availability to undertake such work.

50. A progress report on the implementation of the work performed by the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management will be made available for information of participants in the twenty-fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body.

IV. Recommendations

51. The Subsidiary Body may wish to:

(a) Note the information contained in the present document regarding areas beyond the wild meat sector that might require complementary guidance, in particular those summarized in paragraph 45;

(b) Prioritize among these areas those for which complementary guidance should be developed under the Convention, taking into account the further analysis prepared by the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management;

(c) Recommend to the Conference of the Parties to request that the Executive Secretary, with the support of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, prepare draft complementary guidance on those areas.